

## **NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

### **COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Diego will hold a public hearing to consider adoption of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the San Pasqual Valley Groundwater Basin.

#### HEARING INFORMATION:

	<b>BOARD OF SUPERVISORS</b>
Date:	January 12, 2022
Time:	9:00 A.M. (at or after)
Location:	County Administration Center, Room 310, 1600 Pacific Highway, San Diego, CA

**PROJECT:** Adopt San Pasqual Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plan or in the Alternative Withdraw as Groundwater Sustainability Agency and Take Related Actions (Districts: 2, 3, and 5)

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION:

This item is a request for the Board of Supervisors (Board) to adopt the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (Sustainability Plan) for the San Pasqual Valley Groundwater Basin (Basin), authorize Planning & Development Services (PDS) to enter into a cost-reimbursement agreement with the City of San Diego (City) for Sustainability Plan implementation, and authorize PDS to pursue grant funds from the State of California to support regional water sustainability and sustainable groundwater planning projects. After the Sustainability Plan is adopted by the County and City, and once the cost reimbursement agreement is completed, staff will begin implementing the Sustainability Plan, including monitoring and reporting management actions.

On June 21, 2017 (4), the Board entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the City to establish a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) over the Basin as required by the State of California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The purpose of a GSA is to develop a Sustainability Plan to achieve long-term groundwater sustainability in a basin by ensuring groundwater resources meet current and future needs without degrading water quality or chronically lowering groundwater levels. A Sustainability Plan contains groundwater monitoring requirements to assess basin conditions, along with measures to be implemented to achieve sustainable conditions within 20 years of implementation if a basin is found not to already be sustainable. Those measures could range from water conservation to groundwater use curtailments. While there are three SGMA-mandated basins in the San Diego region, today's actions focus on the San Pasqual Valley Groundwater Basin.

The City and the County of San Diego (County) collaboratively developed the Sustainability Plan with comprehensive stakeholder input, which included establishing a Joint City/County San Pasqual Valley Groundwater Basin Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) and a Technical Peer Review Group to provide input to City and County staff on both policy and technical-related issues. After a 60-day public comment period, which ended on August 13, 2021, the draft Sustainability Plan was finalized and is being provided for Board consideration. Since SGMA requires both the Board and City Council to adopt the Sustainability Plan, the City Council will also consider Sustainability Plan adoption in advance of the January 31, 2022 deadline.

**SUMMARY OF FUNDING:** Funds for initial management actions such as monitoring, reporting, education, and outreach are included in the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Operational Plan in Planning & Development Services. Total project costs will be approximately \$465,000, which includes both \$165,000 in staff time and \$300,000 in consulting costs. Although there is a potential to pursue and obtain future State of California grant funds for this project, the funding source is a combination of existing General Fund fund balance and existing General Purpose Revenue.

The Board approved a waiver of Board Policy B-29 Fees, Grants, Revenue Contracts – Department Responsibility for Cost Recovery for LUEG grants on June 24, 2020 (12), therefore a waiver is not requested as part of this action. If a grant is awarded, any unrecovered cost per Board Policy B-29 would be included in future operational planning in Planning & Development Services as determined by the nature of the project(s) or program(s). Additional, ongoing costs and funding sources for implementation will be included in future Operational Plans. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: The requested actions are exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(1) because Water Code Section 10728.6 states that Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of the Public Resources Code does not apply to the preparation and adoption of Groundwater Sustainability Plans pursuant to the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. Additionally, the implementing actions included in the Sustainability Plan are exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15306 and 15307 because information collection and actions to protect natural resources are categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA. However, the implementation of management actions pursuant to an amended Sustainability Plan may be subject to future CEQA review.

GENERAL INFORMATION: This public hearing is accessible to individuals with disabilities. If interpreter services for the hearing impaired are needed, please call the Americans With Disabilities Coordinator at (619) 531-5205 or California Relay Service, if notifying by TDD, no later than seven days prior to the date of the hearing.

If you challenge the Board's action in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at a public hearing, or in written correspondence delivered to the Hearing Body at or before the hearing. Rules of the Hearing Body may limit or impose requirements on the submittal of such written correspondence.

A copy of the full text of the item is posted at the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, Room 402 of County Administration Center.

For additional information regarding this proposal, contact Jim Bennett, Water Resources Manager, at (619) 346-1476.