

DRAFT

PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

Pleasant Hill Community Center, Pleasant Hill, California

Water Storage Investment Program (WSIP)

California Water Commission (Commission)

April 21, 2015

Prepared by the Center for Collaborative Policy, CSUS

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Introduction

The Commission has made community and stakeholder engagement one of its key priorities in developing the WSIP. Their intent is to educate Californians about Proposition 1 (Prop 1), the WSIP and to gain feedback on program development through a robust engagement process involving public meetings, a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC), hearing testimony at Commission meetings, and obtaining feedback through open comment periods. The Commission’s third public meeting was held at the Pleasant Hill Community Center in Pleasant Hill. Approximately 25 residents attended the meeting. California Water Commissioners Andrew Ball and Armando Quintero attended. Special guests included Pleasant Hill Mayor Ken Carlson and Danny Bernardini from Senator Lois Wolk’s office. Juliana Birkhoff, senior mediator/facilitator for the Sacramento State, Center for Collaborative Policy, facilitated the meeting. Meeting materials can be downloaded from https://cwc.ca.gov/Pages/2015/04_April/042115PublicMeetingAgenda.aspx.

Meeting Welcome

Ms. Birkhoff welcomed attendees and described CCP’s role in the program. Acting Executive Director Rachel Ballanti welcomed participants and introduced Mayor Carlson and Mr. Bernardini. Mr. Carlson welcomed attendees and thanked the Commission for bringing a public

meeting to Pleasant Hill. Mr. Bernardini welcomed attendees on behalf of Senator Wolk, and explained that Senator Wolk is available to assist stakeholders with water policy. Following this, Commissioners Ball and Quintero also made opening remarks. Each introduced themselves, spoke briefly about their water background as well as familiarity with the region. They expressed deep interest in hearing from those attending the meeting and the public at large.

After remarks from the Commissioners, Ms. Ballanti provided a brief overview of the purpose for the public meeting and a brief background of Prop 1. Following this, Ms. Birkhoff reviewed the meeting agenda, and provided ground rules and safety information.

Proposition 1 and the WSIP Program

Following Ms. Birkhoff, Project Manager Jennifer Marr presented an overview the WSIP. The PowerPoint presentation can be downloaded from https://cwc.ca.gov/Pages/2015/04_April/042115PublicMeetingAgenda.aspx.

Public Comment

Ms. Birkhoff facilitated the public comment portion of the meeting. She ensured that all attendees had an equal opportunity to ask questions and make comments. Attendees asked questions and commented about Prop 1, the WSIP, potential storage project locations, as well as other general comments about water and the drought. The following is a summary of these questions and comments.

Major Themes

Many thanked the Commission for holding the public meeting in Contra Costa County and sharing information about the WSIP. They also encouraged the Commission to return and attend local water meetings. Others also thanked the Commission and its staff for following the legislation, being open and transparent, and developing structure for the program.

Proposition 1 Questions and Comments

There was a brief discussion about the regulatory decisions that the Commission must make between now and 2016. Ms. Marr explained that the project staff is working to define public benefits and what types of items qualify as a public benefit. She also noted that project staff is working to define what it means to provide a measurable benefit to the Delta and its tributaries. Once this is completed, the Commission will revise and approve the definitions.

One attendee expressed concern over closed-door decision-making. Commissioner Ball explained that the Commission is seeking a completely transparent process. Commissioner Quintero explained that the Commission is committed to ensuring these projects make a big difference for the state and is looking for well thought out and well-funded projects that will make a difference.

WSIP Questions and Comments

A few questions about the WSIP program centered on project eligibility. One attendee asked how projects in Marin County could be eligible under WSIP considering they do not contribute water to the Delta. Commissioner Quintero explained that these projects could collaborate with other projects that provide direct benefits to the Delta or they could look for other funding in other chapters of Prop 1. Another attendee asked if tribal communities were eligible for funding. Ms. Marr indicated that tribal governments would be eligible for funding.

