

Council Meeting Staff Report

March 15, 2017

Agenda No.: 7.B
Indexes (Council Goals): BCC - N/A
Presenters: James Alarid
Legislative File: 9136-17

Title

Approval of the Long-Range Water Supply Plan

Recommended Action

I move that the Board of Public Utilities approve the revised Long-Range Water Supply Plan and forward to the County Council for their consideration.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the updated Long-Range Water Supply Plan.

Body

DPU contracted with Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc. (DBS&A) to revise the Long-Range Water Supply Plan. Using the original format and data from the Council-adopted 2006 Long-Range Water Supply Plan as a starting point, DBS&A updated the Plan to:

- Reflect current population and water demand projections,
- Evaluate potential climate change impacts, and
- Assess various water supply options, including the timing for development of the County's San Juan-Chama water rights.

The revised Long-Range Water Supply Plan was presented at a public meeting on November 15, 2016, which had 24 attendees, to the Board of Public Utilities on November 16, 2016 and to the County Council on November 29, 2016. On February 15, 2017, the updated plan was presented to the Utility Board. After presentation of the revised plan and discussion of the comments received from the public the Utility Board took no action and asked that the plan be presented for approval in March 2017. This would accommodate the request by the Pajarito Conservation Alliance to have more time to review the revised plan. The final step, as required by the Office of the State Engineer, is to get County Council approval for adoption of the final revised Plan on March 21, 2017. DPU has received written comments from Robert Wells, the Pajarito Conservation Alliance, Ed Jacobson, and C.M. Gillespie. In addition, staff met with three County Councilors on January 17, 2017 to review the plan in detail. Staff also met with the Pajarito Conservation Alliance on March 7, 2017 to review comments provided by the group in a second letter received on February 13, 2017. Based on input from these sources the following appropriate adjustments have been incorporated:

There were many comments and questions about the need for and cost of a potential San Juan-Chama project. The updated long-range water supply plan does not endorse any specific San Juan-Chama project. While the comparison of water supply and demand does not clearly demonstrate that the project water is needed in the short term, the County has more uncertainty in their demand projections than many other communities with the need to support changes in LANL water demands.

1. There were changes made to the plan recommendation related to the San Juan Chama project to

“continue to examine project options”. Revisions were made to better explain how bringing San Juan-Chama project online would diversify the water supply, and to discuss the potential effects of climate change on this source of supply. Based on the growth projections (LACWU and LANL combined) and the uncertainty of the U.S. DOE water rights lease, the consultants recommend that the County proceed with the project planning by conducting an environmental assessment for utilization of San Juan Chama water. The DPU will revisit whether or not to take the next steps towards project implementation at a later time when demands warrant.

2. There were comments about the importance of incorporating conservation into this revised plan. DPU has prepared the Energy and Water Conservation Plan to meet the requirements of the Office of the State (OSE). This plan was approved by the Utility Board in March 2015 and submitted to the OSE as required. A separate branch of the OSE mandates an independent conservation plan be prepared and submitted for approval. As such, the Long-Range Water Supply Plan did not duplicate content and initiatives developed in the conservation plan.

Based on a question received on the earlier draft of the plan, the plan now includes information about the quantity of water that would be conserved if the per capita water use were reduced to be in line with the City of Santa Fe's 2015 value. The City of Santa Fe's per capita water demand was 90 gallons per day in 2015. Comparing this to the Los Alamos County value in the plan (135 gallons per day in 2014), the difference (45 gpd) would be equivalent to an annual conservation savings of 800-1,114 acre-feet, based on the population projections for 2060.

3. Figure 6-1 was removed from the revised plan (this figure doesn't add a lot of value and was the subject of many questions and comments). An explanation of what this was meant to illustrate is included in the text.

4. In response to the discussion about the lease of U.S. DOE water rights, any mention of the partial volume (983.39 acre-feet/year) was replaced with the total (1,662.39 acre-feet/year), since the County is pursuing a lease for the total water rights volume owned by U.S. DOE.

5. Figures 4-1, 4-2, and 4-3 were inadvertently left out of the draft plan that went out for public review, and they are added back in to the final document.

6. No changes were made to Figure 2-1 (we used the city & county boundaries for Los Alamos and White Rock that were available) or Figures 3-1 and 3-2 (that information comes from LANL publications and correctly represent the regional hydrogeology).

7. Colors of the figures were modified to aid in clarity.

Note that the revised plan is presented in its final form and in edit mode indicating revisions made since the November 2016 draft.

Responses to each of the four comment letters received have been prepared and provided as attachments.

Alternatives

If the revised plan is not approved the 2006 plan on file with the OSE will remain in effect.

Fiscal and Staff Impact

None

Attachments

A - Final Long Range Water Plan

B - Revised Long-Range Water Plan - edit mode reflecting changes from the November Final DRAFT.

C - Revised Figures - reflecting changes from the November Final DRAFT.

D - Revised Tables - reflecting changes from the November Final DRAFT.
E - Letters in Response to Comments Received