

**TULARE COUNTY WATER COMMISSION**  
**Monday, August 18, 2014**

**Joint Meeting with APAC**

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:30pm.

2. Public Comment Period

Chairman Ishida stated that Carole Clum submitted a public comment to him in regards to the Three Rivers well at the library.

3. Discussion on the CA Water Bond

Denise England, Administrative Analyst, provided everyone with a handout that details what is currently on the ballot for the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014.

Commissioner Schafer mentioned that the public will see in the ballot a bond proposal over 7 billion dollars.

Chairman Allen Ishida shared that he was disappointed with the amount of allocated funds under the Water Shed Fire Protection Bond. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy only received 25 million dollars for water shed restoration and it provides sixty percent of service water for the state of California. In contrast, Coachella Valley got 10 million dollars in water shed restoration. He believed the bond was slightly skewed in favor of Southern California.

Commissioner De Anda shared that they are happy to see that over 500 million dollars are targeted to disadvantaged communities as it related to the drinking water infrastructure and also waste water infrastructure.

4. Discussion regarding pending legislation- AB 793, AB 1739, SB 1168

Denise England stated that this item was discussed at the last Water Commission meeting. As she understands, there will most likely be one more round of revisions before approval.

Commissioner Larsen mentioned it is still in progress and there could be some behind the scene work being done.

Chairman Ishida recently attended a Rural County Representatives of California meeting and they still have an opposing position unless amended. He asked Denise England to place an item on the next Board of Supervisors agenda with the options to oppose, support, or remain neutral. He feels the legislature will approve something and not allow time for response unless the County responds now. Discussion followed.

5. Discussion on Groundwater Workshop

Chairman Ishida stated that one of the reasons for the joint meeting was because we are starting to see movements from other Counties. Examples are proposed moratoriums on replacing wells 300 feet deep or drilling new wells. That is coming before the Madera Board of Supervisors. He shared that a discussion is needed on ordinances the County may need to put in place. He asked the group to identify the problem and go forward to address it.

Jim Sullins commented that one issue is the high rate of well digging.

Chairman Ishida asked how to impact that issue as the County Board of Supervisors. Commissioner de Anda shared stats from the Tulare Lake Basin studies. We have 354 disadvantaged

communities, of that 96 rely on a single source which make these communities very sensitive to droughts and contaminations. What we see are people's wells going dry. Maybe we can think about areas where people are sensitive to drought and rely on groundwater alone, we are sensitive to allow drilling and do not negatively impact their single source.

Commissioner Larsen appreciated Jim Sullins focusing on the facts of what is going on. He stated that most of Tulare County is a severely over drafted basin. What we are seeing are wells going dry due to the impacts that we get in a drought year like this one where we are not getting the surface water that we normally have. We have seen over a period of time that the ground water table continues to drop on the average. That is the overall problem that we have to deal with. He shared that an ordinance may not be enough to turn the current situation around.

Derek Williams stated that we need to enlist the assistance of environmental advocacy routes in promoting above ground water storage. Without storage, there is not water to re-charge. He shared that we need to put pressure on Sacramento to get the long term storage needed.

Patrick Pinkham stated that the problem is that the County needs a comprehensive approach. There may not be enough time so something else needs to be done in the meantime.

Commissioner Ennis shared that some of the things he is seeing in the drought is people going out and buying graze lands. Others are building high capacity wells and putting them into production. There needs to be a limitation put into place until we get through this. There is no friant water. It is going to get worse unless we get tremendously wet years in the near future. The problem right now is that we don't need more farm land going into production and building deep wells to do it when we are already in a drought. He estimated there to be over 2,000 acres of new farm land.

Richard Garcia thanked committee members for taking the time to focus on this challenge. He commented that measurements are needed. He mentioned that wells and logs should have public access so that they may be measured and analyzed by professionals.

Colene Carlson asked how one can limit one landowner from developing but allow developments that still take water. How can that be addressed? Every development that gets a building permit needs water. She advised to be careful when looking at private property rights.

Commissioner Boyer shared that CSET was surveying houses and they estimated that there are 100 houses with dry wells. A lot of those wells are really shallow and he believes it is because there is not water running down the Tule River. There are also situations where there is water well drilling for profit but not necessarily helping the area.

Commissioner Kapheim agreed that the issue should be looked at by region rather than by County. He shared that each County working independently does not make sense. Discussion followed.

Commissioner de Anda wanted to highlight what the County has done in the interim. She stated that the County is doing a great job at handling the water issue on a short term basis.

Maria Herrera, Community Water Center, believes that data from Irrigation Districts could be a great resource when locating communities in need. Commissioner Kapheim responded by informing the committee that unfortunately Irrigation Districts do not have sufficient data to help locate those communities.

Commissioner Larsen commented that several years ago a water resources evaluation was done and it gave the County a good feel for the changes in groundwater resources and they are in the process of updating that information.

Chairman Ishida stated that he believes the Counties need to form a workable group that can come up with an overall water plan for our region. He does not want to move forward with any ordinance without more information.

Jim Sullins asked what can be done about the re-charge side. He wanted to know when the water comes, where will it go and where will the County put it?

Commissioner Schafer commented that development of new land is adversely affecting everyone else and asked that that should be discontinued. He suggested the County put a moratorium on new land development.

Commissioner Brogan shared that the County relies on imported water and that the valley is dealing with the consequences of decisions made in favor of the Delta. He stated that the problems were more institutional than climate based.

Commissioner Larsen responded by saying that congressional action is needed to respond to prior decisions made in favor of the Delta. He believes the answer is water storage, not regulatory reform. Discussion followed.

Chairman Ishida contacted Senator Feinstein's office to set up a meeting with her and other counties in order to have legislation for assistance in solving the problem. He would like to find out how to go forward and requested that Kings County come to the next Water Commission meeting to see if there is a solution.

Jean Rousseau, CAO, asked if all the organizations can come together and pool their resources in order to have more clout as a County, rather than as individual members. A coalition would force using numbers.

#### 6. Discussion on CV SALTS

Denise England asked the Commissioners for comments regarding the report.

Commissioner Schafer stated that the CV SALT program has been in place for years. It was started because the Chairman of the Water Quality Control Board wanted to know the extent of contaminants in ground water. He also mentioned that he is very apprehensive about what they will come up with. He asked Denise England to invite David Orth to the next meeting in order to inform the Board on the CV SALTS program.

#### 7. Update on Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantage Community Water Study

Denise England displayed and explained the new website. She said that the well map on the site is the "jewel" of the site. The map pin points wells in the County and their water quality status. The map is GIS based and will go live in the next couple of weeks.

She also stated that the County is willing to share information with other agencies and is currently working on ways to cooperate with the State.

Chairman Ishida commented that the most important part of the study is that it outlines all of the disadvantaged communities in each district. This is a helpful tool when grant money comes in and needs to be distributed to struggling communities. The study can be used to find which community is in need of grant funds most. He stated that the study was a very substantial project that the Board can base decisions on.

#### 8. Subcommittee Reports

None at this time.

#### 9. Staff Reports

None at this time.

#### 10. Commissioners Comments

Commissioner de Anda extended an invitation to all for the "Thirsty for Justice" documentary film screening. The documentary about AB 685 will be screened on September 25th at Cafe 210 in Visalia. Following the

screening, there will be a panel discussion. She encouraged everyone to attend.

11. Next meeting – Monday, October 13, 2014, 3:00 p.m. – Board of Supervisors Chambers

12. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:15pm.