



City of Culver City

Staff Report

File #: 18-01290, **Version:** 1

Item #: A-2.

CC - (1) Consideration of, and Authorization to Submit, Comments Regarding the West Basin Ocean Water Desalination Project Draft Environmental Impact Report; and (2) Direction to the City Manager as Deemed Appropriate.

Meeting Date: May 29, 2018

Contact Person/Dept: Helen Chin, Public Works Administration

Phone Number: (310) 253-5618

Fiscal Impact: Yes No

General Fund: Yes No

Public Hearing: **Action Item:** **Attachments:**

Commission Action Required: Yes No **Date:**

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (05/23/18);

Department Approval: Charles D. Herbertson, Public Works Director/City Engineer (05/17/18)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council (1) consider, and authorize staff to submit, comments regarding the West Basin Ocean Water Desalination Project draft Environmental Impact Report; and (2) provide other direction to the City Manager as deemed appropriate.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

West Basin Municipal Water District, a wholesale water agency, has proposed an Ocean Water Desalination Project (Project) which would serve as a local water source in its diverse water supply portfolio. This Project seeks to address growing concerns about reliable water supply due to drought, climate change, and unregulated use of groundwater by considering ocean water desalination as a drinking water supply. Construction for the Project would take place at the El Segundo Generating Station (ESGS), an existing power plant property, and would make use of the power plant's existing intake tunnels as part of its construction.

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), West Basin has prepared a

Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to detail any significant environmental impacts the project could produce. At the moment, the draft EIR is undergoing a 90-day public review and comment period, which will end on June 25, 2018. (Note, the original review period was 60 days, which was recently extended by the West Basin Board of Directors at its May 3, 2018 special meeting.) A final EIR will be prepared after West Basin reviews comments, prepares responses, and incorporates revisions.

At the May 14, 2018 City Council Meeting, representatives from West Basin presented an overview of the Project and speakers from the Desal Response Group, a local environmental water group, provided a summary of their concerns. Both representatives fielded questions from the City Council while a discussion ensued about desalination technology, whether West Basin has considered alternatives to desalination, and whether the Project aligns with the legislative priorities of the City. Staff was directed to review the Draft EIR and letters submitted by other local agencies regarding the Project and draft comments that highlight the City's position on conservation and climate change, while also calling attention to the choice of desalination while different technologies exist to capture, process, and replenish water supply.

Staff recommends the City Council review the proposed draft comments to the Draft EIR and, if desired, authorize staff to submit such comments to West Basin for consideration.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

There is no fiscal impact from reviewing and submitting comments to the West Basin draft EIR.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Letter and Comments to DEIR on behalf of the Mayor and City Council

MOTION

That the City Council:

1. Consider, and authorize staff to submit, draft comments regarding West Basin's Ocean Water Desalination Project; and
2. Provide other direction to the City Manager as deemed appropriate.