



City of Culver City

Mike Balkman
Council Chambers
9770 Culver Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90232
(310) 253-5851

Staff Report

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Item #: C-7.

CC - Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding for the Implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act in the Unadjudicated Portion of the Central Basin

Meeting Date: January 22, 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 (01/17/18);

Department Approval: Charles D. Herbertson, Public Works Director/City Engineer (01/11/18)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council approve a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Beverly Hills, the City of Los Angeles, by and through its Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, the Golden State Water Company, and the Water Replenishment District of Southern California, each a "Party" and collectively referred to as the "Parties", for implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act in the unadjudicated portion of the Central Basin, pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

BACKGROUND

In September 2014, Governor Brown signed three bills (AB 1793, SB 1319, and SB 1168) designed to advance groundwater management in California. The legislation, together known as the SGMA, provides for improved management of groundwater in unadjudicated basins by local authorities. The SGMA is one component of an integrated state policy that includes conservation, recycling, safe drinking water, storage, and watershed restoration. Sustainable management addresses management and use of groundwater in a way that can be maintained during planning and implementation without lowering groundwater levels, significant reduction in groundwater storage, unreasonable salt water intrusion, degradation of water quality, land subsidence, and surface water

depletion.

Groundwater provides water for over 6 million Californians and is used by much of the state's \$45 billion agriculture industry. Groundwater is a critical resource that has been overused and under-regulated for over a century leaving California at risk for catastrophe during periods of extreme drought. During California's severe drought, farmers and other large users were encouraged to pump their own groundwater when surface water supplies ran low. Good groundwater management will provide a buffer against drought and climate change, and contribute to reliable water supplies regardless of weather patterns.

Department of Water Resources (DWR) Bulletin 118 has identified 515 alluvial groundwater basins in California and ranked these basins from high to very low priority. Basin prioritization is a statewide ranking of groundwater basin importance that incorporates groundwater reliance throughout the State and a scoring criteria for each basin using eight specific criteria: overlaying population, projected growth of overlying population, public supply wells, total number of wells, irrigated acreage overlying the basin, reliance on groundwater as the primary source of water, impacts on the groundwater, and other information deemed relevant by DWR.

The Coastal Plain of Los Angeles County Groundwater Basin's Central Subbasin (Central Subbasin or Central Basin) is considered a high priority basin. In compliance with the SGMA, local agencies may form a groundwater sustainability agency (GSA) to prepare and submit a groundwater sustainability plan or directly submit an Alternative Analysis (Alternative) in lieu of forming a GSA. Eighty-three percent (83%) of the Central Basin was adjudicated in 1965, referred to as Management Area A. The remaining seventeen percent (17%) is unadjudicated and includes Management Areas B and C. A small portion of Culver City sits atop a portion of Management Area B (44 square miles total, with under a half square mile in Culver City), the area to the north-northwest of the Central Basin.

DISCUSSION

The Water Replenishment District of Southern California (WRD) is a replenishment district formed pursuant to the Water Replenishment Act. WRD also serves as the administrative body of the Central Basin Watermaster and is designated California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring (CASGEM) Entity for the Central Basin. WRD's service area includes four million residents in 43 cities in southern Los Angeles County. In lieu of a GSA, WRD has elected to submit an Alternative of basin conditions which demonstrates that the basin has been operating within its sustainable yield for over a period of at least 10 years. This is due to the management practices of the WRD, the lack of significant geologic separation between Management Areas A, B, and C, and the lack of significant pumping in Management Areas B and C in the last 40 years.

On December 16, 2016, WRD submitted the Alternative to the California Department of Water Resources on behalf of the Parties. The Alternative includes information that demonstrates that the Central Basin has been operating sustainably due to sustainable management practices, provides measureable objectives and metrics to anticipate undesirable effects of groundwater conditions throughout the basin, and plans for installation of monitoring wells to oversee the need for additional actions in the future.

In order to obtain approval and to implement the items outlined in the Alternative, staff recommends

the City Council authorize the City Manager to execute the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which is intended to facilitate a cooperative relationship among the Parties to coordinate and share groundwater monitoring data. Data could include CASGEM Monitoring Well Data and other data collected by the Parties for the purposes of groundwater resource investigations.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

At this time, the costs are primarily staff time. In the future, costs could include data collection.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Central Basin Alternative Memorandum of Understanding and Exhibit A

MOTION

That the City Council:

1. Approve a Memorandum of Understanding related to the City's role for the implementation of the sustainable groundwater management act;
2. Authorize the City Attorney to review/prepare the necessary documents;
3. Authorize the City Manager to execute such documents on behalf of the City; and
4. Designate the Public Works Director/City Engineer or his designee to represent the City regarding the Alternative Analysis.