



**Desalination Task Force**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**7:00 p.m. - Wednesday, March 21, 2012**  
**Soquel Creek Water District Board Room**  
**5180 Soquel Drive Soquel, CA 95073**

## **Agenda**

*The Desalination Task Force consists of two members of the Soquel Creek Water District Board and two members of the City of Santa Cruz City Council.*

### **Call to Order**

### **Roll Call**

**Presentation** *Organized groups may make presentations to the Desalination Task Force. Presentations that require more than three minutes should be scheduled in advance with staff from the City of Santa Cruz Water Department or the Soquel Creek Water District.*

**Statements of Disqualification** *Section 607 of the City Charter states that "...All members present at any meeting must vote unless disqualified, in which case the disqualification shall be publicly declared and a record thereof made."*

### **Oral Communications**

**Announcements** *No action shall be taken on this item.*

*The Chair may announce and set time limits at the beginning of each agenda item.*

### **Approval of Minutes (Pages 4-6)**

**Recommendation:** *Motion to approve the minutes of the February 15, 2012 Desalination Task Force meeting.*

**Information Items (Page 7)** *No action will be taken on this item.*

1. Environmental Impact Report – Modified Schedule★ (Page 7) (Information Only)

## General Business (Pages 8 -31)

*Any document related to an agenda item for the General Business portion of this meeting distributed to the Desalination Task Force less than 72 hours before this meeting is available for inspection at the City of Santa Cruz Water Administration Office, 212 Locust Street, Suite A, Santa Cruz, California. These documents will also be available for review at the meeting.*

### 1. **scwd**<sup>2</sup> Desalination Task Force – Work Plan and Schedule. ☆ (Page 8-10)

Recommendation: That the **scwd**<sup>2</sup> Desalination Task Force agree on outstanding tasks to fulfill its purpose under the Memorandum of Agreement and a tentative schedule for undertaking and completing those tasks.

### 2. Energy Study Status Report, No. 9 ☆ (Pages 11-12)

Recommendation: That the **scwd**<sup>2</sup> Desalination Task Force receive the ninth Energy Study status report and support the staff recommendation that the project be designed and operated with no net increase with regards to indirect greenhouse gases.

### 3. **scwd**<sup>2</sup> Desalination Program Annual Budget ☆ (Pages 13-14)

Recommendation: That the **scwd**<sup>2</sup> Desalination Task Force review and recommend approval of 2013 Fiscal Year Budget Estimate.

### 4. Election of Officers

Recommendation: That the **scwd**<sup>2</sup> Desalination Task Force elect a Chair and Vice-chair for 2012.

### 5. **scwd**<sup>2</sup> Digital Community Outreach – Scope of Work/Fee Schedule – Civinomics (formerly Greenocracy Inc.) ☆ (Pages 15-31)

Recommendation: That the **scwd**<sup>2</sup> Desalination Task Force ratify the scope of work and fee schedule with Civinomics (formerly Greenocracy Inc.) in the amount of \$5,000 for the **scwd**<sup>2</sup> Digital Community Outreach project, thereby approving the 50/50 cost split identified in the Memorandum of Agreement.

## Program Managers' Report

- A. Work Schedule
- B. Upcoming Tasks
- C. Additional or Amended Tasks
- D. Contacts with Regulatory Agencies/Requests from Regulatory Agencies
- E. Contracts
- F. Public Outreach Program
- G. Budget
- H. Report of Findings

## Media Articles ☆ (Pages 32-67)

1. News Article – Santa Cruz Sentinel 02/12/12 ☆ (Pages 32-33)
2. News Article – Santa Cruz Sentinel 02/15/12 ☆ (Pages 34-35)
3. News Article – Santa Cruz Sentinel 02/19/12 ☆ (Page 36)
4. News Article – Santa Cruz Weekly 02/21/12 ☆ (Pages 37-38)
5. News Article – Santa Cruz Sentinel 02/21/12 ☆ (Pages 39-40)
6. News Article – KION Channel 46 02/22/12 ☆ (Page 41)
7. News Article – Santa Cruz Sentinel 02/26/12 ☆ (Pages 42-43)
8. News Article – Santa Cruz Sentinel 02/26/12 ☆ (Page 44)
9. News Article – Santa Cruz Sentinel 02/27/12 ☆ (Pages 45-46)
10. News Article – Good Times SC 02/28/12 ☆ (Pages 47-48)
11. News Article – Santa Cruz Weekly 02/28/12 ☆ (Page 49)
12. News Article – Santa Cruz Weekly 02/28/12 ☆ (Pages 50-51)
13. News Article – Santa Cruz Sentinel 02/28/12 ☆ (Pages 52-53)
14. News Article – Santa Cruz Sentinel 02/28/12 ☆ (Page 54)
15. News Article – Santa Cruz Sentinel 03/02/12 ☆ (Pages 55-56)
16. News Article – CapitolaSoquel Times 03/05/12 ☆ (Pages 57-59)
17. News Article – Santa Cruz Sentinel 03/06/12 ☆ (Pages 60-61)
18. News Article – Santa Cruz Sentinel 03/07/12 ☆ (Pages 62-64)
19. News Article – Santa Cruz Sentinel 03/12/12 ☆ (Pages 65-66)
20. News Article – Santa Cruz Sentinel 03/13/12 ☆ (Page 67)

## Items Initiated by Members for Future Agendas

### Adjournment

The next regular meeting of the Desalination Task Force is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, April 18, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the Santa Cruz Police Department Community Room, 155 Center Street, Santa Cruz, California

☆ indicates materials included in packet

All information furnished to the scwd2 Desalination Task Force with this agenda is available at <http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/index.aspx?page=1604> or [http://scwd2desal.org/Page-Public\\_Meetings.php#agendas](http://scwd2desal.org/Page-Public_Meetings.php#agendas).

Please observe the following procedures for addressing the Task Force on agenda items. All those wishing to speak on an item should raise a hand and be recognized by the Chair during the portion of the proceedings set aside for public comment. Each speaker will be limited to a single presentation of up to three minutes per agenda item (time limits may be increased or decreased at the Chair's discretion). After all speakers have addressed the task force, the task force will deliberate and take action. Additional public comment will not be allowed during the deliberation unless the Chair specifically calls on someone in the audience.

Disability Access – the meeting room is wheelchair accessible. Please contact Donna Paul (831)420-5200, if you need assistance in order to participate in a public meeting or if you need the agenda and public documents modified.



**Desalination Task Force  
Regular Meeting  
7:00 p.m. – Wednesday, February 15, 2012**

**Santa Cruz Police Community Room  
155 Center Street Santa Cruz CA 95060**

**Draft Minutes**

*The Desalination Task Force consists of two members of the Soquel Creek Water District Board and two members of the City of Santa Cruz City Council.*

**Call to Order** Mayor D. Lane, (Chair) called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He turned the meeting over to Director D. Kriege to Chair.

**Roll Call**

Present: B. Jaffe, D. Kriege (Chair), D. Lane, and D. Terrazas.  
Staff: General Manager L. Brown, Desalination Program Coordinator H. Luckenbach, Assistant Engineer S. O’Hara and Public Outreach Coordinator M. Schumacher.  
Other: Three members of the public.

**Presentation** There were no presentations.

**Statements of Disqualification** There were no statements of disqualification.

**Oral Communications** There were no oral communications.

**Announcements**

Mayor D. Lane announced that he and Councilmember Terrazas are sponsoring an ordinance on the February 28, 2012 City Council Agenda that requires the City to put the proposed desalination plant up for a popular vote.

**Approval of Minutes**

Director B. Jaffe moved approval of the November 16, 2011 and January 18, 2012 Desalination Task Force meetings as submitted. Councilmember D. Terrazas seconded.

VOICE VOTE MOTION CARRIED

AYES: B. Jaffe, D. Kriege (Chair), D. Lane and D. Terrazas.

NOES: None.

### **Information Items**

#### 1. Public Outreach Update – Quarterly

Public Outreach Coordinator Schumacher reported that a presentation is scheduled for February 21, 2012 with the Santa Cruz Neighbors. On February 23, 2012, **scwd**<sup>2</sup> will be hosting a booth in collaboration with the District's water conservation staff at the Aptos/Capitola Chamber Business Showcase. On March 14, 2012 **scwd**<sup>2</sup> will be hosting a booth in collaboration with the City Water Conservation staff at the Santa Cruz Business Fair. On April 21, 2012 **scwd**<sup>2</sup> will be hosting a booth at Earth Day.

### **General Business**

#### 1. **scwd**<sup>2</sup> Desalination Task Force – 2012 Meeting Calendar.

General Manager Brown reported that the March agenda will include an item outlining the remaining tasks assigned to the Task Force.

Mayor D. Lane left the meeting 7:25 p.m.

#### 2. Energy Study Status Report, No. 8

Desalination Program Coordinator Luckenbach provided the background on the Energy Minimization and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Study (Energy Study). Assistant Engineer S. O'Hara presented the eighth status report and answered task force questions. The power-point presentation will be included in the original papers.

Mayor D. Lane returned to the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Public Comments were made by P. Brown and A. Schiffrin.

Councilmember D. Terrazas moved to refer the staff recommendation that the Project be designed and operated with no net increase with regards to indirect greenhouse gases to the District Board of Directors and City Council for review and approval and return the item to the Task Force in March for affirmation. Mayor D. Lane seconded.

VOICE VOTE            MOTION CARRIED

AYES: B. Jaffe, D. Kriege (Chair), D. Lane and D. Terrazas.

NOES: None.

#### 3. Independent Technical Advisor– Contract Renewal (Contract Amendment No. 4)

Director B. Jaffe moved that the **scwd**<sup>2</sup> Desalination Task Force ratify the scope of work and budget with Kennedy Jenks Consultants for independent technical advisory services for the **scwd**<sup>2</sup> Desalination Program. Mayor D. Lane seconded.

VOICE VOTE            MOTION CARRIED

AYES:    B. Jaffe, D. Kriege (Chair), D. Lane and D. Terrazas.

NOES:    None.

**Program Managers' Report**

Desalination Program Coordinator Luckenbach reported that the budget along with report on the EIR schedule slipping will be presented at the March meeting.

**Media Articles**

1. News Article – Santa Cruz Sentinel 01/25/12
2. News Article – Santa Cruz Sentinel 01/26/12
3. News Article – Santa Cruz Sentinel 01/26/12
4. News Article – City on the Hill Press 02/03/12
5. News Article – Santa Cruz Sentinel 02/03/12
6. News Article – Santa Cruz Sentinel 02/05/12

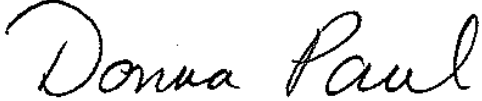
**Items Initiated by Members for Future Agendas**

Election of officers

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m. until the next regular meeting of the Desalination Task Force scheduled for Wednesday, March 21, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the Soquel Creek Water District Board Room, 5180 Soquel Drive, Soquel, California

Respectfully submitted,

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Staff



## INFORMATION REPORT

**TO:** DESALINATION TASK FORCE  
**FROM:** PROGRAM MANAGERS  
**SUBJECT:** ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT – MODIFIED SCHEDULE  
**DATE:** MARCH 21, 2012

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URS Corporation Americas was hired by the City on behalf of scwd<sup>2</sup> in February 2010 for CEQA/NEPA Services related to the scwd<sup>2</sup> Desalination Program. Once under contract, URS began the work of understanding the formidable project-background for each agency and developed the Project Objectives in mid-2010. The Notice of Preparation was issued in November 2010 which launched an extended review period (57 days) that closed January 10, 2011. Project Description was developed summer 2011 following review of nearly 70 comments from the public and resource agencies during scoping. After which the writing of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) began in full earnest.

This project level EIR is evaluating each component including intake, infrastructure (raw water lines, potable water lines, brine water lines, pump stations), brine discharge, and intertie. The technical analysis of each of these components is being performed by other consultants as well as staff from each agency; the work is then being incorporated by URS into the EIR as appropriate. Many of the physical components of the project have more than one alternative being evaluated. All of these factors are resulting in a very large, detailed document that relies on the work of a myriad of other inputs.

In addition, the review team of the Administrative Draft EIR is quite large with members from each of the co-lead agencies in order to assure accurate details related to the project. Collecting, combining, and resolving comments has proven to be more onerous and time consuming than originally anticipated.

Staff had most recently planned to release the draft EIR in spring 2012. A modified schedule is now being developed that targets July/August 2012 for the release of the draft EIR.

**Fiscal Impact:** Staff is aware that slipping schedules can cause cost increases and are doing its best to complete the EIR within existing budgets. There is no fiscal impact associated with this item.



## DESALINATION TASK FORCE MEMORANDUM

**TO:** DESALINATION TASK FORCE  
**FROM:** PROGRAM MANAGERS  
**SUBJECT:** WORK PLAN AND TENTATIVE SCHEDULE  
**DATE:** MARCH 21, 2012

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the **scwd**<sup>2</sup> Desalination Task Force agree on outstanding tasks to fulfill its purpose under the Memorandum of Agreement and a tentative schedule for undertaking and completing those tasks.

**BACKGROUND:** In September 2007, the City of Santa Cruz and Soquel Creek Water District entered into a Memorandum of Agreement to Create a Joint Task Force to Pursue the Feasibility of Construction and Operation of a Seawater Desalination Facility (MOA). Section 10 of the MOA (attached) lists the Task Force's specific authority to oversee and direct preparation and development of studies and plans for a 2.5 mgd seawater desalination project, including, but not limited to, design, environmental review, permitting, providing a forum for public input on the project, formulating an operational agreement prescribing the conditions under which each agency shall be entitled to utilize the project for supplemental supply, and the contractual relationship between the two agencies and ongoing governance structure should the project proceed.

The current status of the project is as follows:

- All studies and plans needed to inform the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) have been completed or are nearing completion;
- The EIR is being written, and it is anticipated that the Draft EIR will be released in summer 2012;
- A conceptual operating agreement has been developed and approved by both agencies.
- An amendment to the MOA is being prepared to clearly set forth the process for review and certification of the EIR as co-lead agencies.

The outstanding Task Force items as set forth in the MOA are:

1. Finalize the MOA amendment with respect to co-lead agencies for the EIR for ratification by each of the governing bodies;
2. Develop recommendations for ongoing governance, cost sharing, ownership and operation of the full-scale facility. Section 10 h. of the MOA qualifies this task with "Should both parties ultimately agree to proceed with constructing the full-scale facility..."



An issue that was not specified in the original MOA is the matter of a net carbon neutral policy. Both governing bodies recently agreed to commit to design and operate the project with no net increase for indirect greenhouse gases. The Energy Technical Working Group (TWG) identified specific projects to avoid or offset greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) including on-site solar panels, energy recovery devices, a micro hydro unit at the Graham Hill Water Treatment Plant, and certified offsets; however, the EIR will commit the agencies to meeting a net carbon neutral performance standard but will not specify the means by which this would be met. Final selection of GHG reduction/offset projects would be made during the project approval phase. At that time, the agencies may choose to pursue shared or independent GHG reduction/offset projects or a combination thereof. Negotiating cost and credit sharing for joint projects will involve division of capital and O&M costs, as well as division of energy and GHG credits during the different operational scenarios. Staff recommends including this item for discussion of ongoing governance should both parties ultimately agree to proceed with constructing the full scale facility. Because projects are not owned exclusively by either the City or the District, and opportunity to implement them may occur prior to approval of the water supply project, the Task Force may wish to recommend to the governing bodies that implementation of any of the projects identified by the TWG be discussed on a project by project basis to allow potential collaboration.

In addition to agreeing on the remaining work plan, the Task Force should determine the time frame for completing these tasks relative to the EIR certification. The MOA amendment regarding co-lead agency review and approval of the EIR should be ready for Task Force review at your next meeting. Whether to proceed with developing recommendations for governance and ownership should the project be completed or defer that item until the project is approved should be decided by the Task Force as well as whether to pursue an additional MOA amendment addressing the matter of a net carbon neutral project.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** There is no fiscal impact associated with this item.

