



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING

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TO: Interested Party
DATE: May 21, 2015
FROM: Xzandrea Fowler, Senior Planner/ EIR Manager
VIA: Ellen Carroll, Planning Manager/ Environmental Coordinator
SUBJECT: Revised - Notice of Availability of Draft Supplemental EIR for the Countywide Water Conservation Program/ Conservation and Open Space Element – (LRP2013-00012)

A Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR) for the Countywide Water Conservation Program/ Conservation and Open Space Element is complete and available for public review and comment. The DSEIR addresses the environmental impacts that may be associated with the proposed Countywide Water Conservation Program that includes amendments to the County General Plan and County Code that would affect water use in both new and existing development, as well as agricultural operations. The proposed Countywide Water Conservation Program is comprised of two components, Water Neutral New Development (WNND) and Water Waste Prevention (WWP).

The proposed WNND component would require that all new urban and rural development offset new water use at a minimum 1:1 ratio in all groundwater basins certified at Level of Severity (LOS) III by the Board of Supervisors (the Urban/Rural Water Offset). The three areas of the county that are currently certified at LOS III for water supply are the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin, the Los Osos Groundwater Basin, and the Nipomo Mesa Management Area. The proposed WNND also requires that, in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin only, all new or more intensively irrigated agriculture offset new water use at a minimum 1:1 ratio (the Agricultural Offset program). The proposed Agricultural Offset program is an implementation tool for the WNND irrigated agriculture offset requirement, and is intended as a measure to substantially reduce groundwater extraction and lowering of groundwater levels in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin only. The proposed Agricultural Offset program would have a sunset provision upon adoption of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan prepared pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

The proposed WWP is comprised of two elements, an ordinance applying to urban and rural development and policy clarifications that would apply to agricultural operations. The proposed ordinance would apply to all existing and proposed urban and rural development within the unincorporated areas of the county where a water purveyor does not already have a similar ordinance (or other comparable program) in place. Provisions to reduce agricultural water waste would be limited to clarifications of policies and implementation measures found in the Agriculture and Conservation and Open Space Elements of the General Plan, which would include best management practices as well as implementation of an educational outreach program.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS: The DSEIR addresses the proposed Countywide Water Conservation Program potential impacts on the following issues: Agricultural Resources and Land Use. The DSEIR also considers four alternatives, including a “No Project” alternative.

HOW TO COMMENT OR GET MORE INFORMATION: Copies of the DSEIR and all documents referenced in the DSEIR, are available for review from the County Environmental Coordinator, 976 Osos St., Rm. 200, San Luis Obispo. Copies of the DSEIR are also available for review at the following locations: Arroyo Grande Library, Atascadero Library, Cambria Library, Creston Library, Los Osos Library, Nipomo Library, Oceano Library, San Luis Obispo Library, San Miguel Library, Santa Margarita Library, Shandon Library, and the Cal Poly Library. The DSEIR is also on the Planning Department’s web site at: www.sloplanning.org under “Environmental Impact Reports” (**Water-Related Amendments**) and under “Plans and Programs” (**Water-Related Amendments**) and at:

<http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/planning/water-amendments/environmental-review.htm>.

Written comments submitted during the previous public comment and review period for this DSEIR that originally closed on May 15, 2015, do not need to be re-submitted and will be included in and responded to in the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Report, along with any written comments received during this re-opened review period.

Anyone interested in commenting on the DSEIR within the re-opened 45-day public comment and review period (starting May 22, 2015 and ending July 6, 2015) should **submit a written statement by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, July 6, 2015, to:**

Xzandrea Fowler, Senior Planner/ EIR Manager
County Planning & Building Department
976 Osos Street, Rm. 200
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408-2040

Official comments must be submitted in writing to ensure the intent of the comment is captured and understood by the County and its consultant.

If you need more information about this project, please contact Ms. Fowler at (805) 781-1172 or by email at waterprograms@co.slo.ca.us.

PUBLIC HEARING: Public hearing(s) before the San Luis Obispo Planning Commission have been **tentatively** scheduled for **May 14, 2015, May 29, 2015, June 4, 2015, and July 30, 2015**, in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, County Government Center, San Luis Obispo.

Public hearing(s) before the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors have been **tentatively** scheduled for **August 11, 2015, August 25, 2015 and September 1, 2015**, in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, County Government Center, San Luis Obispo.