

**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF BOARD GOVERNED COUNTY SERVICE AREAS
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

March 15, 2022

FROM

BRENDON BIGGS, Director, Department of Public Works – Special Districts

SUBJECT

California Water and Wastewater Arrearage Payment Program (Water Districts)

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Acting as the governing body of County Service Area 42 – Oro Grande, County Service Area 64 – Spring Valley Lake, County Service Area 70 CG – Cedar Glen, County Service Area 70 W-3 – Hacienda Heights, County Service Area 70 W-4 – Pioneertown, County Service Area 70 F – Little Morongo, and County Service Area 70 J – Oak Hills, accept funding (**County Contract No. 22-207**) totaling \$237,901.31 from the State Water Resources Control Board through the California Water and Wastewater Arrearage Payment Program.
(Presenter: Brendon Biggs, Director, 387-7906)

COUNTY AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Operate in a Fiscally-Responsible and Business-Like Manner.

Focus on Recovery and Resiliency Following Major Emergency Responses such as the December 2, 2015 Terrorist Attack (SB Strong) and the Global COVID-19 Pandemic.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Approval of this item will not result in the use of Discretionary General Funding (Net County Cost). This item is for acceptance of \$237,901.31 from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). This funding must be used to credit customer accounts identified as having unpaid water bills for billing periods between March 4, 2020 and June 15, 2021. Funds not credited to customer accounts within 60 days from receipt of funds must be returned to SWRCB. The amount of funding for each County Service Area (CSA) is indicated in the following table:

County Service Area	Amount
CSA 42 – Oro Grande	\$ 13,809.65
CSA 64 – Spring Valley Lake	\$ 69,296.23
CSA 70 CG – Cedar Glen	\$ 13,606.28
CSA 70 W-3 – Hacienda Heights	\$ 8,304.69
CSA 70 W-4 – Pioneertown	\$ 6,130.22
CSA 70 F – Little Morongo	\$ 12,066.24
CSA 70 J – Oak Hills	\$ 114,688.00
Total	\$ 237,901.31

**California Water and Wastewater Arrearage Payment Program (Water Districts)
March 15, 2022**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

SWRCB provides funding through the California Water and Wastewater Arrearage Payment Program (Program) to permit recovery of revenues lost due to the State of California declared state of emergency and the resulting COVID-19 stay-at-home orders, which prevented the shut-down of water utilities due to non-payment of bills. The Department of Public Works – Special Districts (Department) operates and manages several water systems throughout unincorporated areas of San Bernardino County, which were financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and would benefit under the Program.

It was recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic financially impacted families and businesses. To help alleviate the financial difficulties during this time, the Department received authorization from the Board of Supervisors (Board) on March 24, 2020 (Item No. 57) to suspend water shutoffs for delinquencies and/or nonpayment of customers during the pandemic.

On April 24, 2020, the Governor of California issued Executive Order N-42-20 to “not discontinue residential service, as defined in Health and Safety Code section 116902, subdivision (c), for no-payment,” and that “water systems shall restore any residential service to occupied residencies that has been discontinued for nonpayment since March 4, 2020.”

The State also recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult for many Californians to pay their bills due to job loss and other hardships. As a result, community water systems that provide water services to customers have been financially impacted. In response, SWRCB created the \$985 million Program. On August 17, 2021, an arrearages survey for community water systems was requested by SWRCB that asked all water systems to collect information to help implement the first phase of the Program. The information collected reflected COVID-19 related residential and commercial customer debt and COVID-19 related revenue loss accrued between March 4, 2020 and June 15, 2021. The Program initially prioritized drinking water residential and commercial arrearages.

On October 5, 2021, the Program Application was made available by SWRCB for community water systems that previously completed the arrearage surveys. Applications were due on December 6, 2021, and signature authorization was required to be received by SWRCB no later than January 6, 2022. To meet the deadline and remain in compliance with the extension of authority for actions related to the COVID-19 pandemic approved by the Board on December 14, 2021 (Item No. 72), submittal documents were signed by the County’s Chief Operating Officer on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer. Pursuant to that extension of authority, ratification by the Board was requested and approved on February 8, 2022 (Item No. 68).

After the initial submittal of the Program Application, seeking a total amount of \$243,474.57, SWRCB requested updated figures for CSA 64 – Spring Valley Lake due to additional reporting requirements for applicants with over 3,300 service connections. When data was recompiled, the arrearages decreased from \$74,869.49 to \$69,296.23 for CSA 64 – Spring Valley Lake, thus reducing the total application amount for all CSAs from \$243,474.57 to \$237,901.31.

Program funding in the amount of \$237,901.31 for the CSAs was approved by SWRCB on January 25, 2022. Approval of this item will accept these funds. The 658 past-due water accounts, identified during the Program application process that remain unpaid, will be credited within 60 days of receipt of the Program funds. Any unused funds will be returned to SWRCB.

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PROCUREMENT

Not applicable.

REVIEW BY OTHERS

This item has been reviewed by County Counsel (Aaron Gest, Deputy County Counsel, 387-5455) on February 22, 2022; Finance (Tom Forster, Administrative Analyst, 387-4635) on February 23, 2022; and County Finance and Administration (Paloma Hernandez-Barker, Deputy Executive Officer, 387-5423) on February 28, 2022.

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Record of Action of the Board of Supervisors
Board Governed County Service Areas

APPROVED (CONSENT CALENDAR)

Moved: Janice Rutherford Seconded: Joe Baca, Jr.
Ayes: Col. Paul Cook (Ret.), Janice Rutherford, Dawn Rowe, Curt Hagman, Joe Baca, Jr.

Lynna Monell, CLERK OF THE BOARD

BY  _____
DATED: March 15, 2022



cc: BGCSA - Leja w/agree
Contactor - C/O BGCSA w/agree
File - w/agree
CCM 03/21/2022