



Board Agenda Item 17

DATE: June 20, 2017

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Steven E. White, Director
Department of Public Works and Planning

SUBJECT: Water and Natural Resources Manager Position - Department of Public Works and Planning

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Approve Salary Resolution amendment, as reflected on Appendix “D”, to include the addition of one Water and Natural Resources Manager classification, effective June 19, 2017.

Since 2014, the Department of Public Works and Planning (Department) has taken the lead for implementation of the State’s Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) utilizing existing allocated staffing. Approval of the Recommended Action would modify the Department’s allocation of positions by adding a Water and Natural Resources Manager position, which would serve in a lead capacity relating to SGMA, Williamson Act, and Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMRA) implementation.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

The Board may choose not to approve the recommended action in which case the Department would continue to utilize existing staffing resources for SGMA implementation.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended action. The cost associated with the recommended action would be approximately \$1,500 and will be fully absorbed within existing appropriations in the Department’s Org 4360 FY2016-17 Adopted Budget. Sufficient appropriations will be requested in FY 2017-18.

DISCUSSION:

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), signed into law in September of 2014, established a new structure for managing California’s groundwater resources at the local level by local agencies. The SGMA requires the formation of locally controlled Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) in the State’s higher priority groundwater basins by June 30, 2017. Each GSA is then required to develop and implement a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) to meet the sustainability goals of the basin to ensure that it is operated within its sustainable yield without causing undesirable results. Failure to timely form a GSA and implement a GSP in a groundwater basin could result in the State Water Resources Control Board asserting its power to manage local groundwater resources. The deadlines to form the required GSAs and prepare the GSPs are June 30, 2017 and January 1, 2020 respectively.

On January 26, 2016, the Board of Supervisors directed Department staff to work to establish the County as party to all GSAs formed within Fresno County. Since then, the Department has taken an active role in

coordinating and facilitating the formation of GSAs in the groundwater subbasins which the County overlies. To date, the County is party to 15 GSAs formed within Fresno County by either being part of the governing board, party to a GSA coordinating agreement, or serving as the exclusive GSA for portions of groundwater subbasins. Department activity associated with the GSA formations have included participating in various GSA committee meetings (technical and advisory), conducting outreach informational meetings to affected property owners, serving as staff support for GSA board of director meetings, and administering the County SGMA Committee meetings. Going forward, the Department will either be participating or taking the lead in the preparation of each Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) as well as participating in GSP implementation.

Since 2014, the Department has utilized existing staffing resources to implement the County's SGMA program to the extent necessary to form the required GSAs. A much greater effort will be required going forward to ensure that GSP preparation and implementation occurs. However, key members of the Department's SGMA team have left the County. The Department has evaluated various options for replacing these positions, including surveying neighboring jurisdictions and the SGMA positions recently added, and has concluded that there is need for a manager position focused on water and natural resource management coordination and implementation. As envisioned, a Water and Natural Resources Division would be created within the Department to implement SGMA and other related resources functions including Williamson Act and Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMRA) implementation. The Division would be staffed with a combination of existing Department positions and new positions proposed as part of the 2017-18 Department budget.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Salary Resolution Amendment - Appendix "D"

CAO ANALYST:

John Hays