Attachment: ~excerpt Section 10 A through H -- Memorandum of Agreement to Create a Joint Task Force to Pursue the Feasibility of Construction and Operation of a Seawater Desalination Facility

## 10. Specific Authority

The Joint Task Force is hereby empowered to:

- a. Oversee and direct preparation of and development of studies and plans for a 2.5 mgd seawater desalination Project, including, but not limited to, design, environmental review, permitting for the proposed seawater desalination facility, provide a forum for public input on the project and formulate an operational agreement prescribing the conditions under which each agency shall be entitled to utilize the project for supplemental supply, the contractual relationship between the two agencies and ongoing governance structure should the project proceed and similar activities with respect to the Pilot Project currently being undertaken by the City of Santa Cruz.
- b. Adopt a work plan and schedule on an annual basis or more frequently as deemed appropriate. Oversee a public outreach program intended to inform the public about all aspects of the Project and provide opportunities for public input.
- c. Recommend to the governing bodies approval of contracts with public or private entities, firms, corporations, partnerships or persons for expert professional consulting services or technical assistance for purposes of implementing the aforementioned project.
- d. Recommend to the governing bodies retention of dedicated staff and consultants as necessary to complete the scope of work approved by the Task Force.
- e. Prepare and recommend adoption of an annual fiscal year budget for costs associated with the seawater desalination Project investigation and development.
- f. Receive, accept and utilize the services of personnel offered by any of the Parties, or their representatives or agents; receive, accept, and utilize property, real or personal, from any of the Parties or their representatives or agents.
- g. Develop the concepts for an operational plan for the Facility for presentation to and final approval by the full legislative bodies of the respective parties. This operational plan shall include, but not be limited to, policies for determining when each agency would have primary use of the plant, including defining drought conditions and allowing for the possibility of joint operation in order to achieve groundwater recovery following a drought or to address groundwater issues of mutual concern to both parties.
- h. Should both Parties ultimately agree to proceed with constructing the full-scale Facility, develop recommendations for ongoing governance, cost sharing, ownership and operation of the full-scale Facility.



## DESALINATION TASK FORCE MEMORANDUM

**TO:** DESALINATION TASK FORCE  
**FROM:** PROGRAM MANAGERS  
**SUBJECT:** ENERGY STUDY STATUS REPORT  
**DATE:** MARCH 21, 2012

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the scwd<sup>2</sup> Desalination Task Force receive the ninth Energy Study status report and support the staff recommendation that the project be designed and operated with no net increase with regards to indirect greenhouse gases.

**BACKGROUND:** At the February 15, 2012 Task Force meeting, staff presented the basis and methodology for the No Net Increase/Net Carbon Neutral recommendation. At that meeting, Task Force members were given an opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions. Task Force members moved to postpone a vote on the recommendation until both the Soquel Creek Water District (District) Board of Directors and Santa Cruz City Council had an opportunity to discuss and provide feedback. Staff presented the item to both governing agencies as well as the City's Water Commission in late February and early March.

**DISCUSSION:** The District Board, City Council and City Water Commission all voted unanimously in favor of approving staff's recommendation to design and operate the project with no net increase of indirect greenhouse gases. A summary of discussions for each body is provided below.

### **District Board Discussion, February 21, 2012**

The District Board raised general concerns as to how certified offset purchases are actually accounted for in portfolio assembly and requested further explanation with regard to the distinction between certified offsets and Renewable Energy Credits (RECs). The Board asked for clarification about the mechanism for cost and greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction credit sharing and suggested that staff begin to contemplate scenarios in which both agencies share projects. The Board asked for clarification about the other projects recommended by the Energy Technical Working Group (eTWG). Staff clarified that the remaining eTWG-recommended projects are not being eliminated, nor is either agency being restricted from continuing their search for other reduction projects. Rather, projects identified during the Board meeting (on-site energy recovery devices, on-site solar panels, certified offsets, micro-hydropower unit at the Graham Hill Water Treatment Plant) were selected for their ability to achieve the net carbon neutral goal by being feasible, local, cost effective and reliable – criteria used and supported by the eTWG. Implementation of any renewable energy or offset project(s) would coincide with approvals of the water supply project, giving ample time for each agency to continue its portfolio development.

### **Santa Cruz City Council Discussion, February 28, 2012**

The City Council requested that additional information be shared in subsequent presentations about the GHG reduction project voluntary accounting measures (real, permanent, additional, quantifiable, verifiable and enforceable). In addition, the Council clarified that the No Net Increase project description approval does not prohibit the Council from taking further, more conservative measures during Project Approval. (This applies to both agencies; but the issue came up for discussion during the Council meeting.)

### **Santa Cruz City Water Commission Discussion, March 5, 2012**

The Commission's feedback was generally in sync with the District Board with the majority of the discussion around the validity of certified offset purchases as well as the cost and GHG credit sharing options.

A short presentation will be provided by staff to further describe the current status of the Energy Study and outline the next steps.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** There is no fiscal impact associated with this item.



## DESALINATION TASK FORCE MEMORANDUM

**TO:** DESALINATION TASK FORCE  
**FROM:** PROGRAM MANAGERS  
**SUBJECT:** SCWD2 DESALINATION PROGRAM ANNUAL BUDGET  
**DATE:** MARCH 21, 2012

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the **scwd**<sup>2</sup> Desalination Task Force review and recommend approval of 2013 Fiscal Year Budget Estimate.

**BACKGROUND:** The City of Santa Cruz and Soquel Creek Water District Memorandum of Agreement empowers the Task Force to prepare and recommend adoption of an annual fiscal year budget for costs associated with the seawater desalination project investigation and development. Below is a description of the estimated expenses for the project in Fiscal Year 2013 (July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013).

**DISCUSSION:** The City budgets annually to cover expenses (labor, travel, memberships, etc.) as well as the full cost of contracts, even multiple-year contracts, anticipated in the coming years. Unspent monies can be carried over as a way of funding subsequent fiscal years and/or new monies can be allocated.

No new monies will be allocated for Fiscal Year 2013. All expenses during that timeframe will be paid for from appropriations carried over from FY 2012. Expenses will be related to recurring staff labor and associated expenses, and payments made on existing contracts as described below.

**Facility Design:** The City, on behalf of **scwd**<sup>2</sup>, contracted with CDM (now CDM Smith) in September 2010 to develop preliminary designs of a treatment facility. The level of effort expended is consistent with the data needs of the environmental analysis. The budgeted amount for Phase 1 of CDM's contract ("Preliminary Design") is approximately \$1.4 million. To date CDM Smith has expended approximately \$720,000. CDM Smith's work in FY 2013 will include completion of their Phase 1 work and assisting with the development of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) including responding to comments relevant to the treatment facility.

**Intertie Analysis:** Akel Engineering Group was hired by the City on behalf of **scwd**<sup>2</sup> in January 2011 to recommend alternatives to delivering water to the Soquel Creek Water District. Several of these alternatives are being further analyzed in the project EIR. To date approximately \$60,000 of the \$118,000 contract has been spent. Akel's work in FY 2013 will include completion of their analysis and final reporting.

**Environmental Impact Report:** URS Corporation Americas was hired by the City on behalf of scwd<sup>2</sup> in February 2010 for CEQA/NEPA Services. URS' budget amount is approximately \$1.7 million. To date URS has expended approximately \$650,000. In FY 2013 URS will complete writing the Draft EIR, respond to comments and produce the Final EIR. There are several other related contracts that remain in effect and will continue to be paid upon. These include Strelow Consulting and Remy Thomas Moose and Manley LLP (RTMM) (now Remy Moose and Manley LLP, RMM) for EIR assistance.

**Permitting:** Dudek was hired by the City on behalf of scwd<sup>2</sup> in November 2011 for permitting advisory services. Dudek's budget amount is \$480,700. To date they have expended approximately \$35,000. In FY 2013 Dudek will continue work described in their Scope of Work – Phase I, which includes assisting staff in developing relationships with regulators who retain the role(s) of responsible agencies with regards to the EIR; receiving input from the regulators on project definition and analytical approaches within the EIR; and responding to responsible agency comments on the EIR.

**Technical Advisor:** Kennedy/Jenks was originally hired in February 2008 to provide technical and program advisory assistance to the desalination program. Their contract has been maintained through contract amendments and most recently through Contract Amendment No. 4 that was approved by the City Council in January 2012. The budget amount is \$95,000. During FY 2013, KJ will continue to advise on technical and programmatic issues, review the Draft EIR or portions thereof, and assist with responding to comments as appropriate.

#### Status of Grants.

In April 2011 staff submitted the final report to the State of California Department of Water Resources (DWR) for the *Proposition 50 Grant: Test Technology Innovations and Optimize Systems in the City of Santa Cruz Desalination Pilot Plant*. At that same time staff requested release of the retention; final retention payment in the amount of \$198,261.17 was received in July 2011. All obligations towards this grant are complete.

In November 2011 staff submitted the final report to the State Water Resources Control Board (SRWCB) for the *Proposition 50 Grant: Integrated Regional Water Management Program; Evaluation of Open Ocean Intake and Subsurface Intake for Desalination Facility*. Release of the retention in the amount of \$61,100 was requested in January 2012.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Expenditures will be funded from existing appropriations to be carried over to FY 2013. The amount expected to be spent in Fiscal Year 2013 is approximately \$1,912,000. In addition to recurring costs such as labor, this includes completion of the preliminary design of the treatment facility, completion of the draft EIR with circulation, comments and final EIR.

As per the Memorandum of Agreement, each agency shall contribute 50% towards these expenses.



## DESALINATION TASK FORCE MEMORANDUM

**TO:** DESALINATION TASK FORCE  
**FROM:** PROGRAM MANAGERS  
**SUBJECT:** SCWD<sup>2</sup> DIGITAL COMMUNITY OUTREACH – SCOPE OF WORK/FEE SCHEDULE – CIVINOMICS (FORMERLY GREENOCRACY INC.)  
**DATE:** MARCH 21, 2012

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the **scwd<sup>2</sup>** Desalination Task Force ratify the scope of work and fee schedule with Civinomics (formerly Greenocracy Inc.) in the amount of \$5,000 for **scwd<sup>2</sup>** Digital Community Outreach project, thereby approving the 50/50 cost split identified in the Memorandum of Agreement.

**BACKGROUND:** Education and community outreach continues to be an important part of the **scwd<sup>2</sup>** Desalination Program. Over the last five years, staff has aimed to open community dialogue and improve understanding of the local water issues and the proposed desalination project. Holding community meetings, creating handouts/fact sheets, maintaining a dedicated project website, and making various presentations at local neighborhood and/or small group meetings are a few of the traditional methods we've employed to educate the community.

Staff learned of a new tool being launched as a pilot program in early 2011; a one-on-one interactive experience using an application developed for the Apple iPad Tablet. Because of the mobility and functionality that an iPad tablet possesses, an interviewee would be able to view a slideshow presentation during the interview in addition to written and oral communication. The iPad interview was constructed to be as informative and interactive as possible while recognizing that today's information needs to be quick, stimulating and accessible.

Formed by two local entrepreneurs, Civinomics (formerly Greenocracy Inc.) reached out to the Soquel Creek Water District in the hopes that it could pilot test its application with a real project, the **scwd<sup>2</sup>** Desalination Program.

On August 11, 2011, the Soquel Creek Water District entered into an agreement with Civinomics (formerly Greenocracy Inc.) in the amount of \$5,000 to develop the education and outreach content of the iPad application and pilot test it within the service areas of each agency.

**DISCUSSION:** From September through December 2011, approximately 1,000 interviews were given either door-to-door or by tabling at local community events or gathering spots (such as supermarkets, Capitola Mall, or farmers markets) within the City of Santa Cruz and Soquel Creek Water District service areas. The iPad interview tool has proven to be an effective method of gathering information because it serves the dual purpose of educating and interviewing people at the same time. Due in part to this value it provides, Civinomics (formerly Greenocracy Inc.) is now providing service to the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) and will soon be conducting iPad interviews for the Santa Cruz Land Trust and for the City's Climate Action

Program. The attached white paper was submitted to WateReuse Association as a technical paper for its upcoming 2012 WateReuse California Annual Conference being held March 25-27. The intent of the paper is to provide Conference attendees an overview of existing **scwd**<sup>2</sup> outreach methods, discuss the iPad interview tool, and provide a sampling of how information was presented and gathered. The paper will be posted to the program website as a way to inform and educate the public on this tool.

The pilot program is nearly complete with a target to interview 1,667 people. A more detailed summary will be provided to the Task Force at that time.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The cost associated with this scope of work is \$5,000. The City and the District will share the cost according to the Memorandum of Agreement. Both the City and the District have allocated monies for this contract in their current budgets.

Attachments: Scope of Work and Fee Schedule

White Paper: New Ways to Engage Community: iPad Tablets



**Project Name:** scwd2 Digital Community Outreach

**Client:** scwd2

**Prepared for:**

Melanie Schumacher, Public Outreach Coordinator, **scwd2**

### **Tasks**

1. Develop education and outreach content for iPad application
2. Identify methods and locations that interviews will take place
3. Kick Off and Training
4. Results Analysis
5. Effectiveness Comparison
6. Project Management and Quality Control

## Task 1. Develop education and outreach content for iPad application

### Description

**scwd**<sup>2</sup> and Greenocracy will jointly develop education and outreach content used to conduct the **scwd**<sup>2</sup> interview on Greenocracy's iPad application. **scwd**<sup>2</sup> will have final approval on all content used to conduct the interviews and retains the option of altering interview content at any point up until the first interview has been conducted.

Greenocracy recommends 2 joint meetings, one to define the content used and a second to confirm the interview content and presentation. Greenocracy recommends that the interview length be under 7 questions total, or between 5-10 minutes in total length to ensure timely completion. Each question should be no more than 2 sentences in length, with 30 seconds reserved for the explanation/presentation of background information beforehand. Questions can be asked in any format (multiple choice, yes-no, matrix), though use of Greenocracy's "slider" is recommended to capture a wide variety of opinion.

### Items Needed

1. List of 4-7 interview questions
2. Educational content used to conduct interview  
*Including multimedia background/presentation materials. Suggested length 5 pages.*
3. A script to be used by canvassers when conducting the interviews  
*Greenocracy Inc. can draft the initial script subject to **scwd**<sup>2</sup>'s approval or vice versa. However, the finalized script should match the appropriate sections/presentation methods used on the mobile application for clarity and easy data collection.*

Expected Time: 14 days

## Task 2. Identify methods and locations that interviews will take place

### Description

Greenocracy Inc. recommends that in-person interviews be conducted both by canvassing **Door-to-Door** and by **Tabling** at specified locations in the Cities of Santa Cruz and Soquel. Additionally, **Viral Responses** (responses given through user initiated web contact) will be facilitated on Greenocracy Inc.'s website. Viral responses will be tallied separately. Each method is discussed in detail below

Greenocracy Inc. recommends that **Door-to-Door** interviews and **Tabling** be conducting in the following manner:

**Introduction (1-2 min):** The canvasser will introduce himself or herself, give a brief description as to what they are asking for (in this case to answer a couple of questions on behalf of **scwd**<sup>2</sup>), and

confirm if the person in question is a registered voter/resident of the City of Santa Cruz or Soquel (if not, the canvasser will be required to move on).

**Survey Portion (3-6 min):** The canvasser will briefly provide a bit of background information/presentation materials to help the user properly answer each question if needed. Canvassers will have to follow a standardized script for the presentation/question-asking portion of the interview in order to maintain continuity from one user to the next. Users will be required to complete the entire interview in order for the results to be used in compiling the total 1667 responses.

**Conclusion (1-2 min):** The canvasser will thank the respondent for participating and invite them to continue to participate in the Santa Cruz Water Issue on the Greenocracy website. Users will be given the option to activate a Greenocracy Inc. profile on the spot, which they can use to update their answers to the interview, submit comments, answer other interviews proposed by **scwd<sup>2</sup>** (with the consent of Greenocracy Inc.), and encourage friends and family to answer the same interview online. This "win-win" allows Greenocracy to capture the user's email address and create a communication channel for **scwd<sup>2</sup>**.

