

Salinas Valley Water Coalition



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COST ALLOCATION COMMITTEE

The Board of Directors of the Monterey County Water Resources Agency appointed a Cost Allocation Committee at its July 23rd board meeting. The Cost Allocation Committee will be charged with developing a framework for identification of benefits and allocation of costs associated with the Salinas Valley Water Project.

In addition, Agency General Manager Curtis Weeks recommended that the Committee also be charged with revising the water standby and availability charges for Zones 2 and 2A. Curtis stated that with the SVWP relying on the modifications to Nacimiento dam and the re-operations of the reservoirs to supply additional water, it is appropriate to combine the Zones 2 and 2A reconfiguration into a single super zone along with the SVWP cost allocation.

Hurray --- this is something the Salinas Valley Water Coalition has worked long and hard toward ---and the work is not completed.

The following is a list of individuals appointed to the Cost Allocation Committee:

Nancy Isakson, Rich Smith, Steve Jensen, Jim Manassero, Bob Martin, Don Chapin Jr., Bob Antle, Chris Bunn, Greg O'Neal, Arvid Myhre, Mary Orradre (asked), Roger Moitoso, Ft. Ord Reuse Authority, Jan Collins, Jim Smith, Mike Armstrong for the

Marina Coast Water District, Matt Gourley (Mayor of Gonzales) and Carl Chase.

The Committee will begin meeting in September and is scheduled to meet once a month for a period of nine months. Ken Wiseman will be the facilitator for the Committee and Lyndel Melton will provide technical support. We believe it is a good group of individuals representing a good cross-section of the urban and ag community – and we feel assured that all issues will be placed on the table and openly discussed. We are hopeful that a resolution can be achieved so the restructuring of Zones 2/2A may take place as well as the successful implementation of the Salinas Valley Water Project.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ADOPT ZONE 2/2A ASSESSMENTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2001-02 --- MODIFIED!

The Board of Supervisors of Monterey County and the Monterey County Water Resources Agency, held a public hearing on July 24th to consider adoption of Zone 2 and 2A water standby and availability charges (WSAC) for the upcoming fiscal year – 2001-02. Curtis Weeks, General Manager of MCWRA, recommended to the Board of Supervisors that they adopt WSAC that represented *no change* in the rates over amounts that have been historically imposed exclusively for operations and maintenance.

Supervisor Lou Calcagno proposed a modification to continuing to impose Zone 2/2A WSAC in the same manner they have been historically. He proposed that if the Agency's recently formed Cost Allocation Committee develops a different form of assessment and/or methodology by which Zone 2/2A assessments can be applied, and if this recommended change is approved by the voters, then the Board of Supervisors could **modify** the WSAC and the change could be implemented before the end of the fiscal year. Adrienne Grover, County Counsel, informed the Board of Supervisors that they could do this as long as they included language within the adopted WSAC stating their intent. Supervisor Calcagno asked that the Cost Allocation Committee's recommended WSAC for Zone 2/2A be brought before the Supervisors before the end of the year. **Zone 2 and 2A water standby and availability charges for fiscal year 2001-02 were adopted unanimously by the Board of Supervisors with the proposed language that would allow them to be modified.**

Thank you Supervisor Calcagno for your leadership and willingness to make changes that can lead to a true resolution of the various issues in the Salinas Valley water basin.

**AD-HOC GROUP SUBMITS
RECOMMENDATIONS TO
MCWRA**

For the past 18 months, a group of individuals have met to discuss issues surrounding Zones 2/2A. Initially, there were six individuals and six alternates representing six water use groups as identified by Judge Richard Silver in a Committee to which he gave a specific purpose in conjunction with litigation before his court.

The group's origin came from language Judge Silver included in his Order in the *Orradre et al. vs Monterey County Water Resources Agency* litigation:

"(t)he Assessment Committee shall have principal responsibility for the development of a new and proportional form of assessment(s) to replace the Agency's existing Zone 2 and 2A water standby charges. The Assessment Committee shall identify an area or areas within the Salinas Valley which can be properly and legally assessed because such area is specifically benefited by the Agency's activities of releasing water from the upstream reservoirs and other reservoir related benefits and shall develop a new and proportional form of assessment(s) to be based upon the degree of water benefit conferred. Any proposed assessment may be proposed in the form of a charge or fee that the Agency may collect under the exercise of its authority to impose fees and charges under the Agency Act. In considering a new form of assessment(s), the Assessment Committee shall take into account the extent to which the Agency makes water available to the assessed land, the reduction of overdraft, the prevention of seawater intrusion, and any other water availability, flood control, quality and other benefits conferred on the assessed lands."

