

TO: James L. App, City Manager
FROM: Doug Monn, Public Works Director
SUBJECT: Emergency Water Supply for County Properties
DATE: July 1, 2014

NEEDS: For City Council to consider options to provide emergency water to domestic users outside the City limits.

FACTS:

1. California is experiencing one of the driest years in state history, prompting the County and State to declare a state of emergency and for the City to implement its local water shortage contingency plan.
2. Rural residents in unincorporated areas near the City use private wells for their water supply.
3. Owners of some private wells in the unincorporated area surrounding the City have reported that their wells have gone dry and water well drillers report a backlog of requests to deepen wells.
4. The City has carefully planned a diversified water supply portfolio that includes Salinas River underflow, Nacimiento Water Project deliveries, and deep basin wells. The City also has an active capital improvement program to maintain and enhance its water supply, production, treatment, storage, and conveyance capabilities.
5. The City's water supply planning and diversification efforts ensure that a sufficient and reliable water supply is available to serve existing and future needs of the City, even during dry periods. By way of example, the City is taking steps to use more of its Nacimiento water, and as of June 19, 2014, nearly 74,000 acre-feet of water remains in storage in Lake Nacimiento.
6. Recognizing that careful use of water throughout the duration of the drought is prudent, and to ensure adequate supplies are available during periods of peak demand, the City will continue to operate under a Level 2 water supply shortage condition. As of May 1, 2014, mandatory water use restrictions were again implemented.
7. The City has received requests to allow water trucks to fill from the City water system for delivery to rural residents outside the City limits.
8. Requests for the temporary use of untreated, surplus Nacimiento Water have been made to the Nacimiento Project Commission.

**ANALYSIS &
CONCLUSION:**

As a result of the City's water supply planning and conservation efforts, the City has sufficient water supplies to serve existing and future needs throughout the City, and also has sufficient

resources to serve a limited amount of emergency water to neighbors facing a hardship. The City could receive requests for water service to assist neighbors in these categories:

Individual Rural Residents Whose Wells Have Gone Dry

One response to requests for emergency water supply may be to allow water haulers to check out a hydrant meter for this purpose. Under this arrangement, a single party (i.e. the water hauler) would hold a permit for a hydrant meter such that bills would be issued to that party.

Hydrant water usage is billed at the same rates as other potable water customers.

Permitting use of hydrant meters for water hauling outside the City limits on an emergency basis would help neighboring rural residents during the drought. It would not be done, however, to the detriment of City water customers. The City's Water Conservation and Water Shortage Contingency Plan (Chapter 14.02) addresses the issuance of hydrant meters, and provides for the discretionary suspension of the issuance of new hydrant meters and/or the recall all outstanding hydrant meters at Level 2 and 3 water supply shortage conditions. At Level 4, no new commitments to provide water inside or outside the City are allowed. In other words, the City's Water Conservation and Water Shortage Contingency Plan provides the framework for recall of hydrant meters when needed.

Should City Council support issuance of hydrant meters to water haulers on an emergency basis, it is understood that such use of City water would be for domestic uses only and subject to the City's Water Conservation and Water Shortage Contingency Plan.

Rural Residential Neighborhoods Looking for Supplemental Water

Also potentially in need are groups of rural residents who seek to supplement ground water supplies with Nacimiento Water. An example of this may be the Jardine area consisting of approximately 500 single family residential lots averaging perhaps 1-2 acres each. These parcels are served by private wells, creating a situation in which hundreds of wells operate within a 2 square mile area. The Jardine area may join together to operate a community water system.

Such neighborhoods could benefit from Nacimiento Water Project deliveries, but they are miles away from the pipeline. The City's water system is within a half mile of Jardine. This presents the possibility that rural residential neighborhoods could form a community water system, secure an entitlement to Nacimiento Water, then make arrangements with the City to treat and wheel that water to their newly-formed water system.

No request for treating and wheeling Nacimiento water to adjacent neighborhoods has been received by the City. Many points would need to be addressed if such an arrangement were considered (e.g., environmental review, costs for water treatment/storage/distribution, available system capacity, reliability of supply, backflow prevention, etc.).

The City Council might consider such arrangements as a means of lessening pumping from the basin, more fully utilizing surface supplies, supplementing water supply where needed most, and addressing pressing needs of rural residents in unincorporated areas.

Irrigators Seeking Supplemental Water

Another category of water requests may come from irrigators seeking to supplement groundwater supplies. The 250 acre-foot request to the Nacimiento Project Commission from J Lohr Vineyards is in this category. In that example, an irrigator north of the City has requested a temporary supply of untreated Nacimiento water for use in lieu of groundwater basin well pumping.

