

**December 17, 2004**

**Contact: David A. Breninger  
(530) 823-4850  
or: Dave Carter  
(530) 265-NEWS**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

*Auburn* - Directors of the Placer County Water Agency on Thursday (Dec. 16) authorized staff to seek a low-interest state loan to help pay for a planned expansion and upgrade of the agency's Auburn Water Treatment Plant.

The agency is expanding the plant in the greater Auburn area served by PCWA to accommodate new growth in both the City of Auburn and the County of Placer.

PCWA Director of Technical Services Brian Martin said the \$9 million loan from the California Safe Drinking Water Act revolving fund will pay for approximately one-third of the estimated \$26.3 million project. The remainder of the project would be financed through water connection charges paid by developers and new water customers, and through the charge that PCWA places on water bills for state and federal mandated programs, Martin said.

The Auburn Water Treatment Plant is located on Ferguson Road adjacent to the PCWA Business Center. It was operated by PG&E before it was acquired by PCWA in the late 1960s. The plant property covers 6.23 acres.

PCWA engineers have planned a major upgrade and expansion of the plant for several years. The environmental documents for the project were processed by the agency this year. Work is expected to begin in 2005 and take two years to complete.

Most of the existing plant will be replaced with new facilities and the addition of landscaping. The eastern third of the project will include a parking lot and serve as a fuel break area with trees and shrubs removed as requested by fire officials for fire prevention purposes. Martin also provided information and context on the designated

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fill area which covers less than an acre that was recently a topic of inquiry by a citizen.

The plant's capacity will be increased from 6-8 million gallons per day (mgd) with an ultimate design capacity of 14 mgd. Martin estimates that this should accommodate the ultimate build out of the general plans of the City and County for the greater Auburn area. The project will include advanced water treatment technology.

In other business, directors:

- received a 2003 audit of the agency presented by Peggy A. Vande Vooren, CPA, a principal with Gilbert Associates, Inc., a Sacramento-based certified public accounting firm. Vande Vooren said PCWA records are being kept in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and that its financial statements fairly present the agency's financial position.

- discussed the agency's water rate structure with Rocklin resident Gerald Gurzell who had submitted a letter suggesting that PCWA water rates do not adequately promote water use efficiency and conservation. Directors appreciated Mr. Gurzell's suggestions and explained that the agency has been moving toward a greater efficiency and conservation-based rate structure for several years and will continue to do so.

Directors adjourned to a workshop session to be held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 4, at the PCWA Business Center, 144 Ferguson Road, in Auburn. The board's next regular meeting will be held at 3 p.m. on Jan. 6 in the Placer County Board of Supervisors chambers, 175 Fulweiler Avenue, in Auburn. PCWA board meetings are open to the public.