

DECEMBER 18, 2009

*CPUC certifies final
Environmental Impact
Report
For Coastal Water Project*

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) certified the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the Coastal Water Project Thursday, December 17, 2009.

The CPUC and its administrative law judge assigned to the Coastal Water Project application is expected to consider adoption of components of the Coastal Water Project early next year. Simultaneously, the boards of the

Marina Coast Water District, Monterey County Water Resources Agency, Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency along with Cal Am – the partners in a local publicly owned alternative – will consider the components for adoption on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) using the Final EIR as a basis of their deliberations.

“Going forward with a NEPA evaluation opens up doors for federal grants and low-cost state loans to reduce final design and construction costs, thus making the publicly owned project cheaper and rates lower when water is delivered to Central Coast customers,” said Jim Heitzman, general manager of the Marina Coast Water District.

The California Public Utilities Commission has expressed support for the Regional Water Project among the alternatives, and Cal Am, which has been ordered by the State Water Resources Control Board to reduce pumping from the Carmel River aquifer, is negotiating with the public water agencies to support the Regional Water Project in financing and purchase of future water supply.

Cal Am needs to find an alternative source to the Carmel River aquifer for about 10,000 acre-feet of water per year. “That is why planning and implementation of the Regional Water Project has become critical. There is a need to replace that water supply to sustain the lifestyle and economy of Monterey County,” Heitzman said.

“The Peninsula is being told by the state to dramatically lower water use. We need to provide alternative water supplies now.”

“The Regional Desalination Plant location meets Coastal Commission restrictions on open ocean intake and treats a combination of ocean and brackish groundwater,” Heitzman said. “Potential use of nearby Monterey Regional Waste Management District methane gases to generate power contributes to reduction of greenhouse gases and supplies a sustainable energy source.”

Desalinated water could come online as early as 2012.