This year, the Nacimiento Project Commission declared 9,287 acre-feet of unused Project water available for purchase. If left unused, this amount of water will be released from the dam and not put to use in San Luis Obispo County. The 250 acre-foot J Lohr Vineyards request would use a portion of that amount on a temporary basis to demonstrate its viability for use as irrigation water and to lessen groundwater pumping.

Requests similar to the J Lohr proposal, seeking to use a portion of the City's unused Nacimiento entitlement or available recycled water to support non-potable demands, may be directed at the City.

The City should be prepared to respond to requests for emergency water from haulers seeking to help individuals whose wells are failing, from neighborhoods seeking to have supplemental supplies wheeled through the City's system, and/or from irrigators seeking to use available Nacimiento supplies on a temporary basis or recycled water supplies.

POLICY

REFERENCE: Water Conservation and Water Shortage Contingency Plan Ordinance No. 957 N.S., and 2010 City of Paso Robles Urban Water Management Plan.

FISCAL

IMPACT: No additional impacts.

OPTIONS:

- a. Adopt Resolution 14-XX to:
 1. Establish policies that would support requests from potable water haulers for hydrant meters to provide emergency water to rural residents outside City limits, subject to City discretion to cease or suspend such hydrant water use in accordance with the City's Water Conservation and Water Shortage Contingency Plan.
 2. Establish policies that would support proposals to treat and wheel unused Nacimiento supplies to neighborhoods bordering the City to more fully utilize available surface supplies, lessen pumping from the basin, supplement water supply where needed most, and address pressing needs of rural residents in unincorporated areas.
 3. Establish policies that would support proposals to wheel a portion of the City's unused and untreated Nacimiento entitlement on a temporary basis and/or available recycled water for irrigation and/or other non-potable uses outside City limits to supplement area water supplies, lessen basin pumping, and more fully utilize available surface water supplies.
- b. Amend, modify, or reject the above option.

RESOLUTION NO. 14-xxx

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO DE ROBLES
ESTABLISHING POLICIES FOR PROVISION OF EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLY
OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS

WHEREAS, California is experiencing one of the driest years in state history, prompting the County and State to declare a state of emergency and for the City to implement its local water shortage contingency plans; and

WHEREAS, owners of some private wells in the unincorporated area near the City have reported that their wells have gone dry, and water well drillers report a backlog of requests to deepen wells; and

WHEREAS, both the City and the Nacimiento Project Commission have received requests for either filling of water trucks or temporary supply of unused Nacimiento water; and

WHEREAS, the City could receive additional requests for water supply to individual rural residents whose wells have gone dry, from neighborhoods looking to supplement water through treatment and wheeling arrangements with the City, and possibly from irrigators seeking to use unused Nacimiento Project water or available recycled water; and

WHEREAS, the City at times has issued permits for the use of water from fire hydrants for temporary uses within the City limits and bills such usage at the same rates as other potable water customers; and

WHEREAS, the City's adopted Water Conservation and Water Shortage Contingency Plan (Municipal Code chapter 14.02) provides for the discretionary suspension of the issuance of new hydrant meters and/or the recall all outstanding hydrant meters at Levels 2 and 3 water supply shortage conditions; and

WHEREAS, at Level 4, no new commitments or arrangements to provide water are allowed; and

WHEREAS, although City continues to operate at a Level 2 water supply shortage condition, as a result of the City's careful water supply planning, diversification, and conservation efforts, the City has sufficient water supplies to serve the existing and future water demands of the City, and also has sufficient resources to serve a limited amount of emergency water to neighbors outside City limits that are facing a hardship.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of El Paso de Robles does hereby establish policies in support of the following:

1. Allowing potable water haulers to apply for hydrant meters to provide emergency water to rural residents outside the City limits, subject to City discretion to disapprove, cease or suspend any such hydrant water use in accordance with the City's Water Conservation and Water Shortage Contingency Plan and other City powers and authorities.
2. Entertaining proposals to treat and wheel unused Nacimiento supplies to neighborhoods bordering the City to more fully utilize available surface supplies, lessen pumping from the basin, supplement water supply where needed most, and address pressing needs of rural residents in unincorporated areas.

3. Entertaining proposals to wheel a portion of the City's unused and untreated Nacimiento entitlement on a temporary basis and/or available recycled water for irrigation and/or other non-potable uses outside City limits to supplement area water supplies, lessen basin pumping, and more fully utilize available surface water supplies.

The policies established herein in support of the provision of emergency water supplies do not apply to applications for new and permanent water service connections to customers outside existing City limits.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of El Paso de Robles at a regular meeting of said City Council held on the 1st day of July, 2014, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Duane Picanco, Mayor

ATTEST:

Caryn Jackson, Deputy City Clerk