

APPROVED  
By the Board of Directors of  
The Metropolitan Water District  
of Southern California  
at its meeting held

AUG 22 1995



**MWD**

METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

*Karen E. Deff*  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

8-7

August 8, 1995

**To:** Board of Directors (Land Committee--Information)  
(Engineering and Operations Committee--Action)  
(Legal and Claims Committee-Information)

**From:** General Manager

**Subject:** Certification of the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Approval of the Central Pool Augmentation and Water Quality Project (CPA Project) [Conference with Legal Counsel - Anticipated Litigation, Significant Exposure to Litigation (Two Potential Cases) to be heard in Closed Session pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(b)]

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Engineering and Operations Committee for Action:

It is recommended that your Board adopt the Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, sent under separate cover; certify that the Final EIR for the CPA Project has been completed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act; certify that your Board has reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR and exercised their independent judgment prior to approving the project; and approve the project along with adoption of the Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

John R. Wodraska  
General Manager

Submitted by:

*N. Gregory Taylor*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
N. Gregory Taylor  
General Counsel

*Debra C. Man*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Debra C. Man, Chief  
Planning and Resources

Concur:  
*John R. Wodraska*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John R. Wodraska  
General Manager

AK:hah  
1AKCPA/board

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Central Pool Augmentation and Water Quality Project (CPA Project) is planned to augment treated water service to the Central Pool service area and to western Riverside County by taking water from Lake Mathews, treating it at a new regional drinking water plant located in nearby Eagle Valley, and delivering the treated water locally and to the Central Pool through a pipeline and tunnel system extending under the Santa Ana Mountains into Orange County.

Last September, technical and environmental feasibility analyses of the project were completed and public review of a second Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was initiated. This public review period concluded in November of last year. Over 1,000 individual comments were received on the Draft EIR.

Since that time, staff has been preparing responses to the comments received and conducting some additional technical and environmental analyses through preparation of the Final EIR. The Final EIR provides your Board with a comprehensive analysis of the CPA Project's environmental impacts, mitigation measures, and alternatives. The Final EIR and its associated documents need to be considered by your Board prior to approving the project.

The Final EIR consists of the Draft EIR, the Public Comments received, and Metropolitan's Response to Comments. The Response to Comments and Public Comments documents are being distributed under separate cover to your Board, to responsible agencies, and to all parties that commented on the Draft EIR. At the time of project approval, your Board will also need to adopt the Final Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations and Final Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program. Drafts of these documents are also being distributed to your Board under separate cover.

**DETAILED REPORT:**

The Central Pool Augmentation and Water Quality Project (CPA Project) is a system of raw water conveyance, water treatment, and treated water delivery facilities planned to augment treated water service to the Central Pool service area and to western Riverside County. The objectives of the CPA Project are to:

- meet treated water demand needs in the Central Pool for the next 20 years;
- strengthen water system reliability;
- improve water quality to meet new drinking water standards; and
- increase operational flexibility.

The project will take water from Lake Mathews, treat it at a new regional water treatment plant, and deliver the treated water locally and to the Central Pool through a pipeline and tunnel system extending under the Santa Ana Mountains into Orange County. The CPA Project's main components include:

- A new Lake Mathews Outlet Tower to feed water to the new water treatment plant, as well as to the existing distribution system;
- A new 400 cubic feet per second (cfs) drinking water treatment plant located in nearby Eagle Valley, and
- An 18-mile long, 12- to 13-foot diameter pipeline and tunnel system extending from Eagle Valley across Temescal Valley south of Corona, under the Santa Ana Mountains, and terminating with a connection to the Allen-McColloch Pipeline near El Toro.

The CPA Project is projected to cost \$575 million in current dollars. At present, construction of the project's water treatment plant and the conveyance is not anticipated to begin until sometime after the Year 2000. Pending further study, construction of the new Lake Mathews Outlet Tower could proceed earlier than the remainder of the project in order to replace the existing Outlet Tower.

Most of the impacts associated with the CPA Project will result from construction of the facilities, including increased truck traffic, noise, dust, and emissions from construction equipment. With the exception of temporary air quality impacts and potential impacts to paleontological resources due to tunnel construction, significant effects of the CPA Project can be fully avoided through adoption of feasible mitigation measures.

The CPA Project will result in some loss of natural vegetation and loss of regionally sensitive biological resources, including habitat of the Stephens' kangaroo rat and the California gnatcatcher. Implementation of the Lake Mathews Multi-species Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Communities Conservation Plan (MSHCP/NCCP) will assist in mitigating project impact to biological resources. In addition, Metropolitan is a participant in the Orange County NCCP and is proposing to commit \$1 million in funding to that program. This commitment will provide biological mitigation for project impacts in Orange County, as well as assurances that operation and maintenance activities of Metropolitan's existing facilities in Orange County will not be impaired by the presence of sensitive biological resources addressed in the plan.

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared for the project and released for public review in 1993. That EIR identified two potential water treatment plant sites in Eagle Valley as superior to all other sites considered. In December, 1993, your Board authorized site selection and further technical and environmental analyses through the preparation of a second Draft EIR. The public review period for the second Draft EIR began on September 15, 1994 and ended on November 15, 1994. More than 1,000 individual comments were received on the second Draft EIR.

Since the close of the public review period last November, staff has been preparing responses to the comments received and conducting some additional technical and environmental analyses through preparation of the Final EIR. Proposed mitigation measures have been incorporated through this effort to further reduce potential impacts of the project. One of these proposed mitigation measures is to construct the tunnel under the Santa Ana Mountains as a single tunnel rather than in two separate tunnel segments. This change eliminates nearly all of the strongly contested construction activities that would have been necessary in the Santiago Canyon area of Orange County.

Pursuant to CEQA, the Final EIR is being prepared to consist of the Draft EIR; the comments and recommendations received, including a list of the parties that commented; and Metropolitan's responses to these comments. The Final EIR will provide your Board, responsible and reviewing public agencies, and the public with a comprehensive analysis of the CPA Project's environmental impacts, mitigation measures, and alternatives. The Final EIR documents are being distributed under separate cover to your Board, to responsible agencies, and to all parties that commented on the Draft EIR.

The completion of the Final EIR is the initial phase in the process of implementing the CPA Project. Authorizations to fund design and construction will be requested subsequently as appropriate for the project schedule.

In order for the CPA Project to be approved, your Board must first certify that the Final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. Because it was found that certain impacts could not feasibly be mitigated to below a level of significance, your Board will need to consider adoption of the Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations, which concludes that the benefits of the CPA Project substantially outweigh the unavoidable adverse impacts that will result from project construction. Your Board will also need to consider adoption of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program which will be used to track compliance with project mitigation measures. Along with the Final EIR documents, a draft Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations and a draft Mitigation Monitoring Program are being distributed to your Board. The final of these documents will be provided for adoption with certification of the Final EIR to ensure inclusion of all adopted mitigation measures in project implementation.