### Items Needed

1. Addresses of 6,000 registered voters

*In order to ensure the accuracy and reliability of interview results, Greenocracy Inc. requests a list of 6000 randomly selected registered voters from the interview pool from which to canvass door-to-door from. Canvassers will use these lists to confirm the residency and identity of the respondents as well as to maximize canvassing route efficiency. We request 6000 because it is unlikely that Greenocracy Inc. will be able to make contact with each individual and because of the difficulty in validating residency/identity. By having 6000 potential respondents, Greenocracy will maintain some flexibility in conducting interviews while ensuring that the sample is still randomized and conclusive.*

2. **scwd<sup>2</sup>** should select 3 sites for Greenocracy to table from.

*Greenocracy Inc. recommends that each site have a diverse group of foot traffic and be located as far from one another as possible. Also, since each respondent will have to verify their identity/residency, locations with little to no tourist traffic should also receive priority. However, no predetermined list of voters will be needed in this case as the rate of respondents will be much faster than the door-to-door method.*

3. **scwd<sup>2</sup>** Banner

*Greenocracy Inc. will have a banner posted at the tabling site and recommends that **scwd<sup>2</sup>** do so as well. Greenocracy Inc. and **scwd<sup>2</sup>** should also get permission to table at each site from the property owner/manager.*

4. Tag Line

*This is an inviting statement for initial contact said aloud by the canvasser to passing by foot traffic. Canvassers should not show any preference for any particular type of passerby. Sample tag lines include "excuse me, do you have 5 minutes to answer a couple of questions related to Santa Cruz's water shortage?", "Are you aware that there is a water crisis in Santa Cruz County?", or "Concerned about local issues?"*

5. Prizes

*Greenocracy recommends that **scwd<sup>2</sup>** provide a series of small prizes for interview respondents (like a **scwd<sup>2</sup>** showertimer) as this has shown to increase likelihood of interview completion.*

### Viral Responses

Viral Responses will be collected online, using the same content as in-person interviews. Typically, a viral respondent is someone who has been recommended by another respondent either online or through in person contact. They may also be a pre-existing Greenocracy user. All viral respondents

will be required to validate their residency and identity. Viral respondents will be tallied separately because of the possibility of skewed results from the differing delivery method.

Items Needed *Not Applicable*

Expected Time (all Location Method Planning): 7 days

### **Task 3. Kickoff and Training**

#### **Description**

Greenocracy Inc. and **scwd**<sup>2</sup> will jointly train between 4-6 canvassers as to how the interviews should be conducted over the course of a daylong workshop. The script can be developed beforehand, but should be subject to changes as the canvassers are trained should any glaring deficiencies be identified. A series of standardized and acceptable greetings should be identified for tabling contacts. At least one member of **scwd**<sup>2</sup> should be present at all times during the training.

Greenocracy Inc. recommends the following agenda and exercises for the **Training Workshop**.

**9:00a – 9:30a. Introduction and Check Ins (30 min):** All potential canvassers, trainers, Greenocracy Inc. Representatives and **scwd**<sup>2</sup> Representatives should introduce themselves and give a brief description as to why they are interested/excited to be participating in the gathering of interview information. During this time, **scwd**<sup>2</sup> and Greenocracy Inc. representatives will be allowed to question each potential canvasser about their backgrounds, previous experience canvassing, previous political involvement, current and previous political leanings, etc, for the purposes of deciding whether or not such information could potential jeopardize the interview accuracy. Should either party decide that any particular canvasser is unfit to participate, he/she/they will be asked to leave.

**9:30a – 10:30a. Issue Background/Briefing (1 hour):** Potential canvassers should be given a broad presentation as to the current state of the water shortage in Santa Cruz and why their services are needed. This includes the history and governing structure behind Santa Cruz County's water supply, the identified causes behind the shortage, a comparative analysis between districts, a look at some potential solutions (including alternatives to what the water board is supporting), a likely timeline of future actions, and finally a focus as to why these issues have been portrayed as being politically controversial. Potential canvassers should also be allowed to question those making the presentation. Greenocracy Inc. recommends that a representative of **scwd**<sup>2</sup> lead this particular section to ensure informational accuracy and clarity.

**10:30a – 11:30a. Script Overview (1 hour):** A representative from both or either **scwd**<sup>2</sup> or Greenocracy Inc. should give an in depth presentation on the drafted script to be used when canvassing. This should include why the script was written the way it was, the importance of memorizing it EXACTLY as it is written, how to respond to interruptions, what tone should be used, etc. Furthermore, canvassers should be allowed to give feedback on the proposed script without necessarily being able to change it, at least not without the approval of both **scwd**<sup>2</sup> and Greenocracy Inc.

**11:30a – 12:15p iPad/software Overview (45 min):** Canvassers should be briefed in depth as to how to use the iPad and the presenter tools for the interview. This includes how to handle the iPad, how it is supposed to sync up with the script, how to properly collect data, what to do when

the program is not working correctly, and what to do if the iPad is stolen, etc. This is the most important section of the workshop because of the learning curve associated with technology and the expensiveness of the technology in question. Each canvasser should finish this section with a thorough understanding of all possible outcomes when working with this technology and the confidence to do so. Greenocracy Inc. recommends that our representative(s) be the one(s) to lead this section.

**12:15p – 1:15p Break for lunch (1 hour)**

**1:15p – 3:15p Role Playing (2 hours):** Each of the canvassers will be required to role play the interview at least 3 times in front of the entire group to ensure that the script and presentation are used correctly. This will also provide an opportunity to give peer-to-peer feedback and help the canvassers in memorizing how to give the interview. This section will continue until both Greenocracy Inc. and **scwd<sup>2</sup>** representatives are satisfied with the results. This section also allows us to test the desired length of the interview, giving us a rough estimate of how long each will take. Canvassers will then be briefed as to how to conduct data entry and analysis at the end of each canvassing period. Role-playing is extremely important when practicing for canvassing because it helps each canvasser develop a rhythm and address potential problems within the script of presentation.

**3:15p – 4:00p De-brief, Positives and Improvables (45 min):** During this section both individual canvassers and representatives from each organization have a chance to offer their feedback and expectations for the campaign. It is often helpful to deconstruct the entire learning process and talk about what went well and what might work well for training canvassers in the future. Ultimately this part of the training exercise helps to build a greater sense of shared goals for all those involved. The more connected each person feels, the more engaging they will be in their interviews and sharing the information with the public.

#### **Items Needed**

##### **1. Event Space**

Greenocracy can provide a meeting space for the event or one of **scwd<sup>2</sup>**'s choosing can be utilized.

**Expected Time: 1 day**

## **Task 4. Results Analysis**

### **Description**

Once at least the contracted number of respondents have fully completed the interview, Greenocracy Inc. will compile the data for submission to **SCWD2**, along with a written report detailing the important findings of the interview. Greenocracy Inc. will compile a frequency diagram based upon the "slider" results for applicable questions that will be included within the final report. Additionally, Greenocracy Inc. recognizes that it does not own the individual interview answers, as those are the official property of **scwd<sup>2</sup>**, however any information given beyond the interview data will be used for user acquisition and site development. A summary of what can be expected in Greenocracy Inc.'s final report is given below, subject to further requests made by **scwd<sup>2</sup>**.

Greenocracy Inc.'s **Final Report** will include the following:

- Cover Letter
- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary
- General Analysis
- Analysis of Key Demographics (subject to scwd<sup>2</sup>'s discretion)
- Comparative Analysis of each type of interview method (Door-to-Door, Tabling, Viral)
- Effectiveness Comparison of iPad vs. Clipboard Canvassing (see next section)
- Illustrative Diagrams/Figures (including frequency chart based upon slider results, bar graphs of key demographics, bar graphs detailing raw "yes or no" answers)
- Concluding Remarks/Finding
- Appendix of Raw Data
- Appendix of iPad vs. Clipboard Raw Data (prior study)

Items Needed *Not Applicable*

Expected Time: 7 days

## Task 5. Effectiveness Comparison

### Description

Prior to the start of the interview collection period, Greenocracy Inc. will be conducting a field test as to how effective the use of the iPad is in comparison to traditional clipboard canvassing. The results of this test will be made available to scwd<sup>2</sup> upon request at any point during the interview period. However, Greenocracy will be submitting a copy of this field test, in written form, as an appendix in its Final Report. The "Effectiveness Comparison" section of the final report will take into account the comparative analysis of the previously conducted field test to estimate how the results of the scwd<sup>2</sup> sponsored interview might have been skewed, had scwd<sup>2</sup> opted for a traditional clipboard canvass. Furthermore, a comparative estimation of how long and how costly a traditional clipboard canvass would have taken will also be completed and included in the "Effectiveness Comparison" section of Greenocracy Inc.'s final report.

Items Needed *Not Applicable*

Expected Time *Not Applicable*

## Task 6. Project Management and Quality Control

### Description

Over the course of the interview period, Greenocracy will provide regular performance updates to scwd<sup>2</sup>.

Greenocracy Inc. will take the utmost precaution to ensure that the interview data collected will be accurate and reflective of the community it represents. This is why Greenocracy Inc. has made every attempt to be as inclusive and transparent as possible when interacting and negotiating with scwd<sup>2</sup>.

Not only does **scwd**<sup>2</sup> have complete discretion over the content of the interview and questions asked, but it will also have a large role to play in helping to inform and train the canvassing staff. Beyond this, Greenocracy Inc. will also be submitting a detailed report analyzing the results in conjunction with the raw interview data so as to remain completely transparent. Greenocracy Inc. is extremely committed to issue equitability and wants to see the most accurate and reflective interview data possible in order maintain legitimacy within the Santa Cruz community.

**Items Needed** *Not Applicable*

**Expected Time:** 30 days

## **Task 7. Schedule**

1. *Day 1 – Contract Finalized*
2. Develop Education and Outreach Content (including canvasser script) – **14 days**
3. Prepare Canvasser Training Session Materials, Finalize Door-to-Door Locations, Tabling Locations/Routes/All other Planning – **7 days**
4. Hold Canvasser Training Session – **1 day**
5. Survey Period – **30 days**
6. Compile results analysis – **7 days**
7. Submission of Report, Review Period – **3 days**
8. In person de-briefing/Final Presentation – **1 day**
9. *Day 63 – Program End*

**Suggested Start Date:** August 15th

**Suggested End Date:** October 10th

### **Items Needed**

1. SCWD desired Start Date for Survey Period

Description	Amount	Days	Hours	Rate	Cost
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**Pre-Campaign**

Interview/Website Review and Breakout 2 6

Asset Collection 2 24

**Campaign**

Canvasser Hourly Wages 5 50

Canvasser Training & weekly meeting 5 10

Van Rental 17

Gasoline 90gl

**Post-Campaign**

Forum Moderation 45 1

Campaign Recap Meeting 2 3

**Deliverables**

Interview Responses 1,667 \$3.00 \$5,000.00

Results Analysis 1 \$0.00 \$0.00

Effectiveness Comparison 1 \$0.00 \$0.00

**Sub-Total \$5,000.00**

**TOTAL \$5,000.00**



# **NEW WAYS TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY: iPad TABLETS ENCOURAGE INPUT VIA INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE**

## **Authors:**

*Melanie Mow Schumacher, Soquel Creek Water District, Soquel, CA  
Robert Singleton, Greenocracy, Santa Cruz, CA  
Mark Millan, Data Instincts, Public Outreach Consultants, Windsor, CA*

## **Introduction**

*Public opposition to major water projects, specifically the implementation of desalination projects, poses serious challenges for utilities and local governments in California.*

*Besides the time and expense of research, planning and required studies, there is the necessity of conducting a public education and outreach process for the community involved.*

*How do you inform, educate and bring your community along through the myriad of technical and environmental studies that have been conducted to meet local, state and federal requirements and provide analyses to make informed decisions?*

Communication and transparency are paramount for all publicly administered institutions. Public agencies struggle to effectively communicate with their constituencies because they lack an understanding of many important and expanding avenues of engagement; they have become too dependent upon the traditional methods of outreach and have thus become complacent in their expectations', and too often they are confronted with situations in which major community stakeholders have differing and or contradictory interests and understandings. All of the above mentioned problems are further compounded by a lack of available resources to fund public outreach and the generally held public perception that government is inherently inefficient or cannot be trusted. Many public agencies are faced with the existential dilemma of having to do more with less while being challenged to successfully navigate the growing volume of media and communication channels.

The City of Santa Cruz Water Department (SCWD) and Soquel Creek Water District (SqCWD), partnering together as **scwd**<sup>2</sup>, are considering seawater desalination as a supplemental source to their current water supply portfolios. Historically, the local community is extremely politically active. There is organized and focused opposition against the potential development of desalination as a supplemental water supply. From the agencies' perspectives, most water conservation measures have been exhausted, surface and groundwater resources have been overtaxed, and reclamation has limited application; leaving few alternatives to the proposed desalination project. This intrepid resistance to a proposed project that has already undergone several years of planning and technical evaluation has sparked a heated debate within the community that is becoming increasingly more emotional.

A robust public outreach program was established using traditional outreach methods and was looking at new and innovative methods of engaging the public to continue the community dialogue and improve understanding of the project. In the fall of 2011, **scwd**<sup>2</sup> decided to implement a supplemental outreach effort using Greenocracy's iPad interview service. This service has enhanced **scwd**<sup>2</sup>'s existing outreach methods by further educating, engaging and obtaining feedback from community members in realtime. Such practices are relatively new and show potential to enhance the way in which community outreach is conducted by public agencies.

## **scwd<sup>2</sup>'s Education and Outreach Toolkit and Goals**

The scwd<sup>2</sup> Public Outreach Program has and will continue to engage the public on the proposed desalination project. The primary goals focus on:

- 1) Building a publicly accepted and understood assemblage of facts and information that can be used for the purposes of educating and providing context as to why this particular project was proposed based on a thorough review of options and significant prior studies.
- 2) Educating members of the community as to the severity of the water shortage problem faced by the water agencies and how desalination would be utilized as a supplemental water source.
- 3) Soliciting input from the community on major concerns about the proposed project.
- 4) Addressing the misinformation and misperceptions related to the proposed project.
- 5) Maintaining awareness as to how the project and related public outreach are being perceived.
- 6) Educating the public on how to get involved in the environmental review process so their input could be appropriately considered.

The methods currently being used are typical of those used by public agencies to educate the community and to solicit feedback. These methods include direct mailers, hosting public community meetings, local (small) group presentations, contributing to public periodicals and local publications, maintaining an up-to-date project website, developing and using a monthly email list, and developing an online social media presence. With growing opposition fueled by misinformation and awareness that additional education was needed, scwd<sup>2</sup> decided to try something new.

### **iPad based Interviews**

iPad interviews are custom created, interactive slideshow presentations that are given door-to-door, or by tabling at local community events or gathering spots (e.g. supermarkets and farmers markets). These interviews are able to transcend the self-selecting feedback mechanisms of public meetings and social media because they are organized similar to public opinion surveys. However, they are much more effective than traditional phone surveys because of the dynamic nature of the data and feedback collected. Respondents are able to communicate directly with an agency representative, thus learning about the project, critically engaging with the information and answering survey questions. Living in an era of smart phones, tablets, and other digital platforms, today's information needs to be stimulating, quick, and accessible. Visual information is much easier to grasp than written or orally communicated messages, and it resonates much more effectively because the respondent has to interact with the presentation through the tablet's user interface.

Greenocracy's iPad based tool focuses on targeted outreach interviews via tablet-based interaction that can engage and encourage a higher degree of both direct and viral community engagement. In contrast to both land line (telephone) based surveys and direct outreach via typical clipboard canvassing, Greenocracy's *user centric platform* and outreach methodology can serve to educate communities while also developing an understanding of potential concerns and possible opposition. The tablet based interviews are more interactive than other forms of direct engagement because of the dynamism reflected in the technical functionality.

iPad interviews provide an opportunity to address various concerns a particular individual may have and links it instantly to a database where information is stored and sorted. Interviewees are left with a greater

understanding of why a given alternative is being evaluated or implemented and experiential personal connection that has occurred can help foster a sense of trust between the agency and the interviewee.

