



Santa Margarita Water District

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF FINAL EIR AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CONSIDERATION OF CERTIFICATION OF THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND APPROVAL OF THE CADIZ VALLEY WATER CONSERVATION, RECOVERY, AND STORAGE PROJECT

Notice is hereby given that on Wednesday, July 25, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. the Governing Board of Santa Margarita Water District will conduct a public hearing at the following location:

Norman P. Murray Community and Senior Center
Sycamore Room
24932 Veterans Way
Mission Viejo, CA 92692

The public hearing is for the Santa Margarita Water District (SMWD) Board of Directors to consider certification of the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to California Code of Regulations Title 14, Chapter 3, (California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines) Section 15090 prepared for the Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery, and Storage Project (Project). SMWD as lead agency has prepared the Final EIR for the Project that would develop a new, reliable water supply and storage facility for SMWD and other participating water providers. The Project would be operated by Fenner Valley Mutual Water Company (FVMWC), comprised of shareholders that are public water systems, and overseen by a joint powers authority initially formed between SMWD and FVMWC. The Board of Directors will also be considering approval of a Purchase and Sale Agreement with Cadiz, Inc. The Agreement establishes SMWD's right to purchase water and sets forth the terms of SMWD's participation in FVMWC, identifies responsibilities for Project development and operation, and provides for the formation of a Joint Powers Authority with FVMWC. The Board will also be considering approval of a Groundwater Management, Monitoring and Mitigation Plan (GMMMP) to manage groundwater resources, monitor and mitigate physical effects of the Project and ensure the Project operations will be conducted without significant adverse impacts to critical resources.

Project Location: The Project is located at the confluence of the Fenner, Orange Blossom Wash, Cadiz, and Bristol Watersheds (see Draft EIR Chapter 1, Figure 1-1) approximately 220 miles east of Los Angeles, 75 miles southwest of Needles, and 65 miles northeast of Twentynine Palms (see Draft EIR Figure 3-1). Groundwater pumped in the Fenner Gap would be conveyed from the Project area via a new conveyance pipeline along the Arizona and California Railroad (ARZC) Right of Way and tie into the CRA, which would distribute water to Project Participants.

To facilitate public comments from areas nearer to the Cadiz Valley, an additional location in Joshua Tree, California will be provided with telecommunicating capabilities. The Public Hearing will be shown via video conference from the following location:

Copper Mountain College
Bell Center Community Room
6162 Rotary Way
Joshua Tree, CA 92252

Any person wishing to comment will be given an opportunity at the public hearing at either location. All interested persons are encouraged to attend the public hearing and to present written and/or oral comments. Letters must be received on or before the date of the hearing, or can be submitted at the hearing. Any person unable to attend the public hearing may submit written comments to SMWD at 26111 Antonio Parkway, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688.

For additional information, please contact Michele Miller at (949) 459-6548 or at cadizproject@smwd.com. If you challenge any action related to this proposal in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered at, or prior to, the public hearing.

Document Availability and Further Information: A CEQA Final Environmental Impact Report (SCH#2011031002), dated July 13, 2012, was prepared for the Project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15080, et seq. The EIR identifies potentially significant, but mitigable impacts to: Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards; Hydrology and Water Quality, Mineral Resources, Public Services, Utilities/Services, and Traffic. The EIR also identifies significant and unavoidable impacts to: Air Quality (short-term construction NOx emissions) and secondary impacts of growth.

The staff report, environmental documents and directions to both meeting sites will be posted on the Santa Margarita Water District website at www.smwd.com/cadiz-ceqa-docs. The environmental documents are immediately available on the Santa Margarita website and at the Santa Margarita Water District, 26111 Antonio Parkway, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688.