



County of Monterey

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Board Report

File #: WRAG 18-087, **Version:** 1

Consider receiving a report on recommendations for a comprehensive investigation of the Deep Aquifers in the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin; and provide direction to Staff regarding implementation of the recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Monterey, Board of Supervisors of the Monterey County Water Resources Agency, and Monterey County Water Resources Agency Board of Directors:

- a. Receive a report on recommendations for a comprehensive investigation of the Deep Aquifers in the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin; and
- b. Provide direction to Staff regarding implementation of the recommendations.

SUMMARY:

In October 2017, the Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Agency) released a report titled *Recommendations to Address the Expansion of Seawater Intrusion in the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin* (Report). The Report included six recommendations, conceptualized as a comprehensive solution that - in conjunction with existing projects - would slow or halt seawater intrusion in the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin.

Two of the recommendations in the Report pertain to the Deep Aquifers in the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin (Deep Aquifers). At its October 16, 2017 meeting, the Monterey County Water Resources Agency Board of Directors directed staff to provide a scope and costs necessary to complete an investigation of the Deep Aquifers, as discussed in recommendation number six (#6) in the Report.

On March 9, 2018, the Agency convened a group of fifteen (15) individuals for the Deep Aquifers Roundtable Meeting. The meeting attendees consisted of professional colleagues with expertise in geology, hydrogeology, or related fields and with specific experience studying the Deep Aquifers in the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin; the meeting also included Agency staff. The meeting objectives were to provide a scientifically-oriented forum in which to discuss available data on the Deep Aquifers; identify gaps in current understanding of the Deep Aquifers; and conceptualize the work necessary to address data gaps.

None of the meeting attendees, excepting Agency staff, contributed directly to the development of the recommended scope or costs for the investigation discussed herein.

DISCUSSION:

The intent of a comprehensive investigation of the Deep Aquifers would be threefold:

1. Identify the geographic extent and hydrologic properties of the Deep Aquifers;
2. Determine the quantity and quality of water resources in the Deep Aquifers; and,
3. Provide recommendations for sustainable management of the water resources in the Deep Aquifers.

To achieve these goals, the Agency recommends that a comprehensive investigation consider the following aspects of the Deep Aquifers: geology; hydrogeology; water quality; water balance; and resource management. The investigation should make use of all available data and, particularly with recommendations for any management actions, should maintain consistency with activities conducted or planned by the Groundwater Sustainability Agencies overlying the Deep Aquifers to the extent possible.

While there is existing data about the Deep Aquifers, Agency staff anticipates that some new geologic or geophysical exploration would be included the study. This could include the installation of monitoring wells or work using airborne or seismic geophysics. Staff also anticipates that new aquifer testing and water quality sampling would be conducted. Depending on the extent of new field activities that are necessary, a comprehensive investigation of the Deep Aquifers could take from eight to twelve months.

Upon completion of a comprehensive investigation, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Monterey, Board of Supervisors of the Monterey County Water Resources Agency, and Monterey County Water Resources Agency Board of Directors will have the necessary data to enable fact-based decision making about short- and long-term solutions to managing the water resources in the Deep Aquifers.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

None, for the purposes developing these recommendations.

FINANCING:

There is no financial impact for receiving these recommendations. The financial impact of implementing the comprehensive investigation of the Deep Aquifers described in this report would be addressed in connection with the consideration of those actions directed by the Boards, but could be in the range of \$1,200,000 to \$1,500,000.

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Attachments:

1. MCWRA Board Order