



San Bernardino County

Legislation Text

File #: 7068, Agenda Item #: 96

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

November 15, 2022

FROM

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

SUBJECT

California Water and Wastewater Arrearage Payment Program

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Acting as the governing body of County Service Area 42 - Oro Grande, County Service Area 53B - Fawnskin, County Service Area 64 - Spring Valley Lake, County Service Area 70 GH - Glen Helen, County Service Area 70 S-3 - Lytle Creek, County Service Area 70 SP-2 - Oak Hills, County Service Area 79 - Green Valley Lake, and County Service Area 82 - Trona:

1. Accept funding in the amount of \$474,268.55 from the State Water Resources Control Board for wastewater arrearages incurred and outstanding by customers of the respective County Service Areas during the period of March 4, 2020 through June 15, 2021.
2. Authorize the Director or Assistant Director of the Department of Public Works to sign and submit any additional documents necessary for reporting, certifying, or finalizing the California Water and Wastewater Arrearage Payment Program, subject to review by County Counsel.

(Presenter: Brendon Biggs, Director, 387-7906)

COUNTY AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER GOALS & OBJECTIVES

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

Pursue County Goals and Objectives by Working with Other Agencies and Stakeholders.

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). The \$474,268.55 received from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) does not require a local match and must be used to credit customer accounts identified as having unpaid sewer bills for billing periods between March 4, 2020 and June 15, 2021. The amount of funding for each County Service Area (CSA) is indicated in the following table:

County Service Area	Amount
CSA 42 - Oro Grande	\$ 1,571.00
CSA 53B - Fawnskin	\$ 36,873.56

CSA 64 - Spring Valley Lake	\$ 12,924.63
CSA 70 GH - Glen Helen	\$ 84,116.12
CSA 70 S-3 - Lytle Creek	\$ 38,883.52
CSA 70 SP-2 - Oak Hills	\$ 2,989.18
CSA 79 - Green Valley Lake	\$ 75,590.68
CSA 82 - Trona	\$ 221,319.86
Total	\$ 474,268.55

Funds not credited to customer accounts within 60 days from receipt of funds must be returned to SWRCB.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Department of Public Works - Special Districts (Department) operates and manages several water and wastewater districts throughout the unincorporated areas of San Bernardino County.

The State of California’s declared state of emergency and the resulting COVID-19 stay-at-home orders had an adverse financial impact on community water and wastewater systems as it became difficult for many customers to pay their bills because of job loss and other hardships. Recognizing this, SWRCB created the California Water and Wastewater Arrearage Payment Program (Program) that provided \$985 million statewide as relief to water and wastewater systems for revenues lost from unpaid bills due to the pandemic. The Program initially prioritized residential and commercial drinking water arrearages, with remaining funding applied towards wastewater arrearages accrued between March 4, 2020 and June 15, 2021. All accounts with an outstanding balance during this period are eligible for this funding.

On March 15, 2022 (Item No. 50), the Board of Supervisors (Board) accepted Program funding totaling \$237,901.31 from SWRCB for drinking water arrearages incurred and outstanding by customers of the Department’s respective water districts. Upon receipt of these funds, the Department immediately began crediting customer accounts for customer debt and COVID-19 related revenue loss accrued between March 4, 2020 through June 15, 2021.

On March 15, 2022 (Item No. 49), the Board also authorized submission of Program applications to SWRCB for wastewater arrearages of the aforementioned County Service Areas. A total of \$474,268.55 was subsequently approved by SWRCB on May 16, 2022 for use in funding wastewater arrearages incurred and outstanding by customers of the Department’s respective sanitation districts during the period of March 4, 2020 through June 15, 2021. Approval of this item will accept these funds from SWRCB pursuant to County Policy No. 05-13. Any unused funding will be returned to SWRCB. This item was not presented to the Board sooner, as the funding award did not require any additional documentation and the Department was not aware Board action was needed.

PROCUREMENT

Not applicable.

REVIEW BY OTHERS

This item has been reviewed by County Counsel (Aaron Gest, Deputy County Counsel, 387-5455) on November 2, 2022; Finance (Tom Forster, Administrative Analyst, 387-4635) on October 20, 2022; and County Finance and Administration (Paloma Hernandez-Barker, Deputy Executive Officer, 387-5423) on October 24, 2022.