A brief analysis of this methodology is outlined below.

- Those interviewed are able to directly benefit from the educational experience through interacting with a knowledgeable person, aided by incorporation of a rich multi-media experience via an iPad tablet.
- Respondents benefit from being recognized as having valuable input worth providing the agency.
- The agency benefits from the positive association derived from the individual's involvement experience and input.
- The agency further benefits directly from the data solicited from individuals, which can be broken down for further analysis based upon key demographics and/or particular questions

### **Case Study: iPad Based Interviews for scwd<sup>2</sup>**

While the City of Santa Cruz and Soquel Creek Water District had independently been searching for a supplemental water supply for more than 25+ years, they both developed independent integrated water plans in the early 2000's comprised of conservation, curtailment, and desalination as a potential supplemental supply. Since the formation of **scwd<sup>2</sup>** in 2007, a variety of extensive technical and environmental studies for the proposed 2.5 million gallon per day seawater desalination project have been conducted to fully inform the upcoming environmental review process. However, many members of the public had not participated or known about the lengthy planning process, and were thus unaware of the extent of the prior planning. In addition, opposition began to materialize and the full scope of the planning process became convoluted and was publicly downplayed as old and outdated. Claims were also made that exaggerated the size of the project, environmental issues such as marine impacts and promoted energy use, and the notion that desalination was an unproven technology.

Greenocracy approached **scwd<sup>2</sup>** in August 2011 about conducting a new type of community outreach campaign that would focus on educating residents about the proposed desalination facility. From August 2011 to December 2011, over 1,000 interviews have been conducted across both agencies' service areas. These interviews were aimed at providing information through a series of images, data sets, and interactive questions in order to give context to the proposed project.

**scwd<sup>2</sup>** and Greenocracy jointly developed the content for the iPad based interviews in early September. The interview was constructed to be as informative and interactive as possible, to take full advantage of the iPad as an outreach tool. The final result came to resemble a sort of interactive slideshow presentation, complete with images and figures to supplement the information being presented and including a total of 9 questions to gain data and feedback from the interviewee.

The interview includes asking respondents about their previous knowledge of the existing water supply and the shortage problems (Figure 1). A brief overview was then given to those respondents who had not been aware of the existing water supplies and the water shortage problems. Many pictures and graphics were used to illustrate these points further. Following these informational slides, respondents were then

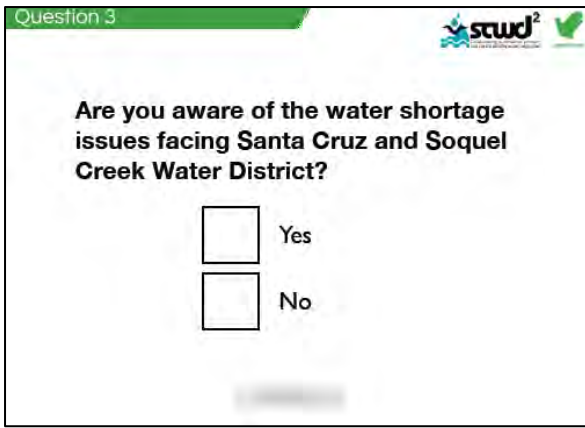


Figure 1

stimulated interviewees to think critically about their own water impact and what they could do to reduce their use and (b) scwd<sup>2</sup> received feedback to gauge the community’s acceptance to implement and/or expand conservation programs.

Figure 3 is an example of one of the graphics used to illustrate how seawater intrusion can occur, which was used to educate about the technical aspects of how seawater contamination can occur when a groundwater is overdrafted.

The final questions focused on common concerns with desalination, namely the energy requirements and effects on the environment. Both of these impacts were accompanied by educational material that put the scope of the project into perspective. For example, to

asked about their own personal habits, including how much water they felt they conserved using a slider bar response (Figure 2) and what further conservation measures they would be willing to implement. These types of questions provided dual benefits: (a) it

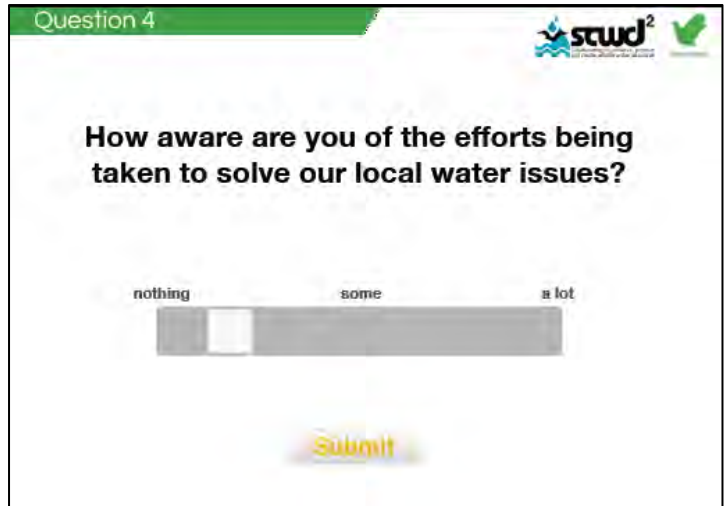


Figure 2

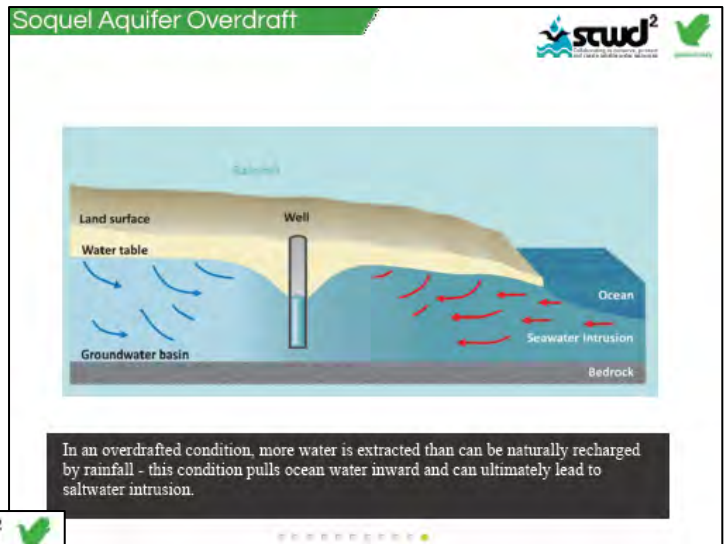


Figure 3

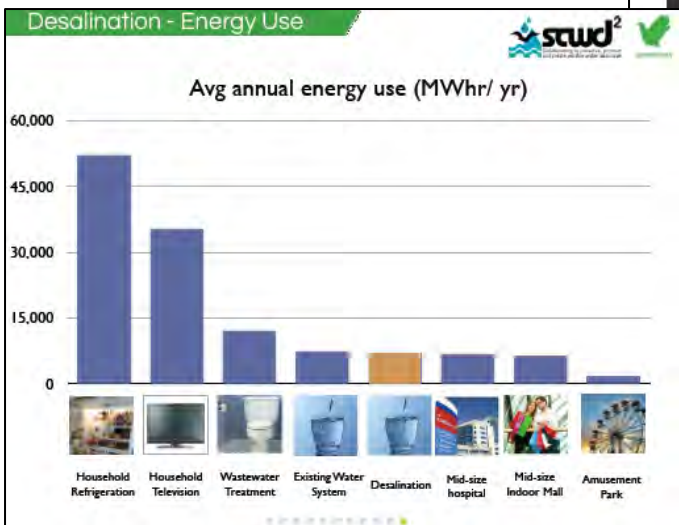


Figure 4

illustrate the relative energy intensity, a graph was shown (Figure 4) that compared the energy use of desalination with household appliances and televisions, as well as a mid-size hospital and a local data center. Furthermore, the slideshow provided images to use as touchstones of information related to brine handling, use of small-slotted intake screens to reduce marine impacts, and the size and scale of the project, Which is much different than the common image of massive plants in the Middle East. These

slides were structured specifically to put the scope of the project within the context of other community services with which the respondents would likely be familiar. The purpose was to clarify misinformation about the project scope that may have been exaggerated or misrepresented.

## Results and Summarizing Information Gathered

*The iPad based interviews are fundamentally different than other forms of outreach because they can serve the dual purposes of educating and surveying people at the same time.*

### ***As an Educational Tool***

The iPad serves to educate people more effectively than existing methods because it incorporates the use of images and video, is very interactive and the interviews are carried out in person.

Many people are not as receptive to orally communicated information as they are to pictures, so the iPad has an inherent edge over traditional methods in that respect. Furthermore, much of the information presented in print or during public meetings is lost on the community at large. When used in conjunction with an orally communicated interview, the information tends to be synthesized more than once because it is not just heard, it is also seen.

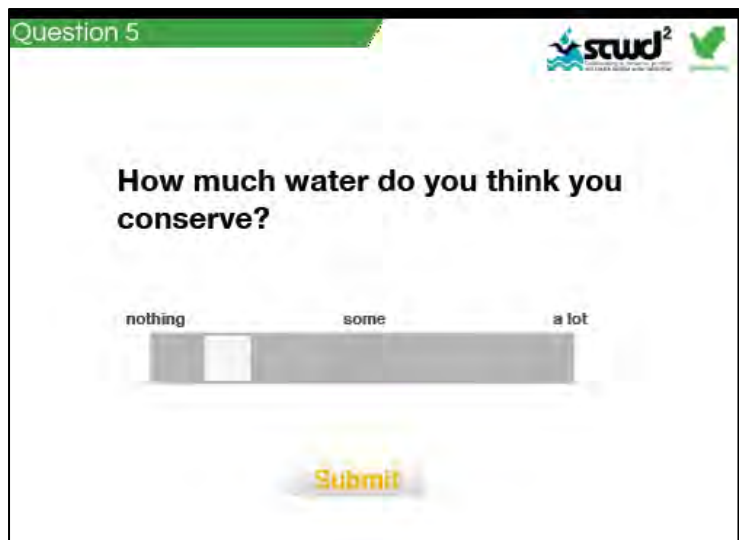
The interviews are also much more effective than other impersonal means of outreach because the respondent is forced to engage with another person. So not only do they hear and see the information, but they also have the ability to ask questions and share the interaction. These encounters serve to both enhance the educational aspects of the presentation and develop a personal connection between the respondent and the agency. The physical presence of the agency’s representative fosters a sense of lasting trust that would have otherwise been lost over the phone or through a mailer.

Furthermore, the iPad application is connected to a backend database so it eliminates the need for manual data entry, saving public agencies time and money.

### ***As a Feedback or Survey Tool***

The primary reason that iPad based interviews are an effective surveying/feedback technique is that they allow for the respondents to answer each question more directly and in line with their preferences. Specifically, Greenocracy’s tool employs the use of its “slider” (Figure 5), to allow people to answer on a continuum, rather than a simple “yes” or “no”, or in some defined set of categories. The slider helps to gauge “how likely”, or “how much” preferences on a scale between 1 and 100. Not only does this offer the respondent more flexibility in how they answer, but the public agency benefits from having a more accurate approximation of how a particular respondent feels.

The data generated can also be broken down upon a continuum for further analysis based upon intervals. For instance, if a question asks



**Figure 5**

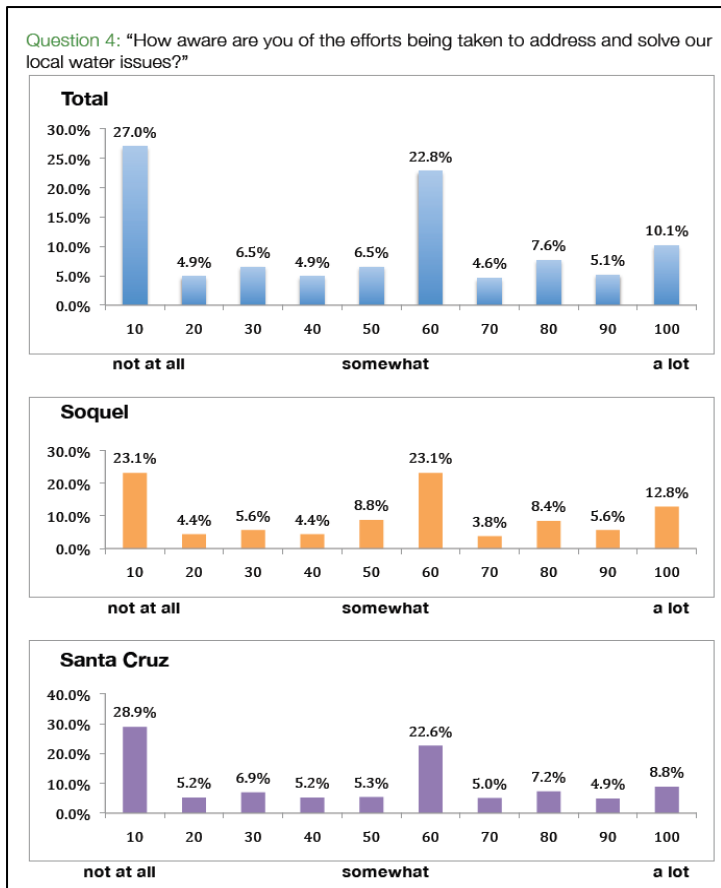


Figure 6

a respondent how much they feel they conserve, the individual could answer between “little to nothing” and “a lot”. If they place the slider closer towards the “a lot” side of the spectrum, e.g. 65/100, then the iPad would automatically record that answer as being in the interval 60-70, however the intervals can be constructed to be as small or as large as deemed necessary. The data generated is then mapped out on a scatter plot for further analysis (Figure 6).

Given the sheer depth and dynamism reflected in the iPad functionality, it is an optimal tool for use by public agencies for community engagement. It both educates and can be used for public opinion polling more effectively than traditional methods. It also has the ability to create a more personable and interactive experience that is enjoyable to the respondent and valuable to the agency. Information can easily be summarized and analyzed from both “yes/no” as well as “slider” responses that can help us gauge and adjust our education and outreach appropriately.

### What Did We Learn?

The iPad interview tool has proven to be quite an asset for our scwd<sup>2</sup> Public Outreach Program. Interviewees did not seem to shy away and avoid eye contact as is often typical with clipboard/traditional surveys possibly because they were intrigued with the hardware and technology being used. Other benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Quick Results – As more community members were interviewed, we could quickly adjust the information and messaging to adapt and provide information as feedback was submitted. For example, if information on brine disposal was difficult for interviewees to understand, we were able to go in and edit the presentation with new graphics and new text and then reload these back onto the iPad application.
- Engaging Experience – As stated above, the one-on-one experience with the interviewee and interviewer allowed a connection to be established and a heightened level of engagement not just during the interview but hopefully after. It was clearly visible that many of those interviewed enjoyed hearing about the project and appreciated providing their response to help inform the agencies on their viewpoint.
- Information can be streamlined into summary charts – Data is collected electronically which eliminates the need to transcribe and enter in the information taken as is often the case with

traditional clipboard surveys. This reduces processing time and can more efficiently provide feedback to the agencies.

For **scwd**<sup>2</sup>, we learned that, although some people in Santa Cruz and Soquel Creek Water District are not sold on desalination as the solution to augmenting their water supply, they indeed believe we should continue studying and evaluating the potential impacts. This is helpful as we move forward with the project and the upcoming release of the draft Environmental Impact Report.

