

**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA ITEM TRANSMITTAL**

(1) DEPARTMENT Public Works	(2) MEETING DATE 7/12/2016	(3) CONTACT/PHONE Catherine M. Martin, Water Resources Engineer (805) 781-5275	
(4) SUBJECT Request to authorize the Director of Public Works to submit a letter of support for the proposed Cuyama Basin Water District to the Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission. District 4.			
(5) RECOMMENDED ACTION It is recommended that the Board authorize the Director of Public Works to submit a letter of support for the proposed Cuyama Basin Water District to the Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission (SBLAFCO).			
(6) FUNDING SOURCE(S) Flood Control Zone General Fund (1300000000)	(7) CURRENT YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT \$140,000.00	(8) ANNUAL FINANCIAL IMPACT \$0.00	(9) BUDGETED? Yes
(10) AGENDA PLACEMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing (Time Est. ___) <input type="checkbox"/> Board Business (Time Est. ___)			
(11) EXECUTED DOCUMENTS <input type="checkbox"/> Resolutions <input type="checkbox"/> Contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinances <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A			
(12) OUTLINE AGREEMENT REQUISITION NUMBER (OAR) N/A		(13) BUDGET ADJUSTMENT REQUIRED? BAR ID Number: N/A <input type="checkbox"/> 4/5 Vote Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	
(14) LOCATION MAP Attached	(15) BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT? No	(16) AGENDA ITEM HISTORY <input type="checkbox"/> N/A    Date: 2/9/16 #7; 5/24/16 #21	
(17) ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE REVIEW David E. Grim			
(18) SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S) District 4			

Reference:            16JUL12-C-8

# County of San Luis Obispo



TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Public Works  
Catherine M. Martin, Water Resources Engineer  
Carolyn K. Berg, Senior Water Resources Engineer

VIA: Mark Hutchinson, Deputy Director of Public Works  
Courtney Howard, Water Resources Division Manager

DATE: 7/12/2016

SUBJECT: Request to authorize the Director of Public Works to submit a letter of support for the proposed Cuyama Basin Water District to the Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission. District 4.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board authorize the Director of Public Works to submit a letter of support for the proposed Cuyama Basin Water District to the Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission (SBLAFCO).

## **DISCUSSION**

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (Water Code §§ 10720 et seq.) (SGMA) took effect on January 1, 2015. SGMA provides new authorities to local agencies with water supply, water management or land use responsibilities and requires various actions be taken in order to achieve sustainable groundwater management in high and medium priority groundwater basins, including the Cuyama Valley Groundwater Basin (Cuyama Basin). As a first major milestone, SGMA requires formation of Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) by eligible entities within a basin no later than June 30, 2017. GSA(s) are responsible for developing and implementing groundwater sustainability plan(s) to meet the sustainability goal of the basin.

Existing eligible entities within the Cuyama Basin include the Cuyama Community Services District and the Counties of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Kern, and Ventura. However, a group of landowners is seeking to form a new California Water District<sup>1</sup> over a large portion of the Cuyama Basin. The proposed water district affects three counties - Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Ventura. The petition for formation of the water district was submitted to the SBLAFCO, as the new district would have its greatest portion of assessed value of taxable property in Santa Barbara County.

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<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to Division 13 of the California Water Code (commencing at Section 34000).

The SBLAFCO is tentatively scheduled to hold a public hearing on August 5, 2016 to review (and potentially take action to approve or deny) the Cuyama Basin Water District formation application. The proposed water district formation application states its purpose as follows:

*The purpose for forming the district would be to provide a public agency with power and abilities to, among other things, (i) administer, develop, construct and operate projects and programs to enhance water supplies to help stabilize the groundwater conditions in the basin, and (ii) advance groundwater management and conservation programs and thereby pursue stabilizing the basin and sustaining its resources for the beneficial use of all who use water within the proposed district... The district will provide a governmental structure for local control and management within the proposed district to take appropriate actions to comply with SGMA.*

The applicants are seeking the County's support for formation of said water district. The new water district, if formed, would be a local agency eligible to be a GSA member and directly represent landowners within its boundaries. Therefore, it is recommended that the Board authorize the Public Works Director, or designee, to submit a letter of support for the application to SBLAFCO.

It is important to note that the proposed water district boundary aligns with the boundary as delineated in the Cuyama Basin Boundary Modification request submitted by the Santa Barbara County Water Agency to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) on March 29, 2016 rather than the boundary as delineated in DWRs Bulletin 118. The boundary includes irrigated, and potentially irrigatable land and excludes federal and other local public agencies. DWR anticipates publishing draft recommendations on basin boundary modifications in June/July 2016.

The Cuyama Basin as delineated in DWRs Bulletin 118, encompasses approximately 147,200 acres which extends into four counties. Approximately 32,600 acres are within San Luis Obispo County. The proposed water district encompasses approximately 83,180 acres, of which approximately 19,273 acres (or 106 parcels) lie within San Luis Obispo County, excluding federal lands.

### **OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT/IMPACT**

The Cuyama Basin underlies four Counties: Santa Barbara, Ventura, Kern, and San Luis Obispo. The Cuyama Community Services District provides water to the community of New Cuyama. These agencies, together with the respective water conservation agencies in each County, are eligible to participate in a SGMA Groundwater Sustainability Agency, and therefore are involved with and would be affected by the creation of a new California Water District. The SBLAFCO is the Lead Agency for the creation of the new district pursuant to applicable statutory requirements/regulations. SBLAFCO is coordinating with their counterparts in the other two Counties (San Luis Obispo and Ventura) that underlie the proposed new water district. Other water users in the basin include the US Bureau of Land Management, the US Forest Service, agricultural interests and rural landowners.

### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The support costs associated with GSA formation efforts for the Cuyama Basin are estimated to be \$140,000, and are included in the Flood Control General District's FY2016-17 groundwater budget. Efforts may include the following, as detailed in the May 24, 2016 Staff Report:

- Verify updated Bulletin 118 basin boundary to understand required area for compliance
- Develop an outreach plan and engage basin users

- Develop governance structure, funding plan and GSA agreement(s)
- Eligible GSA agencies consider executing GSA agreement(s); Establish GSA

As these efforts progress, some basins may require more support, and some less. It is Public Work's intention that combined groundwater basin efforts are funded within the authorized Flood Control General District's FY2016-17 groundwater budget.

## **RESULTS**

Approval of the recommended action will provide support for the landowner-proposed Cuyama Basin Water District formation application, in its pursuit of sustainable groundwater management, thereby contributing to a well governed community.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Cuyama Basin Water District Vicinity Map
2. Request for Support from Applicants for Cuyama Basin Water District - (Petition of Formation Applicator excerpts are provided and to be used as reference. The complete application is on file with SBLAFCO).
3. Draft - County of San Luis Obispo Letter of Support for the Proposed Cuyama Basin Water District Formation - Pending Board Action

File: CF 900.100.01 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)

Reference: 16JUL12-C-8

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