

**July 18, 2003**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

*Auburn* - Directors of the Placer County Water Agency on Thursday (July 17) said the agency must explore whether there is any way to further stretch water supplies in Zone 1 over the next two years to meet the expanding number of requests for new water services. The matter remains a serious concern to the board. They have scheduled another workshop on Zone 1 water availability for 4 p.m. Tuesday (July 22) at the PCWA Business Center in Auburn. The board invites local officials and the public to attend.

Water agency officials remain concerned about how to meet requests for new and expanded water service between now and the summer of 2005 when the new American River permanent pump station is expected to be completed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

Reclamation has awarded a \$17 million contract for the first phase of the pump project. However, construction has not begun, according to Reclamation, because of a bid protest by one of the unsuccessful contractors. When complete, the project will provide delivery of up to 35,500 acre-feet of water per year to PCWA customers. But the project's anticipated completion is two years from now.

Director of Technical Services, Don Reighley observed that although the agency has adequate water supplies, it is the consistently high rate of growth in Zone 1 that is about to out-pace the agency's ability to have needed infrastructure constructed and operational in a timely manner. In particular, the lack of the permanent American River

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pump station is squarely at the heart of the current problem to meet Zone 1 customers' requests for more water, said Reighley.

Because of this, staff has been reporting at every board meeting how much unallocated water is available to serve requests from customers for new or expanded water service.

The agency supplies on the average, over a hundred thousand acre-feet of surface water per year to customers in Zone 1. Staff calculates there may be less than one thousand acre-feet of unallocated water supplies remaining, said Reighley.

Requests for additional water allocations have averaged 173 acre-feet per month but would end in five months at the current pace, he said.

District 1 Director Pauline Roccucci of Roseville said it is important for people to understand how vital the permanent American River pumps are for accessing agency water supplies near Auburn from the American River for Placer County customers.

District 5 Director Otis Wollan of Colfax said that unless options and alternatives are identified to change the current course of events for the better, the board may soon have no alternative but to not approve requests for new or expanded water service in Zone 1 until such time as Reclamation completes the permanent American River pump station for the agency.

At the Tuesday workshop the board plans to review water efficiency measures and to consider other ideas for endeavoring to stretch the existing available water supply for Zone 1.

The board took two actions relating to water availability at Thursday's meeting. Directors voted to further limit the amount of water available to new and existing raw water customers and to adjust limits on seasonal and year-around raw water use.

In other business, directors:

- approved a written response to the Placer County Grand Jury which asked PCWA to reaffirm to the next Grand Jury its plans for future Zone 1 water allocations and infrastructure construction. The board was pleased with the Grand Jury's interest

on water availability. The board unanimously approved a written response to the request and thanked the Grand Jury for its time and interest.

- learned that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on July 11 reversed an earlier decision and issued interim guidelines for use of herbicides to inhibit growth of algae in canals. PCWA attorney Ed Tiedemann recommended that the agency develop a plan to resume its algae control program that was suspended two years ago because of a federal court ruling and EPA regulations. Director of Field Services Mike Nichol said he hopes to reinstitute a full algae control program next year.

The July 22 board workshop on water availability will be held at 4 p.m. in the Placer County Water Agency Business Center, 144 Ferguson Road in Auburn. The next regular PCWA board meeting will be held on August 7 at the Placer County Board of Supervisors Chamber, 175 Fulweiler Avenue in Auburn. PCWA board meetings are open to the public.