

**REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN DIEGO REGION**

EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT

APRIL 12, 2023

ITEM NO. 5

SUBJECT

Expanding recycled water reuse projects for the Moulton Niguel Water District (MNWD) (*Mahsa Izadmehr*).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Informational item only; no staff recommendation.

KEY ISSUES

This item is an opportunity for the San Diego Water Board and members of the public to learn about MNWD's proposed Regional Adaptive and Integrated Natural (RAIN) Treatment Center that will expand recycled water reuse and create a new direct potable reuse (DPR) source of drinking water.

PRACTICAL VISION

Chapter 6 of the *San Diego Water Board Practical Vision*,¹ Strategize to Achieve Resilient Local Water Supply, is focused on protecting, restoring, and regulating water quality in a manner that contributes to sustainable local water supply and is consistent with the protection of other beneficial uses for current and future generations.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this informational item is to provide the San Diego Water Board and members of the public with an overview of MNWD's proposed RAIN Treatment Center. MNWD staff will provide a presentation on their plans for DPR, expansion of recycled water for non-potable reuse, and the harvesting of stormwater runoff. MNWD staff will also present their collaborative partnership with local cities to reduce urban runoff. MNWD anticipates the proposed RAIN Treatment Center project will enhance downstream water quality and augment local potable water supplies.

MNWD, as the primary agency, intends to conduct studies on DPR and assess the feasibility of runoff diversion to support the RAIN Treatment Center. The DPR study will assess wastewater treatment concepts, wastewater treatment plant facilities for DPR implementation, and spatial feasibility, design criteria, constructability, and maintenance concerns. The runoff study will analyze watershed hydrology, influent water quality, and climate change impacts to determine the potential for a cooperative runoff diversion from the Aliso Creek watershed.

¹ Practical Vision:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/water_issues/programs/practical_vision/

The South Orange County Wastewater Authority (SOCWA) operated the Advanced Water Treatment (AWT) facilities at the Regional Treatment Plant (RTP) until November 16, 2022, when MNWD took over those responsibilities, as part of its plans to broaden recycled water projects. MNWD proposes to supplement flows at the RTP by incorporating (1) sewage flows from El Toro Water District's wastewater treatment plant, (2) captured urban runoff in Laguna Niguel Lake, and (3) stormwater flows from Aliso Creek. MNWD is also pursuing a small-scale DPR project while simultaneously upgrading the AWT process at the RTP.

San Diego Water Board staff met with MNWD on January 13, 2023, to discuss the near-term and long-term wastewater reuse objectives. MNWD, San Diego Water Board, State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), and Division of Drinking Water staff held a follow-up meeting on March 13, 2023, to discuss the details of the RAIN Treatment Center and the potential regulatory requirements of the State Water Board's *Policy for Water Quality Control for Recycled Water (Recycled Water Policy)*.²

The Recycled Water Policy encourages the safe use of recycled water from wastewater sources that is consistent with state and federal laws and protects public health and the environment. The Recycled Water Policy also provides a consistent state-wide approach to streamline and standardize the permitting process for recycled water projects. The State Water Board recognized the importance of recycled water as a critical water supply for California and adopted the Recycled Water Policy on February 3, 2009; and amended the Policy on January 22, 2013, and December 11, 2018. Recycled Water Policy, as amended, provides requirements regarding the methodology and criteria for the Regional Water Boards to use when issuing permits for recycled water projects. The Recycled Water Policy also allows for the reuse of recycled water to provide water to a public water system.

The State Water Board also recognizes that stormwater is typically lower in nutrients and salts and can be used to augment local water supplies. The inclusion of significant stormwater uses and recharge components in local water supply projects can play a vital role in the long-term sustainable use of water in California. The inclusion of stormwater recharge is consistent with the California Water Plan and the State Water Board's *Strategic Planning for Storm Water Resource Management and Program Improvement*, as adopted in State Water Board Resolution No. 2016-0003.³

² The Recycled Water Policy can be found at the following webpage:
https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2018/121118_7_final_amendment_oal.pdf

³ State Water Board Resolution No. 2016-0003 can be found at the following webpage:
https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2016/rs2016_0003_with_strategy.pdf

PUBLIC NOTICE

The agenda notice for today's meeting was posted on the San Diego Water Board's website and sent to subscribers to the email list for Board meetings. This satisfies the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act requirements to publish the meeting notice and agenda.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

None.