### **Future Steps**

A potential next step for continued outreach and education regarding the **scwd**<sup>2</sup> project may be participation in Greenocracy's interactive web portal as a way of staying connected with the community. The web portal is currently in development and is expected to be fully functional as early as spring 2012. Once in place, it can be used in addition to **scwd**<sup>2</sup>'s existing website to engage comments and questions around the project and other water-related issues. Similar to social media networks, community members will be able to post questions and initiate a dialogue with others in the community. While much of the exchange is fostered amongst the portal users, **scwd**<sup>2</sup> has the ability to provide factual data to correct misperceptions and act as a source of information rather than a direct advocate. Through the process of social learning and interaction, users will be forced to think critically about the information that is being presented.

### **Conclusion**

After 25+ years of looking for a supplemental supply project and two unanimously adopted integrated water plans that identified conservation, curtailment, and desalination as the preferred supplemental supply project to further study, it was imperative to implement a **scwd**<sup>2</sup> public outreach program to educate the community and foster ongoing trust based on transparency and facts. While the **scwd**<sup>2</sup> public outreach toolkit contains traditional methods to ensure that community members have the opportunity to access multiple layers of information, it has proven to be viable and also valuable to additionally include the iPad based interview tool. The iPad based interviews are fundamentally different than other forms of outreach because they can serve the dual purposes of educating the community with facts and information as well as simultaneously receive input and comments.

## Group kicks off campaign to put desal before Santa Cruz voters

[By Cathy Kelly - Santa Cruz Sentinel](#)

Posted: 02/12/2012 06:28:59 PM PST



Santa Cruz residents sign petitions to put the desal plant up for a vote crowd into India Joze restaurant Sunday. (Dan Coyro/Sentinel Dan Coyro/Sentinel Dan Coyro/Sentinel)

SANTA CRUZ - Organizers of a ballot measure designed to put a planned desalination plant to a vote are set to begin circulating petitions around the city.

About 100 people attended a kickoff party Sunday for a drive to place a measure on the November ballot that would require Santa Cruz city leaders to obtain voter approval before the desal plant is built.

If passed by a majority of city voters, the measure would amend the city's charter to ensure the city "does not approve, permit or fund a desalination plant without voter approval." The amendment also would bar the city from incurring debt for the controversial project.

Rick Longinotti, a desal opponent and member of the initiative's steering committee, told the crowd assembled at India Joze restaurant that they would need about 5,500 signatures, or about 15 percent of city voters, by May to get on the ballot. Sunday's event served to sign up petition volunteers.

The measure, dubbed the Right to Vote on Desalination, does not take a position on whether a desalination plant is a good idea, he said. But he believes voters should be able to decide.

"We're hoping to pick up support of people who haven't decided," he said. "It's a whole lot of money and a whole lot of environmental impact."

Santa Cruz Desal Alternatives, which Longinotti founded, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom are active in the campaign, he said.



Richard Stover, who recently retired from industrial development at Lick Observatory, said he came to the meeting because he feels strongly that people's voices should be heard on the important issue.

"I'm very much in favor of putting this on the ballot so we can all have input," Stover said. "And I'd need some real evidence that it's truly needed. I'd like to see a lot more real facts. I've also come to the conclusion that business as usual for the future is not sustainable.

"Water processing and pumping takes a lot of energy. Can they run a desal plant with a solar array?"

The city Water Department and its desal partner, Soquel Creek Water District, have said a desalination plant is necessary to offset supply shortages during drought years. It would be paid for largely through increases on ratepayers, some of whom live outside the city and would be ineligible to vote on the measure.

Opponents say the plant would require too much energy, negatively affect marine life and water quality, and cost too much.

The regional seawater desal plant, if built, would be the largest and costliest infrastructure project in the city's history and directly affect half the county's population. Already, more than \$12 million has been spent pursuing and promoting it. It is estimated that it would cost a minimum of \$116 million to build the plant on the city's Westside.

A draft environmental impact report on the plant is due in April, but city officials don't expect a final report will be ready for the council to certify before November's election.

Georgia Brewer, a Santa Cruz artist, said she came to Sunday's kickoff because she doesn't want the city to "steamroll" a desalination plant through.

"The cost and environmental effects are atrocious," Brewer said. "And is it for the university? You bet."

Longinotti estimated it will cost \$8,000 for the signature gathering portion of campaign, with will include a part-time paid coordinator and volunteer signature gatherers. The group will be doing fundraisers, he said.

For more information, visit [VoteOnDesalSC.org](http://VoteOnDesalSC.org) or call 419-6441.

## Santa Cruz puts up its own desal plan for voters: Council will consider new ordinance Feb. 28

By J.M. BROWN - Santa Cruz Sentinel

Posted: 02/15/2012 07:54:04 PM PST

SANTA CRUZ - Mayor Don Lane announced a proposed city ordinance Wednesday designed to short-circuit a citizen-driven initiative to give voters the final say on a controversial seawater desalination project.

Like the charter change amendment sought by desalination opponents, the ordinance to be considered by the City Council on Feb. 28 also would require Santa Cruz to put the question of a Westside desalination facility up for a popular vote.

Santa Cruz Desal Alternatives, which hopes to collect the required 5,500 signatures to get a competing measure on November's ballot, is asking voters whether they want a future opportunity to approve a plant. The measure also would bar the city from incurring any debt for the project.

Lane and fellow Councilmember David Terrazas, who sit on a regional desalination task force, said in a statement that they proposed the ordinance because "there is strong community consensus that the voters should have the opportunity to make the call on how Santa Cruz will address our need for long-term drought protection and protection of coastal aquifers."

The pair are concerned the charter change amendment would tie citizens' hands in that it wouldn't allow a yes-or-no vote on the plant until 2014, the next regularly scheduled election. And it would cost the city at least \$50,000 in election-related costs.

"I just don't think that initiative is necessary if the council is just prepared to make this commitment now, and I suspect that it is," Lane said in an interview late Wednesday.

The mayor said a vote on desalination could come as soon as 2013 after the required Environmental Impact Report for the project, which could cost ratepayers more than \$100 million, is finalized. The first draft of the report is expected in two months.

Rick Longinotti, a founder of Santa Cruz Desal Alternatives, said the city's proposed ordinance will not keep his group from moving forward on a ballot initiative.

"While we celebrate this step by the council, we are concerned that the proposed ordinance could be repealed by the council at any time, unlike the ballot initiative that we are circulating," Longinotti said in an email late Wednesday. "Our ballot measure calls for a vote on desalination to take place in a regularly scheduled election."

Longinotti is concerned a 2013 election would cost taxpayers money as there is no regularly scheduled election.

Desal opponents are also irked that, when they first brought a proposed measure to the city, it was rejected by the city attorney for being too broad in its takeaway of the city's legislative authority. Based on that advice, the group rewrote the initiative as a charter change amendment, only to now see the council propose an ordinance change.

The difference, Lane said, is that the city's ordinance is more narrowly tailored to require voter approval for construction, not permitting or other preparatory steps.

Lane also addressed concerns that an ordinance could later be repealed by a future council, therefore effectively stripping voters of the right to OK the project. Four of the council's seven seats are up for election in November.

If a repeal ever happened, Lane said voters could file a petition to suspend it and then the city would be forced to put it up for a vote if it wanted to move ahead quickly.

The city has proposed a plant that would have the capacity to transform at least 2.5 million gallons of seawater per day into drinking water. The Soquel Creek Water District, which would also draw from the plant, is sharing the costs.

## Bill Tysseling: Transparency vital to desal vote

-Posted: 02/19/2012 01:30:09 AM PST  
Bill Tysseling

The Santa Cruz Area Chamber of Commerce welcomes the timeliness and transparency of the proposal for a community vote on desalination being brought forward by Mayor Don Lane and Santa Cruz City Councilman David Terrazas. The ordinance would mandate a vote of the people before proceeding to construction of a local desalination facility. We agree with them that the community should have the opportunity to vote sooner rather than later on how Santa Cruz will address the need for long-term drought protection and the preservation of its coastal aquifers.

More importantly, contrary to the arcane provisions of a ballot measure proposed by the DesalAlternatives group, there should be only one vote -- not a vote to require a subsequent vote as DesalAlternatives has proposed. And a final vote should occur prior to 2014 if possible, contrary to their proposal.

Water supply in times of drought has been a serious issue for decades in Santa Cruz. The city Water Department has spent more than 20 years researching options for this problem. The realities are that every new supply source would involve environmental issues and major expenditures and that we cannot sustain on current sources alone. For a variety of technical, legal and political reasons, the best solution has been identified as construction of a desalination facility by a partnership of two adjacent water districts. It would provide the Santa Cruz Water Department with water in times of drought and the Soquel Creek Water District with water in rainy years with which they could recharge their overdrafted aquifers.

The shortfall in times of drought -- already a threat to local jobs, community institutions and businesses -- is expected to be significantly increased by state and federal mandates to protect the habitat of endangered fish species. While the specifics of these mandates are not yet known, they are certain to reduce Santa Cruz's ability to draw water from its North Coast streams, especially in drought years.

The measure proposed by Lane and Terrazas would avoid the risky and expensive delay of two elections. Of course the most significant risk is a serious drought which would have dire economic consequences in its second and subsequent years. The DesalAlternatives proposal would also result in the expense of a second election -- \$60,000 to \$80,000 to the city alone. And, the projected construction costs are likely to increase as the construction industry recovers over the next decade, making delay of the election costly.

It is fair to say that building and operating a desalination plant will add some cost to our water bills. Of course any source of additional water will add some cost. Assuming that continuing research demonstrates a desalination plant to be both commercially feasible and environmentally sound, we believe this is simply the best and lowest-cost insurance against an avoidable economic catastrophe. We recognize that we cannot as a community hope to avoid either a serious and extended drought or its grave economic consequences if we fail to develop an alternative water source. We are confident the voters will agree.

## City, Activists Stand by Separate Desal Initiatives

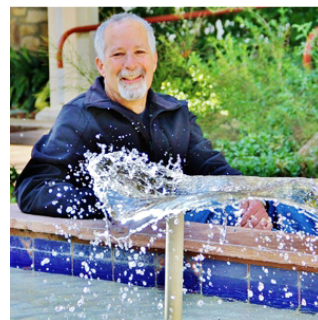
Mayor will drop ordinance if activists' ballot initiative succeeds

by Jacob Pierce on Feb 21, 2012

Mayor Don Lane says November 2014 is too long to wait to hold an election on a desalination plant.

When Santa Cruz Mayor Don Lane read local activists' ballot initiative to put desal to a vote, he says one thing caught his attention. It had to do with timing.

Lane agrees with a host of activists that Santa Cruz voters should weigh in on whether or not to build a \$100 million-plus desalination plant on the Westside to increase the fresh water supply. But they agree on little else—including when to hold the vote.



Lane, who says he sees himself being “stuck” with plans for a desal plant because he hasn’t seen any viable alternatives, says it should happen as soon as the city is ready, probably in 2013.

The original initiative, written by Rick Longinotti and fellow activist Paul Gratz, sets a date of November 2014 for a vote on the fate of the plant, a delay Lane says could wind up costing water customers millions of dollars as material and building costs rise.

“There’s no need for it,” says Lane.

With that in mind, Lane and Councilmember David Terrazas last week proposed an ordinance that would allow Santa Cruzans to vote on the plant “as soon as practicable” after the plans and environmental impact report are finished. The city council is expected to approve the move on Feb. 28. It could mean a vote as early as June 2013.

Longinotti, founder of the group Desal Alternatives, says he’s happy Lane and Terrazas are taking the issue seriously enough to codify putting it to voters.

“I think they should be congratulated for that,” says Longinotti. “If they’re going to try to use it to rush it through, that’s where we don’t agree, which is why we’re still working on the ballot initiative.”

Longinotti, worried that a 2013 special election could hurt his chances of stopping the plant, is moving forward with his own proposed charter amendment. The Right to Vote on Desal has

hired a part-time employee to gather up signatures and is trying to raise \$8,000 to fund that effort. If the group succeeds in gathering signatures from 15 percent of registered voters (about 5,500 people), Longinotti and Gratz will get a measure on the November 2012 ballot.

But here it gets complicated (or Kafkaesque, depending on your thinking). Under Longinotti's proposal, Santa Cruzans wouldn't be voting on the plant this November. They'd be voting on whether or not to vote on the plant in November 2014.

### **Fear of Desal**

If Longinotti and company get their November initiative, Lane says the council will overturn its own ordinance rather than hold a third election.

"We would of course have to abide by the voters' wishes and hold the election when the charter decides," says Lane. "That would fulfill the requirements of our ordinance."

Longinotti says that in addition to his concerns about the financial and environmental costs of the plant, he also has problems with Lane's sped-up process. Longinotti says the city needs more time to study possible water transfers with the Soquel Creek Water District. Those plans would involve pumping city water to the neighboring district in the winter and maybe having that water come back to Santa Cruz during droughts.

The water swap plan isn't perfect, though. Even the county Resource Conservation District's John Ricker, the man who thought of the swap and became something of a folk hero to environmental activists, has said it isn't a viable alternative to desalination; Soquel Creek Water District's overdraft problems are too severe.

Longinotti also fears well-funded desal supporters would take the edge in a special election. Off-year elections tend to draw smaller numbers of voters, so successful campaigns tend to be targeted and expensive.

"It could hurt our chances if there was a heavily funded campaign to target likely voters in a special election that we should spend millions of dollars on a desal plant," says Longinotti.

## Desal dominates Santa Cruz Neighbors forum on water: Opponents wanted to make full presentation

By [J.M. BROWN](#) -

Posted: 02/21/2012 09:41:26 PM PST

SANTA CRUZ - Concerns about a proposed desalination plant dominated questions during a Santa Cruz Neighbors forum about the city's water system Tuesday, another sign that tension is growing about turning seawater into drinking water.



June Coha, a resident of Santa Cruz for more than 40 years, came to the meeting opposed to desalination, but left with an open mind after city officials discussed the plant as part of a long explanation about water supply, demand and finances. "Now, I'm not sure," she said.

Taking on a big-picture topic like the city's water system is a departure from the norm for Santa Cruz Neighbors, which typically zeroes in on issues within specific neighborhoods or at least general safety threats that could affect different parts of town.

But organizers acknowledged that water - especially the scarcity of its supply during a critically dry year like the one shaping up - is a major issue that affects all neighborhoods and will only grow in importance as the community debates desalination. The city has proposed building a plant that could transform at least 2.5 million gallons of seawater per day into drinking water.

A member of the Right to Vote on Desal campaign was initially given permission to make a formal presentation Tuesday, but leaders of Santa Cruz Neighbors decided to "pull back and refocus" the meeting to deal more broadly with water issues, said co-founder Deborah Elston.

"Tonight, desal is part of the discussion, but not the whole discussion," Elston said. However, at the end of meeting, during a question-and-answer period, Elston allowed Paul Gratz, a member of Santa Cruz Desal Alternatives, to speak briefly.

Gratz told audience members other municipalities have closed plants or placed on hold proposals to build new ones due to the financial and energy demands. If a plant is built locally, Gratz said, "There won't be any money left for options for management of demand and supply."

Water officials said the cost of the plant, estimated now at \$115 million, could be funded through bonds or rate increases and would be shared with the city's desalination partner, Soquel Creek Water District. The city, which serves 92,000 customers from Davenport to Live Oak, projects the rate increase per customer to build the plant will be \$5 per month.

Officials still are studying how to reduce the energy required to conduct the reverse osmosis process that desalts ocean water, estimated at 10 times as much as required per 1,000 gallons at the city's treatment facility. But because the plant is expected to supply only a portion of the

city's water each year, the energy required will be closer to two or three times more than used at the treatment facility.

Officials also are awaiting a critical environmental analysis, which is expected this summer after more than a year of study, and are narrowing locations where the intake system and plant would be located.

Anti-desal advocates are collecting signatures to place a city charter change amendment on November's ballot measure that would ask voters whether they want a say on building a plant on a future ballot.

Marlene Majewska, a Santa Cruz resident, said she felt "hoodwinked" that desal opponents weren't allowed to make a full presentation. "All we got was propaganda," she said.

But Jim Mesik, also of Santa Cruz, disagreed, saying he appreciated hearing about the city's water history and why desal is on the table.

"There are more viewpoints to be heard," he said.