As the "Assessment Committee," prepared to meet, one of the six initial members representing the plaintiffs in the case decided not to participate with the group. The remaining representatives were individuals who have actively participated in various County processes over the past several years and have examined and evaluated the MCWRA and its administrative and operational systems. These representatives began to meet and continued to encourage the plaintiffs to participate. Eventually they also decided to broaden the groups' membership. In particular, greater balance was sought by inviting additional urban representatives to join the discussions.

The focus of the group's efforts was to continue the development of a new and proportional form

of assessment(s) to replace the Agency's existing Zone 2 and 2A water standby charges. In this work, the group spent considerable time and resources engaging consultants and working with the MCWRA staff to develop useful information.

This group of individuals sent a letter to the Agency Board of Directors on July 13th summarizing the work they had completed and their recommendations. The letter included the following statements:

"In summary, we began as a formal Committee made up of six members, but we have evolved into a larger, informal group that includes more urban representatives. All of us continued to meet and work on these concepts and issues because **we believe it is critical to the well being of the Salinas Valley that compromise and consensus is reached leading to a basin-wide solution.**

We also recognize that the Agency has other programs and projects that either require comprehensive review or new policies with regard to assessments and charges throughout Zones 2/2A. We would encourage the Agency to view this work in a comprehensive manner, ensuring that all property owners understand the full complement of activities that will be required in the near future; and, that the issue of a possible new Zone and modified assessments, as discussed in this letter, be identified as the **first order of business. It is important that the restructuring of Zones 2/2A be accomplished and that the results be (1) based on good science, (2) be equitable, and (3) reflect understandable and proportional cost-benefit analysis.** With such a restructured Zone and new assessments, the Agency would have the funds necessary for the operation and maintenance of Nacimiento and San Antonio Reservoirs."

The following is the list of organizations participating in the above discussed process: Castroville Agricultural Water Coalition, Eastside Water Alliance, Salinas Valley Water Coalition,

Cal-Water Company, Monterey County Water Resources Agency, City of Salinas, City of Marina, Marina Coast Water District, and the City of Greenfield. The Salinas Valley Water Coalition is proud to have been a part of this dynamic group and fully supports the recommendations submitted to the Agency. It is our understanding that the Agency will provide the letter with the groups recommendation(s) for the restructuring of Zones 2/2A to the newly formed Cost Allocation Committee, so they may begin their review and discussions. **Hurray!**

REGIONAL 404 PERMIT FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THE SALINAS RIVER

MCWRA has asked the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to extend the interim guidelines pertaining to the steelhead trout. NMFS has agreed to extend the interim guidelines pertaining to the steelhead trout for the year 2001, the last year of the existing Army Corps of Engineers five-year 404 Regional Permit for the Salinas River Channel Maintenance Program. NMFS will again consult with individual landowners/applicants on a case by case basis as was done in the year 2000 of the program. Also, NMFS will again allow the individual landowner/applicants to use the same fisheries biologist to perform the necessary on site tasks pertaining to the NMFS interim guideline. MCWRA will have a meeting concerning the 2001 NMFS interim guidelines and relations issues on Wednesday, August 8, 2001 at 11:00 am in the Agency Board of Directors room.

Please know that **no work is allowed in the Arroyo Seco River under the Regional 404 Permit.** However, our consultant, Nancy Isakson, is working directly with NMFS representatives to address this problem and the issues that surround it. If you would like

additional information regarding 404 work in the Arroyo Seco please let Nancy know.

**SALINAS VALLEY WATER PROJECT
DRAFT EIR**

The draft EIR/EIS document for the Salinas Valley Water Project has been released for public review and comment since June 8, 2001. The public comment period will conclude August 28th. The Coalition office has two copies of the draft document available for your use. Please make arrangements with Joann or Carolyn to check out a copy, by calling them at the office.

The Agency will hold a public hearing on August 1, 2001 at 1:00 pm at the Monterey County Office of Education, where the MCWRA and the Corps of Engineers will receive public input on the document. The final EIR/EIS will be circulated in December 2001.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- ◆ August 1st 1:00 pm: Public Hearing on Draft EIR/EIS for SVWP – County Office of Education
- ◆ August 2nd 8:30 am: BMP Committee
- ◆ August 8th 11:00 am: MCWRA meeting on 404 permit and 2001 NMFS interim guidelines
- ◆ August 9th 8:30 am: Planning Comm.
- ◆ August 17th 9:30 am: Finance Comm.
- ◆ August 27th 1:00 pm: MCWRA BOD
- ◆ August 28th – Deadline for written comments on SVWP Draft EIR/EIS

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THE
SALINAS VALLEY WATER
COALITION!**

*Published by Salinas Valley Water Coalition
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