

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
CENTRAL COAST REGION**

STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 8-9, 2018

Prepared on January 16, 2018

ITEM NUMBER: 11

SUBJECT: **Salinas Valley and Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) - Integrated Plan to Address Salinas Valley Drinking Water and Wastewater Needs of Disadvantaged Communities**

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THIS ACTION: **Informational**

INTRODUCTION

Item 11 is a presentation by Environmental Justice Coalition for Water (EJCW) to update the Board on the *Integrated Plan to Address Drinking Water and Wastewater Needs of Disadvantaged Communities in the Salinas Valley and Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Region*. The goal of the plan is to identify affordable and sustainable safe drinking water and wastewater solutions for disadvantaged communities in unincorporated areas of the Salinas Valley.

The core Project Team for this planning effort consisted of the Greater Monterey County IRWM Program Director and members of the Regional Water Management Group including EJCW, Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc., and consulting group Nilsen and Associates. Central Coast Water Board staff, Matthew Keeling, participated on the Technical Advisory Committee. Additionally, staff member Larry Harlan and CivicSpark fellow Gabrielle Ostermayer, provided assistance to develop water quality spatial data layers.

BACKGROUND

The lack of reliable drinking water and wastewater systems is severe and widespread in the Salinas Valley and on the Central Coast. Domestic well owners, schools and small communities, with an emphasis on disadvantaged communities (DACs), are subject to a disproportionately high share of the health risks and financial burden associated with such problems. A significant challenge is that many DACs lack the resources and capacity to address their drinking water and wastewater issues, and often there are also limitations to the local and regional environmental justice service capacity to provide organizational and technical assistance and support to address these problems.

In October 2014, the Regional Water Management Group for the Greater Monterey County IRWM Region received grant funds from the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) to develop an integrated plan to address drinking water and wastewater needs of

disadvantaged communities in the Salinas Valley. The funds were appropriated by the California Legislature through Assembly Bill (AB) 1630 (Alejo), from fines and penalties from the Waste Discharge Permit Fund.

The plan focuses on small disadvantaged communities, and communities suspected to be disadvantaged, in unincorporated areas that are served by state small water systems (5-14 connections), local small water systems (2-4 connections), and private domestic wells that face drinking water and wastewater issues. The planning effort included the following objectives:

1. Identify disadvantaged communities within the planning region, with a focus on small disadvantaged communities in unincorporated areas;
2. Identify drinking water and wastewater problems;
3. Develop a comprehensive inventory and database, and create maps;
4. Identify potential solutions for each "high priority" community;
5. Work with each community to determine preferred solution(s);
6. Develop conceptual project descriptions and cost estimates for each "high priority" community;
7. Identify potential funding sources for the proposed projects and for broader regional solutions;

Additionally, the planning effort included the following general recommendations:

1. Increase funding support to address specific needs and related community engagement;
2. Improve the grant funding process;
3. Increase coordination with Monterey County Health Department;

On November 8, 2017, the Greater Monterey County Regional Water Management Group voted to approve the *Integrated Plan to Address Drinking Water and Wastewater Needs of Disadvantaged Communities in the Salinas Valley and Greater Monterey County IRWM Region*. The Executive Summary is included as Attachment 1 and the plan's Recommendations are included as Attachment 2. The plan in its entirety is available at the link below:

<http://www.greatermontereyirwmp.org/documents/disadvantaged-community-plan-for-drinking-water-and-wastewater/>

CONCLUSION

The plan is a significant step forward in that it identifies and evaluates solutions for specific high priority DACs, including detailed project proposals. An important next step is to evaluate whether there is sufficient local and regional environmental justice service capacity available to successfully implement the proposed projects, given the limited capacity currently available to provide sufficient technical assistance and support. Additionally, increasing local and regional environmental justice service capacity in the long term is a high priority for the Water Boards, as a means to protecting water quality and beneficial uses.

ATTACHMENTS

1. *Integrated Plan to Address Drinking Water and Wastewater Needs of Disadvantaged Communities in the Salinas Valley and Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Region - Executive Summary*
2. *Integrated Plan to Address Drinking Water and Wastewater Needs of Disadvantaged Communities in the Salinas Valley and Greater Monterey County Integrated Regional Water Management Region – Recommendations (Chapter 6)*