## Santa Cruz remains “critically dry”

*Posted: Feb 22, 2012 8:19 AM PST Updated: Feb 22, 2012 8:49 AM PST*  
By Matt de Nesnera - email

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SANTA CRUZ, Calif. -- The City of Santa Cruz is facing a "critically dry" water year, and with no rain in sight, water officials said if conditions remain the same there will likely be voluntary or mandatory water restrictions this summer.

Toby Goddard, water conservation manager for the City of Santa Cruz Water Department, said there have been only four years in the last century with this little rain through February.

Since July 1, the city has recorded 10.57 inches of rain. Rainfall totals are down by about 50%, but critically, stream flow is currently 20% below normal. "It's stream flow that matters most," said Goddard, explaining that the San Lorenzo River and coastal streams supply about three-quarters of the water for the city's 92,000 customers.

Goddard struck a positive tone when discussing the Loch Lomond Reservoir, which is 97% full thanks in part to a cool, foggy summer and last year's abundant runoff. But any ability for the reservoir to act as a buffer in drier times is tempered, as it only accounts for 20% of the city's supply.

It has been a beautiful winter across the Central Coast, and the National Weather Service forecast remains sunny for the next seven days. Wednesday, temperatures in the Santa Cruz area were expected to approach the 70s.

Goddard said if the outlook doesn't change, water restrictions could be in place this summer. The extent of any restrictions would be decided in late March or early April when a recommendation is brought before the water commission and the city council.

In an effort to "conserve, protect and create reliable water resources," the Santa Cruz Water District and Soquel Creek Water District have joined together to share costs associated with evaluating a proposed desalination facility. The plant, which is currently in the environmental review stage, would generate up to 2.5 million gallons of drinking water per day, with plans to dispose of the resulting brine through the existing city wastewater treatment facility.

The desalination plant is controversial. Mayor Don Lane and Councilmember David Terrazas recently announced they plan to ask the voters to approve or reject the construction of a desalination facility. Opponents of desal in Santa Cruz, who propose alternatives including regional water transfers, are also circulating a petition to ask for an up or down vote this November.

## The desal debate: 'Right to vote' taps into groundswell

Posted: 02/26/2012 01:30:22 AM PST  
Margie Kern-Marshall, Karen Minkowski, and Steve Pleich

The considerable financial and environmental consequences of the proposed ocean desalination plant have inspired our group of citizens to gather signatures on a ballot initiative that would put the decision on desalination in the hands of the voters in November.

Recently, Mayor Don Lane and Councilman David Terrazas proposed an ordinance that would commit the City Council to submit putting the decision on desalination to the voters. Backers of the Right to Vote on Desal ballot initiative see the Lane/Terrazas proposal as an important acknowledgement that a decision with weighty impact on voters' and ratepayers' pocketbooks, as well as the environment, should be made by the voters.

However, differences between their proposal and the citizens' ballot initiative are significant. The Lane/Terrazas ordinance could be overturned by a future council, whereas the community-driven ballot measure could only be reversed by the voters. Most importantly, if a future council were to overturn the ordinance, the community would only have 30 days in which to obtain the signatures of 10 percent of the registered voters to qualify a referendum to reverse the council action.

A second major difference is that the Right to Vote on Desal ballot measure would require that a decision on desalination be made at a regularly scheduled election, not a special election. The Lane/Terrazas ordinance would allow a special election in 2013, following certification of a final Environmental Impact Report.

A special election in 2013 would likely have much low voter participation. The last mail-in special election that the city conducted, in August 2008, had merely 28 percent voter participation and cost more than \$82,000. We are concerned that moneyed interests could sway the outcome of a special election by targeting likely voters with a heavy direct-mail, phone-call and advertising campaign. In Marin County's "right to vote on desal" ballot contest in 2010, Kennedy/Jenks Consultants, a San Francisco-based engineering company with large contracts in desalination development including in Santa Cruz, made campaign contributions to oppose the community-driven ballot Measure T.

Consider these important differences. A special election would cost our cash-strapped city more money than adding a proposition to the ballot in a regular election. According to the head of the county Elections Department, a special election \$4-\$5 per registered voter is significantly more expensive than a November election \$1.50-\$2.50 per registered voter for the city of Santa Cruz.

Finally, approving a regional desalination plant -- to be located on the city's Westside -- in 2013 could pre-empt a cost-effective and environmentally safe strategy for regional water transfers between districts, an approach that is currently being planned by the county of Santa Cruz. With this collaborative strategy, the city and adjacent water districts could use water from the San Lorenzo River in normal winters to recharge local aquifers, and then draw on those aquifers and

share water during a drought. James Bentley, former superintendent of water production for the city of Santa Cruz, will speak on this strategy on Thursday, March 1st at 7 p.m. at the Quaker Meetinghouse, 225 Rooney St., Santa Cruz. For more information, see [DesalAlternatives.org](http://DesalAlternatives.org). Bentley was invited, then subsequently uninvited, to speak at a recent gathering of the Santa Cruz Neighbors.

For these reasons, we are continuing our non-partisan petition drive to gather signatures from Santa Cruz city voters through early May.

Margie Kern-Marshall, Karen Minkowski and Steve Pleich are Santa Cruz residents and members of [RightToVoteOnDesal.org](http://RightToVoteOnDesal.org).

## Mayor Don Lane: The desal debate: Let's just have one vote on desalination

Posted: 02/26/2012 01:30:22 AM PST

Opponents of the desalination facility being considered through a partnership between the city of Santa Cruz and the Soquel Creek Water District are circulating petitions to place a "right to vote" measure on the local ballot. Their hearts are in the right place in proposing that a community vote take place. Unfortunately, their partisan agenda is embedded in the specific language of the measure they propose and therefore presents some real problems.

First, the measure contains biased and speculative statements about the water situation in our community. For instance, the measure suggests that there are simple alternative solutions to meet our water needs when, in fact, none of the options before us are simple. Further, many of the specific statements of "fact" are actually opinions that are not demonstrably true.

Next, though the anti-desal folks are always talking about saving money, they suddenly lost their frugality by proposing a ballot measure that will lead to a second ballot measure. This is likely to be costly on two fronts. First, each of the two ballot measures they propose will cost local taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars. Second, they've created a time schedule in their proposal that means a community decision on desalination has to be delayed for more than two years. Perhaps there is some value in this delay that I am unable to discern. One thing I know for sure is that delaying a decision on desal for an extra year would easily cost ratepayers millions of dollars if the project eventually gets voter approval. It is not hard to see that a one-year delay -- which would easily add a couple of percentage points in additional cost -- would amount to millions of dollars on a project costing somewhere in the neighborhood of \$100 million.

Lastly, the anti-desalination folks have set their vote up so that only the residents of the city of Santa Cruz will get to vote on the desal issue. But there are customers of the city Water Department who live outside the city limits and this measure does not include them. Similarly, the anti-desal folks have not made any move to include the voters of the Soquel Creek Water District in the decision. In other words, they have hastened to push their city of Santa Cruz measure without including a process for all these other, equally effected voters.

Fortunately, there is a way out of this.

Santa Cruz City Councilman David Terrazas and I have put forward an ordinance that would mandate the community election that we all want -- without the extra cost or the extra politics of the measure put forward by the anti-desal folks. It delivers a single election on the issue. It delivers an approach that contains neither unsubstantiated claims nor wishful thinking. Just a vote on the real question we face. And because our measure has some flexibility not contained in the anti-desal measure, it will make it easier to coordinate an election with the other jurisdictions involved, if they choose hold a similar election.

The desalination issue is already complicated enough. Let's all agree on a single vote that is as timely as possible and then begin an educated discussion on our water future -- with fewer drops of political partisanship.

Don Lane is mayor of Santa Cruz.

## Santa Cruz City Council to consider desal ordinance: County leader wants outside water customers to have a voice

By [J.M. Brown - Sentinel staff writer](#)

Posted: 02/27/2012 06:01:01 PM PST



John Leopold



Don Lane

SANTA CRUZ - The chairman of the county's governing board is urging Santa Cruz leaders to include city water customers in Capitola, Live Oak and other areas outside the city in a discussion about whether to let voters decide the fate of a proposed desalination plant.

Last week, Supervisor John Leopold wrote in a letter to Mayor Don Lane that, because close to half of the city's 92,000 water customers live outside the city's boundaries, residents of the county and Capitola who are served by the city should have a say in whether to build the plant, whose more than \$100 million cost will largely be passed on to ratepayers. The city's water department said the share of customers living outside the city is closer to a third.

Regardless, the City Council on Tuesday will consider a proposed ordinance saying the city must seek voter approval before building the Westside plant, which could transform at least 2.5 million gallons of seawater each day into drinking water. The council will also consider a plan to make the facility carbon neutral by reducing greenhouse gasses emitted by the plant or conducting offsets.

"We pay for water but have no voice in the decisions of the water district," Leopold wrote. "The non-city water customers represent over 40,000 people, and the decisions that the Santa Cruz City Council makes on water issues have a significant impact on the lives, work opportunities and development possibilities of residents outside city limits."

Leopold said Monday he is interested in having supervisors possibly consider a ballot initiative to gauge voter support. Leopold acknowledged such a referendum would likely be only advisory because it's legally questionable whether the county's voters could bind the city's Water Department, even if they are ratepayers.

"But combined with the city measure, that will give us a clear sense of where ratepayers are," Leopold said.

Lane said the council could consider action at a future meeting to at least cooperate with the county in its efforts to engage city water customers living outside Santa Cruz. But he said he doubted the city could include in its proposed ordinance Tuesday a requirement to put the plant up for a vote among county voters because the city can only call for elections inside its boundaries.

"We're caught between what is legally possible and politically possible," Lane said. "The reality of the political situation is the votes (of county residents) would matter."

Also Tuesday, the council will consider a water conservation strategy related to a proposed expansion of water and sewer service for possible growth at UC Santa Cruz. The strategy could include using fees paid by the university when it exceeds its allotted water use expressly for landscaping replacement rebates and other conservation measures off campus.

The policy proposal is timed to precede a March 7 hearing before the Local Agency Formation Commission, which will make the final approval to extend water service to a portion of campus outside city boundaries.

The council also will consider a recommendation Tuesday by the Planning Department to keep in place limited hours and entertainment for the Cypress Lounge, 120 Union St., for at least another six months. The council approved restrictions in September in response to reports of alcohol-fueled noise and other problems surrounding the property, but agreed to review the case in four months.

During that time police calls for service have gone down and other problems have improved, though there had been an event that drew some complaints. Because of a change in ownership, city staff believe the restrictions will help ensure the rules continue to be followed.

Also, the council could appoint Doug Ley, a managing partner of Redtree Properties, to the shuttered Redevelopment Agency's successor oversight board. Ley, a member of the city's Transportation and Public Works Commission who was instrumental in wooing Forever 21 to lease space in Redtree's building at 1200 Pacific Ave., will represent the city's parking district.

Also serving on the oversight board, which will make recommendations about disposing of the agency's assets, will be Vice Mayor Hilary Bryant and J. Guevara, a member of the city's economic development staff. Both were appointed by Mayor Don Lane. Other appointments will come from the county Office of Education, Board of Supervisors and Cabrillo College.

Follow Sentinel reporter J.M. Brown on Twitter [@jmbrownreports](https://twitter.com/jmbrownreports)

## **IF YOU GO**

### **SANTA CRUZ CITY COUNCIL**

**FIRST MEETING:** City appointments to Redevelopment Agency's Successor Oversight Board, water conservation strategy for future demand increase at UC Santa Cruz, proposed ordinance to create a Local Business Preference for city purchasing, oral communications.

**SECOND MEETING:** Cypress Lounge permits, carbon neutrality proposal for desalination project, proposed ordinance to seek voter approval before constructing desalination plant.

**WHEN:** 3 and 7 p.m. today

**WHERE:** Council Chamber, 809 Center St.

**DETAILS:** [www.cityofsantacruz.com](http://www.cityofsantacruz.com)

# GOOD TIMES

## A Salty Vote

TUESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2012 15:09 LINDSEY GRAHAM-JONES

*With desal heading toward the ballot, the debate rages on*

In Santa Cruz, which relies almost entirely on surface water, scarce rainfall and a warm winter have water department employees and residents, alike, worried about the year's water supply. The recent dry spell tied in interestingly to the prevailing debate over the city's proposed desalination plant, which they insist will be necessary to protect the city from inevitable droughts.



The proposed Westside desalination facility—a joint effort of the Santa Cruz Water Department and neighboring Soquel Creek Water District—would produce 2.5 million gallons of water per day by removing salt and other minerals from seawater and making it safe for human consumption. But many are worried about the project's impacts on both the taxpayer's wallet and the environment.

The vocal anti-desalination movement, which has been led, thus far, by Rick Longinotti's group, Santa Cruz Desal Alternatives, made news last month when it announced the launch of the Right to Vote on Desal campaign. The effort seeks to gather enough signatures to put desalination up to voters in November.

The matter was a predictable topic for the Santa Cruz Neighbor's Feb. 21 water-themed meeting, to which desal opponents Longinotti and former Santa Cruz Water Manager Jan Bentley were originally scheduled to speak, and then uninvited at the last minute.

According to Santa Cruz Neighbors event organizer Deborah Elston, the rescinded invite was because the meeting was meant to be educational—not a debate.

"We realize that desal is part of that conversation, but tonight it really is just part of the conversation," Elston announced at the beginning of the event. "It isn't the whole conversation."

But as each speaker took his or her turn power pointing about desalination costs, effects, and plans, it became clear that desal was, in fact, the central issue at hand, and that all speakers were supporters of the project.

Longinotti, Bentley and other Right to Vote on Desal members are critical of the financial cost of desalination, the projected increase of city energy usage, and the environmental impacts—mainly the endangerment of marine organisms caused by the intake and outtake of seawater.

The Right To Vote on Desal is seeking a minimum of 5,500 signatures by early May to put an initiative on the November ballot that would establish the public's right to vote on the desalination issue. If the initiative passes, the vote wouldn't veto or approve the desalination plant project, but rather guarantee the voters another election to decide.

Mayor Don Lane and Councilmember David Terrazas have cited the group's campaign initiative as "flawed," and put forth another ordinance at the Feb. 28 city council meeting that, if passed, would also guarantee residents the right to vote, but at one special election. (As of press time, the council had not voted.)

The Right To Vote campaign worries that the city's initiative could do more harm than good.

Primarily, the group is concerned about the high cost of special elections and the fact that voter turnout is often much lower than at regular elections. But if the Right to Vote on Desal's initiative makes it onto the November ballot, an additional election would also be required if it passes.

Either initiative could end up costing the taxpayer money, but Lane asserts that the city's version would be simpler and less expensive—requiring an ordinance be passed by the city council rather than petitioning thousands of signatures.

The Right to Vote on Desal group is also concerned that Lane's measure could legally be repealed at any time by the city council. However, former mayor Mike Rotkin asserts that there's no possibility of the city repealing the initiative.

"If they said you could vote and then changed their mind later, in this town they'd be crucified," says Rotkin. "There's no question there's going to be a vote one way or another."

Regardless of securing residents the right to vote on the issue, many opponents feel that desalination has become mainly a political issue.

"[The city] doesn't want to have anything stall their desal project," says Bentley. "They've spent a ton of money on it, there's a lot riding on it, and I don't blame them, they're doing a very, very good job of defending what they're doing. But I just strongly feel that they shouldn't do it."

The desalination project is currently in the city's evaluation phase—meaning that when and if the final Environmental Impact Report is approved, which isn't expected until early 2013, voters will then have the right to decide. Because 2013 is not a regular voting year, it's looking like either desal initiative would require a special election.



## Debate on Desal and Growth Coming to Head

LAFCO prepares to make crucial decision on the future of UC-Santa Cruz growth

by Juan Guzman on Feb 28, 2012

Stormy seas lie ahead for proponents of the city's plan to build a desalination plant, and the name of the thunderhead is UC-Santa Cruz. On March 7, the Santa Cruz County Local Agency Formation (LAFCO) decides whether or not to extend water rights for the university's proposed expansion into the North Campus natural reserve area.

