

- **Board of Directors**
Engineering, Operations and Real Property Committee

June 12, 2001 Board Meeting

8-1

Subject

Authorize purchase of 2.5 cubic feet per second (cfs) of service rights in the Mills Gravity Line from Western Municipal Water District of Riverside County for \$1.8 million

Description

Metropolitan needs to increase its service rights in the Mills Gravity Line by 2.5 cubic feet per second (cfs) to accommodate needed fireflow protection at Lake Mathews. The most effective way to meet these needs is to purchase the additional conveyance rights from the Western Municipal Water District of Riverside County (Western).

In January 1987, Metropolitan entered into an agreement with the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA), which provided Metropolitan with the right to convey 1 cfs in the Mills Gravity Line. The Mills Gravity Line extends from the H. J. Mills Filtration Plant to Lake Mathews and beyond, following portions of Metropolitan's Box Springs, Upper and Lower Feeders rights-of-way. The agreement provided Metropolitan conveyance capacity, storage rights in SAWPA's reservoirs, along with other auxiliary services. Metropolitan provided SAWPA easements for the pipeline. In April 1990, the agreement was amended to include Western, which provided a method for Western to continually deliver high quality water. The amendment also reaffirms Metropolitan's rights to this 1 cfs of capacity and specified that SAWPA construct a "turnout structure" in order for Metropolitan to receive this water and declares that this 1 cfs service right would meet the domestic water needs at the Lake Mathews facility. Ownership and operations and maintenance of the Mills Gravity Line were later transferred wholly to Western by SAWPA.

The Lake Mathews facilities have no formal fire-flow connection other than at the turnout structure. In June 2000, Metropolitan conducted a flow test at the "turnout structure" to establish the maximum flow rate and achieved a maximum flow rate of approximately 3.5 cfs. The additional 2.5 cfs of service right capacity in the Mills Gravity Line, for a total of 3.5-cfs service right capacity meets both the domestic and fireflow needs at the Lake Mathews facility. The purchase of the additional 2.5 cfs will make official Metropolitan's usage of the water for fireflow protection off of the Mills Gravity Line for the Lake Mathews facility. The cost for 2.5 cfs of service rights in the Mills Gravity Line is approximately \$1.8 million, calculated by dividing the original pipeline cost by cfs capacity times 2.5 cfs, updated pursuant to the Engineering News Report index to reflect current value.

Policy

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 8115(a) contracts over \$250,000

CEQA

Option #1: The proposed action is categorically exempt under the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The overall activities involve the minor operation and leasing/licensing of water service rights of existing public facilities with negligible expansion of use and no possibility of significantly impacting the physical environment. As such, this proposed project qualifies under a Class 1 Categorical Exemption (Section 15301 of the State CEQA Guidelines).

Option # 2: This option provides direction to staff to investigate the possible construction of a floating barge with pumps and hoses on Lake Mathews. Environmental documentation associated with this option would then be prepared pursuant to CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines during the conceptual design phase, and submitted to the Board for certification/approval prior to project approval. Action taken by the Board on this option at this junction does not constitute a project as defined by CEQA (Section 15378(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines). In addition, where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA (Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines).

The CEQA determination for:

Option #1: Determine that pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the proposed project qualifies under a Categorical Exemption (Class 1, Section 15301 of the State CEQA Guidelines).

Option #2: Determine that the proposed direction given to staff is not subject to CEQA per Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15378(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

Board Options/Fiscal Impacts

Option #1

Adopt the CEQA determination and authorize purchase of 2.5 cfs of service rights in the Mills Gravity Line from Western.

Fiscal Impact: \$1.8 million

Option #2

Adopt the CEQA determination and direct staff to investigate an additional scenario (such as barge mounted pump and flexible piping and upgrade of the existing generator and electrical system). This will result in a period of time without a formal fire flow service.

Fiscal Impact: Increase cost (Total approximate cost of \$3.1 million)

Option #3

Defer. This will result in no formal emergency fire flow service and eventually lead to a violation being issued.

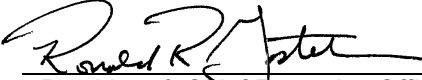
Fiscal Impact: None

Staff Recommendation

Option #1



Jill T. Wicke
Manager, Water System Operations
5/20/2001
Date



Ronald R. Oster
President & Chief Executive Officer
5/22/2001
Date