There were also questions and discussion about project integration and partnerships. Attendees specifically wanted to know whether the Commission encouraged integration and how they were going to review projects with existing federal partnerships. Commissioner Quintero noted that the Commission welcomes integration and partnerships. He explained that integrated projects would be eligible for funding as long as they met the program criteria. The Commission encourages project proponents to work together. Commissioner Ball noted that the Commission wants to work towards helping develop more of an integrated water system. Ms. Marr explained that project staff is working to develop a competitive process that treats all partnerships, including those with the federal government, fairly. She also explained they are interested in performing an integration study to see how integrated projects work, which will inform the Commission's decisions.

Several participants asked whether the WSIP could fund projects focused on flood control benefits and that leverage federal funds. Commissioners Ball and Quintero, as well as Ms. Marr, explained that the statute language limits what the Commission can fund for flood control, however they noted that water storage will likely help with flood control. The Commission is also interested in reviewing projects that leverage any additional funding, including federal funding.

Attendees also asked about program development and the metrics that staff would use in the application process. One attendee wanted to know whether the Commission and project staff intend to provide guidance to projects by the end of the year. Ms. Marr confirmed that the Commission is working quickly to provide information to potential applicants. She explained that project staff would begin to publicize portions of the regulations and guidelines this summer. At that time, the public will be able to provide feedback and comments.

Attendees asked how DWR, DFW, and the Water Board would manage ecosystem benefits. They also asked whether DFW has the resources to assist CWC to develop regulation. Ms. Marr explained that project staff is working with these key agencies to determine their role in managing the ecosystem benefits. They are only in the beginning stages of determining how best to monitor and manage. She also explained that the Commission has been working with DFW and the State Water Board to ensure they have enough resources to participate in the program's development. DFW and the State Water Board are committed to the process, the statute, and the Commission in its work towards developing regulations.

One attendee asked how they could learn about the activities and priorities of the State Water Board and DFW. Ms. Marr explained that the State Water Board and DWF will share information with the public after they have completed their internal assessments. Furthermore, as information is presented to the SAC or the Commission, that information will also be public.

Location Recommendations, Questions and Comments

Several participants highlighted the region's push for developing Los Vaqueros Reservoir and increasing water storage west of the Delta and the Bay Area.

General Comments

One attendee asked whether there have been any studies on the fragility of the Delta and how the Delta will change if water is diverted. Commissioner Ball noted that there have been several studies on impacts to the Delta. He explained that water storage projects funded under WSIP must have a measurable benefit to the Delta or its tributaries.

Comment Forms

At each public meeting, attendees received Public Meeting Comment Forms (Comment Form) to make additional comments about the presentation and the WSIP Program. A copy of this form is included in Appendix A.

Key Highlights from the Comment Form

- Only four attendees returned the Comment Form.
- One person indicated being very familiar with Proposition 1 and the remaining three had heard of it.
- Almost (n=3) all indicated the presentation answered their questions about project eligibility. One indicated the presentation answered some of their questions.
- Half indicated the presentation answered their questions about the funding timeline, and the other half indicated that the presentation answered some of their questions.

Excerpts from the Comment Forms

Water Storage Issues

- System integration is needed at the state level to optimize the system.
- Preservation of ecosystems in the Delta and its tributaries.
- This program should have been started 10 years ago because by their very nature water storage projects have a long lead-time.
- Lack of focus on flood control.

Suggestions for the Commission

- Prioritize reduced reliance on the Delta for supply.
- Take an integrated look at what will benefit/improve the Delta.
- Look at the overall impact of the individual projects to assess the possible long-term environmental benefits/impacts.

- Once projects have been selected, provide incentives for early project delivery.

Comments on the Information Presented at the Workshop

- Good presentation.
- There has not been an overall environmental impact assessment to determine the potential fragile areas around the water transfer systems or places.
- Ensure the sound system is working well at public meetings.

Appendix A



Water Storage Investment Program *Public Meeting Comment Form*

How familiar were you with Proposition 1 legislation before today?

Very familiar I've heard of it Never heard of it

Did the presentation answer your questions about which projects are eligible?

Yes Some No

Did the presentation answer your questions about the funding timeline?

Yes Some No

What water storage issues most concern you?

Do you have any comments on the information presented at this workshop?

Do you have any suggestions for the Commission as they develop the program?