Supporters say that the desalination plant has nothing to do with new growth, but desal opponent Gary Patton disagrees. "In a settlement agreement between UCSC and the city," contended Patton in a Feb. 22 forum on desalination held on campus, "The city agreed to provide desal water to the university's new growth areas."

Advocates insisted that the city was committed to putting forward a proposal that did not tax its water resources any further. "The university has been told [by LAFCO]," said former Mayor Mike Rotkin, "that any new expansion has to be water-neutral." But when the city was asked to submit its ideas for the conditions of the expansion, it pegged the so-called "water-neutral" number not at the university's current rate of usage, 179 million gallons per year, but at its historic high of 206 million gallons per year.

For desal skeptics, this 27 million-gallon-per-year difference is an indication that the city is committed to using the plant to promote growth, despite its rhetoric in favor of conservation. "Under this condition," says Patton, "the university is not obligated by the city to conserve until it reaches its historic highs."

When LAFCO meets on the 5th floor of the county building on March 7 to consider the city's proposition, one can be sure that Patton and other desal skeptics will be there advocating for a policy that promotes water savings over growth.

## Water Customers Want to Be Included in Desal Vote

Some 40,000 residents in Santa Cruz's water district could be left out of the public process

Read More:

[News, Politics, desalination, Gary Patton, John Leopold](#)

by Jacob Pierce on Feb 28, 2012



Supervisor John Leopold wants water customers in the unincorporated county to be able to weigh in on important water decisions. Photo by Chip Scheuer.

If given the choice, Michael Lewis says he'll vote against any plan to construct a \$100 million-plus desalination plant to increase the Santa Cruz area water supply.

"I'm opposed to it for a number of reasons," says the Live Oak resident. He cites concerns about the plant's energy usage as well as its location on the federally protected Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. "To be drawing water out of there is atrocious. It's a ridiculous thing to do."

But Lewis might not have a chance to weigh in. He and his wife Jean Brocklebank are two of about 40,000 Santa Cruz Water Department customers who don't actually reside within city limits. While two separate proposals to bring the controversial desal project to the public for a vote would guarantee a say for Santa Cruz city residents, those city water customers living outside the city proper would have to stay home on election day.

So would the 38,000 customers of the Soquel Creek Water District—whose water supply (and water bills) would also see a boost from the desal plant. That's a lot of disenfranchised people, say critics.

County Supervisor John Leopold, whose District 1 constituency includes residents of Live Oak and Soquel, is spearheading the effort to find a way to let water customers in unincorporated parts of the county weigh in. He's focusing on city of Santa Cruz water customers first.

"It's going to be very hard to support any construction unless there's a vote of the people, and that means all of them," says Leopold, who's written a letter to Santa Cruz Mayor Don Lane in hopes of getting the conversation started.

Leopold wants to know if there is a way for nonresident Santa Cruz water customers to take part in the vote outlined in a new city ordinance proposed by Lane and councilmember David Terrazas. As of press time, Santa Cruz City Council was expected to approve the ordinance on Tuesday, Feb. 28. It would put the desalination plant to a vote of city residents, probably sometime next year.

Leopold says he's also asked county counsel chief deputy Rahn Garcia to look into the possibility of including Live Oak residents in the city's election process, but Garcia is not commenting on the matter, citing client privilege.

Leopold notes that water customers in the unincorporated areas already pay a higher water rate than city residents. Santa Cruz Water Director Bill Kocher confirms that those customers pay rates 26 percent higher than city residents. He says that's because their water depends on piping and infrastructure that is specific to them and does not benefit the city.

Leopold also notes that out-of-city water customers, who mostly live in Live Oak and Pasatiempo, with a few in Capitola as well, have almost no representation on the city water commission. The seven-member water board has only one non-city member, and he's appointed by the city.

Leopold wants residents of the Soquel Creek Water District to have a chance to vote on the plant too. Under the desal plan, Soquel Creek would use the plant at half capacity for about 90 percent of the time. But any vote would have to be OK'd by the district's leaders, and its board has not yet discussed the possibility of holding an election.

Rick Longinotti, a leader of Desal Alternatives, has been gathering signatures for a measure, separate from the one advanced by Lane and Terrazas, that would put desal to a vote, most likely in November 2014. Longinotti says he'd like to join forces with Leopold, but says he can't for legal reasons: Longinotti says his group's measure cannot be changed to include out-of-city voters. But he wishes Leopold's efforts well.

"I totally support his goal, which is to have his constituents in Live Oak have some kind of voice in their water future," Longinotti says.

Lewis looks forward to voicing his concerns on desalination, but adds there's more than one way to do that. He says sometimes Americans put too much focus on voting and end up ignoring the other aspects of democracy. If the activist, a member of Desal Alternatives, does not get a chance to cast his vote, he says it won't be the end of the world. Protest and activism are also important.

"If I were not able to vote on it," Lewis says, "I wouldn't sit and cry in my beer, because I [already] take part in democracy on a day-to-day basis. Voting is just one part of it."

## Santa Cruz City Council OKs putting desal in voters' hands: Election wouldn't be called before 2014

[By J.M. BROWN -](#)

Posted: 02/28/2012 10:00:23 PM PST

SANTA CRUZ - The City Council preliminarily approved an ordinance late Tuesday requiring the city to seek voter approval for a \$115 million desalination plant no earlier than June 2014.

The ordinance calls for a referendum on the proposed Westside facility during a regularly scheduled election only after the council certifies a critical environmental analysis, a draft of which is due this summer.

The move to eliminate the possibility of a special election in 2013 reflects a compromise that could minimize confusion with a citizen-led initiative calling for a vote only during a regularly scheduled election.

"Giving our community one opportunity to do that, the better it is for everyone," Vice Mayor Hilary Bryant said of a single citywide vote.

Previous language on the proposed ordinance would have allowed the city to call for a special election next year. Desal opponents who are gathering signatures for a November ballot initiative asking voters if they wanted to weigh in during a future regular election saw the city's move to get voter approval as early as 2013 as an attempt to short-circuit their effort.

Mayor Don Lane said he received assurances from city water officials and the city's desal partner, Soquel Creek Water District, that a delay until June 2014 will not hurt the project because it would allow spending on energy use, design and other aspects that precede construction. The initiative from desal opponents calls for the city not to incur bonded indebtedness for the project, which water officials say won't be required for pre-construction work.

However, desal opponents remain concerned a future council could repeal the ordinance, which in itself could be stopped by voters with a separate initiative drive. But, Lane said, "That's not going to happen."

Tuesday, the council also approved a plan to keep the plant carbon neutral by reducing energy use within the facility and conduct other offsets in the community. City officials who readily acknowledge the plant will use a lot of energy have been investigating ways to reduce it for months.

There would be an approximately 40 percent increase in indirect greenhouse gas emissions to supply water during a drought period. And performing reverse osmosis to remove the salt will require 10 times as much energy as it takes the city to treat 1,000 gallons of water at the city treatment plant.

The council made the move Tuesday so the new policy can be included in the ongoing Environmental Impact Report. Water department staff said the city could pay for local solar, power purchase agreements or other projects - that the city isn't currently participating in - to offset greenhouse gas emissions from the plant.

Activist Paul Johnston said it didn't make sense to increase emissions by constructing and operating a facility when the city already has a mandate through its Climate Action Plan to reduce the emissions its making now.

"It's just not competent planning to look at a single project out of context of the community's overall need," he said.

Former Mayor Cynthia Mathews, a founder of the pro-desal Sustainable Water Coalition, said the plan is a thorough answer to concerns over high energy use.

"Santa Cruz should and can be leading edge, and I think this is a good start," she said.

The cost of the plant will be funded through bonds or rate increases or a combination, and shared with Soquel Creek Water District. The city, which serves 92,000 customers from Davenport to Live Oak, projects ratepayers will see a \$5 per month increase to build the plant.

In other action, the council also approved a request by the Planning Department to keep in place limited hours of operation and entertainment for the former Cypress Lounge on Union Street, which is now under new ownership. The council changed the business' permits in October in response to violence, noise and other problems stemming from the bar.

Police report fewer calls for service since the restrictions were put into place, and the new owner of the bar to be called The Reef, connected to the popular Hawaiian restaurant Pono, did not object during the meeting. Neighbors supported the decision to reduce late-night hours and limit amplification for small-scale entertainment.

"We want to help keep this business open but we want no more late night club," said Marion Vittitow, who spoke for residents in the Union Street, Chestnut Street and Squid Row areas.

## **Santa Cruz City Council OKs UCSC conservation funding plan, downtown solar plan**

[By J.M. BROWN -](#)

Posted: 02/28/2012 06:46:36 PM PST

SANTA CRUZ - The City Council approved a plan Tuesday to pour fees paid by UC Santa Cruz when the university exceeds water use limits into a fund for off-campus conservation.

The move comes before a March 7 hearing by the Local Agency Formation Commission to finalize details of a city water service extension to an undeveloped corner of campus for future growth. LAFCO, under its own policy to approve only water-neutral projects, has requested a formal plan to designate overage fees for conservation.

The city's water conservation manager, Toby Goddard, said it was "extremely valuable to the city as a whole" to have a mechanism for funding utility and irrigation upgrades if UCSC, the largest water customer, exceeds 206 million gallons per year. The fee would be nearly \$77,000 for each million gallons over the limit.

Opponents complain the limit was established before natural resource agencies have determined how much the city must reduce its diversion on surface water supplies to protect fish habitat. They believe UCSC should pay additional fees, regardless of whether it exceeds limits, to fund water supply improvements that don't involve the city's primary plan, a controversial desalination plant.

Councilwoman Katherine Beiers asked why the usage limit couldn't be lowered to meet UCSC averages from recent years. But water managers said the reduction in UCSC use stemmed from aggressive conservation, and they didn't want to punish the university for surpassing goals to cut back.

## Fisheries agencies warn LAFCO against UCSC water expansion: Final vote set for Wednesday

[By J.M. BROWN - Santa Cruz Sentinel](#)

Posted: 03/02/2012 06:32:11 PM PST

SANTA CRUZ — State and federal natural resource agencies have warned a panel charged with approving a city water extension for UC Santa Cruz that it shouldn't give final approval to the plan until accord is reached about the protection of fish habitat.

Representatives from California Fish and Game and the National Marine Fisheries Service have told the Santa Cruz Local Agency Formation Commission that a key condition the commission placed on its preliminary approval of the project has not been met. In December, LAFCO tentatively approved requests from the city and university to extend up to 100 million more gallons of water — an increase of two-thirds over the total amount UCSC used all last year — to support growth planned in an undeveloped area outside city limits.

LAFCO is set to take a final vote at a hearing that begins at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday.

“To date, it does not appear that current water supplies are sufficient to meet current demand and protected listed (salmon species), let alone allow for increased demands resulting from the expansion of the city's service area,” Dick Butler, North Central Coast office supervisor for the National Marine Fisheries Service wrote.

The agencies say the city can't prove it will have an adequate and reliable water supply — a key LAFCO requirement — to serve planned campus growth because it hasn't agreed with regulators on how much to reduce diversions from the San Lorenzo River and North Coast streams to bolster salmon habitat. The regulators advised LAFCO to get assurances about a new city water supply, an effort that centers around a hotly debated desalination plant that won't go before voters for at least two years.

Critics of the water extension have urged delay.

“The state of California has no money to finance UCSC construction on the North Campus in the foreseeable future,” members of the Coalition to Limit University Expansion, or CLUE, wrote the commission. “A delay of a few years in your decision should have no effect on UCSC's growth plans.”

The university has acknowledged its plans to add 3,000 new students by 2020 are unrealistic given years of state cuts and an uncertain fiscal future. But it wants to clear the way for constructing new facilities as funds become available — development that it agreed with the city, county and CLUE in a landmark 2008 deal to do to reduce traffic, environmental and other impacts off campus.

The city's water director, Bill Kocher, told LAFCO he is close to reaching a deal with the state and federal regulators but that “the impact to fisheries if LAFCO approves these two applications is in fact zero” because the city on Feb. 28 approved a water neutrality policy regarding UCSC water. If the campus exceeds a baseline level for use, it will pay fees that will be plowed directly into off-campus conservation.

County Supervisor Neal Coonerty, who chairs LAFCO, said the warnings from regulators do little to persuade him that the UCSC water expansion plan isn't still viable. He cited the city's UCSC water neutrality program, but noted that his vote is but one of seven.

“If there is not a single (net) drop of water being used for expansion of campus, it's hard to know how that impacts the stream diversions,” Coonerty said Friday. “Stream diversions go on in any event.”

### **IF YOU GO**

#### **LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION**

**WHAT:** Hearing on UC Santa Cruz water expansion

**WHEN:** 9:30 a.m. Wednesday

**WHERE:** County Government Center, 701 Ocean St., Room 525

**INFORMATION:** Visit [www.santacruzlafco.org](http://www.santacruzlafco.org)

**ON THE NET:** To read the reports, visit [santacruzsentinel.com](http://santacruzsentinel.com)



Published on Monday, 05 March 2012 15:03

Written by Noel Smith

## WATER WARS – PART ONE

The ‘Why’ of Desalination for Santa Cruz County



To Desal or not to Desal, that is the question. The Santa Cruz Water Department and the Soquel Creek Water District believe that is the most rational option to ensure an adequate, consistent water supply for the future. They have formed a partnership known as scwd2 to pursue a regional seawater desalination program. A pilot plant at UCSC’s Long Marine lab facility has already addressed the technical issues of seawater intake, brine disposal, and quality of the water produced.

The results of all this testing can be found on the scwd2 website, [www.scwd2desal.org](http://www.scwd2desal.org) along with an explanation of why desalination is considered the best long-term choice for additional supply.

### Why is more water needed?

California is subject to droughts. In the late 70’s Santa Cruz County suffered a three-year drought, but there have been documented periods of little rain lasting five years and longer. Without a new and reliable water supply, such protracted dry spells would seriously affect our local economy, environment, and quality of life.

Our tourist economy — which includes hotels and restaurants — would suffer, agricultural income would be hurt, hospitals and schools would be first priority while residents would see their lawns and gardens dry up and shower-sharing would become a necessity, not just recreational.

Most of Santa Cruz County is unique in that we are entirely dependent on local sources for our water. The Santa Cruz Water Department, serving an area from the North Coast to Capitola, depends on surface water (runoff) for its water supply with Loch Lomond reservoir as the primary source during the dry season. The Mid County (Capitola, Aptos, La Selva Beach) depends on the Soquel Creek Water District for its water. Despite its name, the District doesn’t depend on Soquel Creek for its water — it all comes from wells, which are already overdrafted and are at risk of being ruined by saltwater intrusion into the underlying aquifer.

So here are two adjacent water companies with different problems. The Santa Cruz Water District customers — dependent on runoff — will suffer if there is a drought while the Soquel Creek Water District will suffer from continuing to overdraft their source of water. In order to reduce water demand, both districts have successfully promoted water conservation to the point where their customers use 30 percent less water per person than the rest of California.

But no matter how much their customers conserve, they are each still are faced with the potential problems of drought for one, and saltwater intrusion for the other.

### **What is the solution?**

How to provide a consistent supply of water in all conditions is the problem that each has struggled with for over fifty years. There is no outside source of water coming into the county in a pipeline or canal that they can draw upon. As far as water is concerned, we are on our own.

However, there is a rather abundant source of water available that borders the county — the Pacific Ocean. By drawing water out of the ocean and removing the organic material and the minerals in order to desalinate the water, both Water Districts have a solution to their respective problem.

With desalination, the Santa Cruz Water Department would have a source of water that wouldn't depend on yearly rainfall totals which they would be able to draw upon it during the dry months of summer and periods of severe or extended drought.

With desalination, the Soquel Creek Water District would have a source that would allow them to reduce or even cease pumping water from their wells thereby allowing the aquifers to recharge and thus preventing further saltwater intrusion. In the case of a drought, the Santa Cruz Water Department would get the desalinated water and the Soquel Creek Water District would go back to pumping until the rains returned. This is what is known as an elegant or win-win solution that makes good economic and environmental sense.

