



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council **DATE:** March 13, 2023
FROM: Matthew Bronson, City Manager
PREPARED BY: Greg Ray, Public Works Director/City Engineer
SUBJECT: Participation in the County of San Luis Obispo Desalinated Water Study

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt the Resolution approving participation in the County of San Luis Obispo Desalinated Water Study.

BACKGROUND

The City has two principal water sources: Lopez Lake and the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin. Both sources rely on local rainfall and unfortunately the Central Coast has seen below average rainfall for extended periods in recent years. While both supplies have been historically reliable, the expectation of even greater periods of drought due to climate change makes the future reliability of these supplies questionable.

As the Council is aware, the City has considered various supplemental water supply sources to protect Grover Beach against the effects of drought. These sources include desalination, connection to Diablo Canyon's desalination plant, raising the Lopez Dam spillway, purchase of State Water and recycled wastewater. Of these, recycled wastewater has been identified as the most feasible which led the City to develop a partnership with Pismo Beach and Arroyo Grande for the Central Coast Blue recycled water project. The project will bring a sufficient supply of recycled water to the region from a treatment facility in Grover Beach to provide supply reliability during extended drought and minimize the risk of seawater intrusion into the groundwater supply. The participating cities approved a Joint Powers Authority agreement in 2022 and the project is expected to be operational by mid-2026 with additional groundwater supply available by late-2026.

Due to proximity to the ocean, and future water supply quantity, quality and reliability needs, the 2019 San Luis Obispo County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan and 2012 Countywide Master Water Report identified desalination as a water resource management strategy for the region to pursue. However, while desalination can provide a local, reliable, and sustainable water supply for decades to come, desalination projects take a long time to plan for, permit and construct with significant costs associated with them.

The San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District intends to develop the DESAL Plan, a study of the feasibility of developing a desalinated water supply over the next several years via a public process that, when complete, will ultimately contain balanced recommendations related to responsibly advancing the implementation of a regional desalination project. The San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District will be the lead agency and contract administrator for the DESAL Plan and is requesting

that water-purveying agencies that wish to be evaluated during the development of the DESAL Plan adopt resolutions approving participation.

While the City anticipates that Central Coast Blue can adequately address the city's future water supply reliability, it would still be valuable to develop a better understanding of the benefits and impacts of a regional desalination project to address long range growth and possible unanticipated climate change impacts. There is minimal cost to the City associated with developing the plan and the City can opt out at any point in the development. Staff recommends participation to the point that information identifying the costs and benefits of this potential supply to the City can be determined.

FISCAL IMPACT

This action will result in minimal cost to the Water Enterprise Fund including staff time associated with participation in meetings during development of the DESAL plan.

ALTERNATIVES

The Council has the following alternatives to consider:

1. Adopt the Resolution approving participation in the County of San Luis Obispo Desalinated Water Study; or
2. Do not adopt the Resolution approving participation in the County of San Luis Obispo Desalinated Water Study; or
3. Provide alternative direction to staff.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

The agenda was posted in accordance with the Brown Act.

Attachments

1. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 23-

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GROVER BEACH, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING PARTICIPATION IN THE DESALINATION EXECUTABLE SOLUTION AND LOGISTICS (DESAL) PLAN

WHEREAS, adequate water for the people, economy and environment in San Luis Obispo County is needed in perpetuity; and

WHEREAS, conflicts surrounding use of the limited existing water supplies are increasing, including limitations on groundwater use and transfers, limitations on surface water diversion and State policies that lead to water system consolidation mandates; and

WHEREAS, water use efficiency practices, low impact development, stormwater capture and recycled water have been implemented to help extend the limited water supplies but are insufficient to overcome long term shortages and cannot be relied upon to sustainably meet future additional needs and maintain a reasonable quality of life; and

WHEREAS, despite conservation efforts which have reduced per capita consumption from 231 gallons per day to 146 gallons per day over the last 25 years¹, the County remains highly vulnerable to water shortages due to its isolated location and dependence on rainfall; and

WHEREAS, the future reliability of existing water supplies and infrastructure that depend on rainfall, such as groundwater and surface water reservoirs and streams, is uncertain due to changing hydrologic patterns, land use, environmental regulations, population growth and aging infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, water-purveying agencies are best positioned to develop and utilize water supply projects that will reduce dependence on groundwater and surface water and can thereby relieve competition with individual well owners and the environment for those water supplies; and

WHEREAS, due to proximity to the ocean, and future water supply quantity, quality and reliability needs, the 2019 San Luis Obispo County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan and 2012 Countywide Master Water Report identify desalination as a water resource management strategy to pursue; and

WHEREAS, while desalination can provide a local, reliable, and sustainable water supply for decades to come, desalination projects take a long time to plan for, permit and construct; and

WHEREAS, the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District intends to develop the DESAL Plan over the next several years via a public process that, when complete, will ultimately contain balanced recommendations related to responsibly advancing the implementation of a regional desalination project that will benefit the people, economy and environment in the County; and

WHEREAS, the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District will be the lead agency and contract administrator for the DESAL Plan and is requesting that water-purveying agencies that wish to be evaluated during the development of the DESAL Plan adopt resolutions approving participation.

¹ <https://www.ppic.org/publication/water-use-in-california/>

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Grover Beach, California, does hereby:

1. Wish to be included in the development of the DESAL Plan and to be evaluated as a potential partner in such a regional desalination project in the future in order to inform our decision makers and constituents.
2. Designate the City Manager or their designee, to participate in the development of the DESAL Plan, and to bring forward related recommendations.

On motion by Council Member _____, seconded by Council Member _____, and on the following roll-call vote, to wit:

AYES:	Council Members –
NOES:	Council Members –
ABSENT:	Council Members –
ABSTAIN:	Council Members –
RECUSED:	Council Members –

the foregoing Resolution was **PASSED, APPROVED**, and **ADOPTED** at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Grover Beach, California this 13th day of March 2023.

****DRAFT****

KAREN BRIGHT, MAYOR

Attest:

WENDI B. SIMS, CITY CLERK