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METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Leon E. Dorrill
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

September 20, 1994

(Water Problems Committee--Action)

To: Board of Directors (Engineering and Operations Committee--Action)

From: General Manager

Subject: Authorize the General Manager to Enter Into an Agreement
With Los Angeles County to Participate in the Morris Reservoir
Sediment Sampling Program

Report

Morris Reservoir (Morris), see attached map, is located within the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (County) reservoir and spreading basin system. Under a long-standing agreement, Morris is operated by Metropolitan pursuant to instructions from the County to capture storm runoff for groundwater recharge. The County is also developing a sediment management plan which would depend upon the use of Morris as a temporary holding facility for sediment sluiced from the County's upstream reservoirs to the downstream Santa Fe Reservoir or nearby gravel pits. Approximately 10,000 acre-feet of the initial 32,300 acre-feet of storage capacity in Morris is now filled with sediments predominantly sluiced from the County's upstream San Gabriel Reservoir.

Metropolitan acquired Morris from the City of Pasadena in 1941 to store water for emergencies. However, storage levels now vary widely in response to the County's groundwater recharge operations. Furthermore, it would be difficult to use Morris water in Metropolitan's distribution system because it is not connected to a filtration plant. Although Metropolitan currently expends about \$300,000 annually to operate and maintain Morris, the County contributes approximately \$30,000 annually to defray those expenses.

Your Board, in 1977, concluded that Morris would best serve the public as a water conservation and flood control facility. Accordingly, in October 1977, Metropolitan entered into an agreement to transfer Morris to the County following completion of specified conditions:

- Compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements (Completed in 1977).
- Compliance with State mandated spillway requirements (Completed in 1980).
- Attainment of California Safety of Dams Certification of structural stability and authorization to operate without restriction (Completed in 1989).
- Execution of new lease terms with the U.S. Navy to remove reservoir operation restrictions and allow public access (Completed in 1992).
- Approval by U.S. Bureau of Land Management of the assignment of flood easements from Metropolitan to the County (Completed in 1992).

The 1977 Transfer Agreement includes terms that ensure the ownership transfer is compatible with Metropolitan's future construction and operation needs. The Agreement specifically allows Metropolitan to connect the proposed Middle Reach of the Foothill Feeder to Morris and store at least 2,000 acre-feet of imported water during the summer months. Additionally, the 1977 Agreement allows Metropolitan to use the entire contents of Morris as an emergency supply, subject to replacement of non-Metropolitan water withdrawn.

In August 1993, County officials deferred accepting ownership of Morris because of concerns about possible environmental contamination. The County's concerns are based on the fact that the U.S. Navy conducted torpedo testing activities at Morris from 1945 to 1993 under a lease from Metropolitan. The County has agreed to share half of the cost of a sediment sampling program seeking to determine whether contamination exists at Morris. Secondarily, the study will be helpful in determining whether any contamination found is related to U.S. Navy torpedo testing, the County's upstream operations and maintenance activities, or other sources. Assuming the results are acceptable, transfer would take place under an updated agreement. The County would administer the consultant's work in coordination with Metropolitan staff. Metropolitan's obligation to contribute its share of the investigation costs would be conditioned upon the successful transfer of the facility to the County.

Over the last year, staff has participated with the County in developing the scope of services and interviewing prospective consultants. Costs for the field

sampling plan are estimated to be nearly \$1 million. Metropolitan's share would not exceed \$500,000. Although this expense is not included in the Fiscal Year 1994-95 Operations and Maintenance Budget, money will be available from contingency funds and through reduced expenditures following the transfer of Morris. The County, acting as Lead Agency has approved the sediment sampling project and has found it to be exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

While the sediment sampling program is being performed, staff will continue to evaluate the need for expanding Metropolitan's reserved storage rights at Morris related to future distribution system improvements and conjunctive-use opportunities. Before the transfer is completed, staff would have the opportunity to explore the relationship between the proposed Middle Reach of the Foothill Feeder, Morris and Metropolitan's groundwater storage agreements in the Main San Gabriel basin. Additionally, staff will evaluate possible integration of mutual operational objectives, to expand storage beyond that reserved in the 1977 Transfer Agreement.

As the work progresses, Staff will continue to keep your Board apprised.

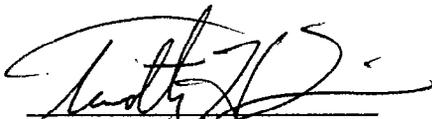
Recommendation

It is recommended that the General Manager be authorized to enter into an agreement with the County to participate in the Morris Reservoir Field Sampling Plan for an amount not to exceed \$500,000, such agreement to be in form approved by the General Counsel.

John R. Wodraska
General Manager

By Debra C. Man
Debra C. Man
Chief of Planning and Resources

Concur:


John R. Wodraska
General Manager

MHS:arb

Attachment

MORRIS RESERVOIR