### **So, what is all the fuss about?**

There is a group, Santa Cruz Desal Alternatives, which insists that there is no justification for using desalination because there are viable alternatives, that Desal is too expensive and uses too much energy. Some of the hypothetical alternatives to desalination they have presented:

- Recovering more water from the San Lorenzo River

Three problems with that are: 1.) Where do you store it to prepare for a drought? There is no additional reservoir capacity, and future reservoirs face immense environmental, legal, cost and regulatory hurdles. 2.) We know that federal and state regulators will require the City to decrease the amount of water it currently draws from streams, to provide habitat protection for endangered species. 3) In drought years, there's no water in the river to take.

- Recycling Sewage Water

Recycling sewage water or gray water for human use is illegal. Using it for non-human use (parks, golf courses, etc.) is costly because it takes building a separate distribution system and would be limited in its impact on overall water usage.

- More Water Conservation

The county is already one of the lowest urban water usage areas in the state. Additional conservation could be achieved, but not enough to solve the water supply shortfall that both districts face. We would be hard pressed to save significantly more without causing health and quality of life issues.

- Water Sharing

The only other local water district with large enough resources that could share water with Santa Cruz in a drought is the Soquel Creek Water District. 1.) Water sharing would mean pumping more water from their wells, which accelerates saltwater intrusion. 2.) Recharging the aquifer through water sharing means taking water from the San Lorenzo River, which federal regulators are unlikely to permit. 3.) Recharging an aquifer is not a seasonal exercise, as it takes a lot longer to recharge than it does to remove the water.

- Water Neutral Development

Water neutral development does not improve the situation because it does not provide additional water for use in a drought or for recharging an aquifer. It puts enormous economic burden on new projects, thus creating a major disincentive for new housing, commercial or public uses that the community may actually support.

Each of these proposed alternatives to desalination falls short of addressing sufficiently the problems of potential drought for the citizens served by the Santa Cruz Water Department and the recharging of the aquifers that the Soquel Creek Water District depends on to serve its communities.

#### The Effect on the Environment

Environmental issues, including energy use and offsets, water intake and outflow, protection of North Coast streams and the mid-county aquifer are being addressed in the detailed Environmental Impact Report (EIR) which is now in process. We will cover these in depth in a future "Water Wars."

But there are two significant "wins" for the environment if a desalination plant is built:

- The aquifers that have been drawn on for so long will have the opportunity to recover allowing local springs and streams to return to their original flow rates in Mid-County.
- With their increased flows, the larger streams and rivers (San Lorenzo River, Soquel Creek, Aptos Creek etc.) will become a friendlier habitat for fish and other wildlife.

Desalination is an opportunity for the people of this county to help return the environment to what it once was for both its current and original inhabitants while providing a sustainable water supply for future generations.

## Coastal Commission weighs in on UCSC water case: Agency says it may have oversight role in related fisheries debate

[By J.M. BROWN - Santa Cruz Sentinel](#)

Posted: 03/06/2012 07:45:42 PM PST

SANTA CRUZ — At the urging of a conservation group seeking to halt a city water expansion for UC Santa Cruz, the state Coastal Commission weighed in at the 11th hour Tuesday, warning it may have authority to review the controversial case because weakened fish habitat central to the debate could affect the coast.

The Santa Cruz Local Agency Formation Commission is scheduled Wednesday to finalize its approval of applications tentatively approved in December to expand the city's sphere of influence and extend water and sewer service to an undeveloped northern corner of campus. The university has requested up to 100 million gallons more water each year to support new housing and other buildings — as outlined in a pact with the city and county — if student growth hits a projected maximum of 19,500 by 2020, about 3,000 more than what it is now.

However, federal and state fisheries agencies have urged LAFCO to delay final approval until the agencies complete negotiations with the city to reduce diversions from the San Lorenzo River and North Coast streams — which provide about 85 percent of the water supply — to rebuild salmon habitat. It's within those deliberations that Coastal Commission staff believe they may have a future role to play.

Susan Craig, supervising coastal planner for the agency's Central Coast District Office, wrote LAFCO on Tuesday to say that, even though the river and stream diversions fall outside the coastal zone, their effects could be within the commission's purview. She explained that federal coastal law allows her agency to request a review of the diversions because they will affect fish, which are considered coastal resources.

Even though the Coastal Commission can't interfere with LAFCO's decision now, Craig explained that LAFCO's approval of the water expansion could come into play later if the diversions enable the city to meet the increased demand from the university.

"This was just to give them a heads up that what you're doing now may have ramifications in the future," Craig told the Sentinel.

Patrick McCormick, executive director of LAFCO, which decides whether municipalities can expand their boundaries or utility services, said it wasn't clear what impact Craig's letter could have on Wednesday's vote or whether uncertainty about diversions could cause a delay. But he has opted not to make a recommendation either way, given the commission's earlier approval of the expansion.

Although Craig didn't recommended outright that LAFCO wait until diversion rates are set, she noted in her letter that federal regulators, if they grant the Coastal Commission oversight in the process, may not approve the diversion-related permits until that review is completed.

Santa Cruz's water director, Bill Kocher, said he regarded Craig's letter similarly to those last month from the National Marine Fisheries Services and California Department of Fish and Game pressing LAFCO to delay. Kocher said the warnings don't mention the fact that the city, at LAFCO's insistence, has agreed to charge UCSC fees for off-campus conservation programs, such as turf replacement and high-efficiency appliances, when water use exceeds a baseline level.

"There is no demand in increase; there is no issue," Kocher said. "How much is water use going up on campus? Zero."

Craig said she did take the water-neutrality program into consideration when drafting her letter. But the letters from regulators, who want the city to meet diversion reductions seen as impossible by the city, do not mention the program because it was implemented only late last month.

The Coastal Commission will have a say on whether the city can build a controversial desalination plant to increase water supply in drought years, a proposal seen by supporters as a way to stave off drastic cutbacks and protect fish. But Kocher said he was unaware the commission could insert itself into the fisheries issue, which he said could be resolved this year.

The Coastal Commission approached LAFCO at the urging of Don Stevens, a leader of the Habitat and Watershed Caretakers group, which sued the city over an environmental analysis of the water expansion. A Santa Cruz judge said the environmental impact report was valid, but the case is awaiting an appeals hearing.

"It would seem to be awfully audacious for LAFCO to ignore those agencies and take action now when they could easily wait six to 12 months and get the studies," Stevens said. "There is so much doubt."

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## **IF YOU GO**

### **Santa Cruz Local Agency Formation Commission**

**WHAT:** Hearing to finalize approval of applications by the city of Santa Cruz and UC Santa Cruz to expand city water service on campus to support future university growth.

**WHEN:** 9:30 a.m. Wednesday

**WHERE:** County Government Center, 701 Ocean St., Room 525

## In UCSC expansion vote, panel waits on fish protection plan, lowers overall water limit

By J.M. BROWN -- Santa Cruz Sentinel

Posted: 03/07/2012 01:46:15 PM PST

SANTA CRUZ - The Santa Cruz Local Agency Formation Commission signaled narrow support Wednesday for a city water expansion at UC Santa Cruz under two new conditions that left city and university officials shaking their heads.

The essential question facing the panel, which is charged with approving such boundary and utility service changes, is whether the city has enough water to supply more to the university for development outside city limits at a time of drought-year shortages and uncertain reductions in surface water supply.

The majority of LAFCO members were doubtful enough to vote 4-3 in favor of Commissioner John Leopold's recommendation not to permit any new water be delivered to an undeveloped 240-acre area eyed for new student housing until negotiations with fisheries regulators are completed. Leopold's plan, supported by Commissioners Jim Anderson, Roger Anderson and Jim Rapoza, also calls for lowering by 15 percent the baseline level of annual water use above which UCSC would have to pay fees for off-campus conservation.

Noting LAFCO's mandate to ensure an adequate water supply, Leopold, a county supervisor, said, "There are big question marks about whether the city has that supply," especially absent approvals for a proposed seawater desalination facility to produce more water during droughts.

Regulators from the National Marine Fisheries Services and California Department of Fish and Game urged LAFCO to deny the city and university until the city's Habitat Conservation Plan and diversion permits are approved by those agencies to boost habitat for endangered salmon species. City officials have no estimate on when talks with regulators may wrap up.

LAFCO could take a final vote in April after its lawyer verifies the legality of the new conditions placed on the university. Even if approval is granted, the city, university or any opponents of the expansion have the right to file an appeal with LAFCO.

A minority of commissioners, including Don Lane, Daniel Dodge and Chairman Neal Coonerty, preferred Wednesday to finalize the expansion as outlined in December, when LAFCO gave the controversial expansion a tentative thumbs-up. As required by LAFCO, the city has since passed a water-neutral policy on UCSC water use, which says any increase above 206 million gallons each year - a limit determined in a 2008 settlement to end lawsuits with the city, county and citizen groups - would generate funds for replacing lawns or low-efficiency appliances in town.

The campus, which already has surpassed city conservation targets by cutting 50 million gallons per year from 2007 to 2011, is asking for up to 100 million gallons more per year in the event

maximum growth of 3,000 more students is realized, which few expect given the state's financial shortfalls.

"The city really put the screws to the university to demand a reduction," said Commissioner Lane, who serves as the mayor of Santa Cruz. "Now if we do something like this we are moving the goal post for the university of what the community wanted them to do."

City officials, who insisted the university subject itself to LAFCO approval in the first place, are now worried LAFCO's decision will enable the university to grow unchecked for however long it takes the city and fishery regulators to reach consensus on diversions from the San Lorenzo River and North Coast streams that comprise 85 percent of supply for the city's 92,000 customers.

The university doesn't have to abide by the growth agreement to provide housing for two-thirds of new students on campus through 2020 unless LAFCO approves the water extension. According to UCSC's online records, the campus already has enrolled more than 1,100 students from the time settlement talks began in 2007 to 2011, the latest official figures available.

"The shame of this decision is, it's putting thousands more students into more neighborhoods and costing our water customers millions," Councilman Ryan Coonerty, an author of the growth pact and the LAFCO chairman's son, said after the vote. "I just wish this LAFCO had shown some concern for the quality of life in the community."

The commission tentatively approved lowering the university's baseline to 176 million gallons per year, which Leopold said represents UCSC's average use during the past five years. Under LAFCO's conditions, the university would have to pay \$6,500 for each 85,000 gallons of water over that amount, which it would exceed after building housing and academic buildings in the north campus.

"In some obvious ways, the trajectory of the board discussion was very disappointing to us - and we suspect to the city," UCSC spokesman Jim Burns said. "One aspect of today's hearing was particularly troubling: The prospect that - very unfairly - the city, the campus, or ultimately all of the ratepayers may now be penalized for UCSC's many water-conservation accomplishments."

Burns said UCSC isn't inclined to pay more on a lowered baseline and city officials are worried if LAFCO can't legally bind the university to the lower limit, the overage fees will be passed on to ratepayers.

A number of UCSC students and graduate researchers encouraged LAFCO to deny or delay the expansion, saying it won't improve educational opportunities through growth. Rather, they said it will only require stretching resources thinner and increasing UCSC's debt to construct buildings.

Luz Cordoba, a UCSC researcher and city resident among those in a standing-room only audience Wednesday, said, "The expansion will demand the building of a desal plant to compensate for water shortages, which we are already experiencing today." City officials say the facility is proposed only to offset emergency drought. Voters will get the first of several chances as early as November to decide the plant's fate.

Charles Eadie, a land use planner and UCSC alumnus, said LAFCO should support the expansion to "reaffirm the work that's been done" to improve relations between the city and university. He said many students opposed to growth now wouldn't have been admitted had past differences not be ironed out.

"Speaking as a resident, things are way better when the university and city are in cooperation," he said. "That is really what this is about."

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## Santa Cruz water officials could seek 5% curtailment: Low February rainfall puts year on track to be seventh driest

By [J.M. BROWN](#)

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SANTA CRUZ -- With rainfall in the typically soggy month of February totaling just sixth-tenths of an inch, this year is on course to be the seventh driest on record for Santa Cruz.

Although rain is forecast for much of the coming week, February ended with a seasonal total of just 10.6 inches, or about 45 percent of normal year-to-date rainfall, according to the city's most recent Water Supply Outlook. Water officials may ask the City Council in April to approve a 5 percent curtailment if March doesn't deliver a significant turnaround.

A Stage 1 Water Shortage Alert would aim to reduce use systemwide by encouraging customers to cutback on irrigation. However, the city is, as always, also urging customers to fix leaks and upgrade to higher-efficiency toilets and clothes washers.

"If nothing changes, clearly it would be irresponsible in such a dry year to do nothing," Toby Goddard, the city's water conservation manager, said of the potential curtailment.

The last time there was a shortage alert was 2009, which was followed by two consecutive wet winters.

The Water Supply Outlook, the second of three expected during the rainy season, classifies this year as critically dry, the most severe level on a four-point scale that includes wet, normal and dry. Flow in the river was less than one-tenth of normal in February, and what little rain Santa Cruz did receive last month was absorbed into the ground.

The good news is Loch Lomond reservoir was 97 percent full at the end of February, thanks to last winter's drenching. But the Water Department will have to draw down its reserves during the high-demand summer months if river flows dip below legal pumping levels and North Coast streams remain drier than normal, the report said.

Goddard said the dry winter would have been an even more serious concern a decade ago, before aggressive conservation helped the city reduce demand by 23 percent despite 6 percent growth.

"If demand were higher, we might be calling for a more rigorous response," he said.

Goddard said a third supply assessment will be done at the end of March before any alert recommendation is brought to the Water Commission and City Council. Any cutback measures would go into place May 1.

The potential shortage alert comes as an anti-desalination group is gathering signatures for a November ballot measure that would allow voters to decide whether to build a controversial seawater desal facility during a future election. The city has also passed its own ordinance requiring a voter referendum on desal as early as 2014.

The city argues the plant is needed to supplement supply in a drought, which could be declared after multiple dry years. But Rick Longinotti, founder of Santa Cruz Desal Alternatives, said any shortage alert could only "prompt more people to ask us, What are the alternatives to desalination?"

His group is pushing for increased conservation, water swaps with neighboring districts and a citywide water-neutral development plan rather than a facility expected to cost more than \$100 million. The city recently passed such a policy to cover UC Santa Cruz.

Longinotti applauded what he called "the integrity" of the city's decision to possibly curtail use 5 percent, "given that it may not help their case that there is available water to offer for UCSC growth."

The city argues it has enough water in normal years to serve existing customers and extend more water to the campus, especially if increased campus use is offset by conservation off campus. Plans to extend more water to an undeveloped portion of north campus were put on hold last week while the governing body overseeing such expansions awaits results of a deal between the city and fisheries agencies over reduced river and stream diversions.

## Santa Cruz council OKs local business preference; leaders also finalize rule on desal vote

[By J.M. BROWN -- Santa Cruz Sentinel](#)

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Also Tuesday, the council took a second and final vote on a new ordinance requiring voter approval before the city constructs a seawater desalination plant. There were no objections from the public at the meeting, but desal opponents have expressed past concern that a future council could simply undo the ordinance.

The Right to Vote on Desal Coalition is gathering signatures for a charter change amendment that would appear on November's ballot. The amendment, which requires verified signatures of 15 percent of registered city voters, would give voters the right to weigh in at a future election.

City officials argue their ordinance does the same thing and have urged the desal opponents to drop their measure, saying it will cause the city to unnecessarily fund two elections for the same purpose.

"In light of what we are doing today, it's not a prudent use of the city's money," Mayor Don Lane said.

The earliest the plant could come up for a vote in any event would be June 2014.

The desalination facility, estimated to cost at least \$115 million, is undergoing an environmental analysis that isn't expected to be completed until this summer at the earliest. If approved by the council and put to voters, the Westside facility must still get the OK of the state Coastal Commission.