



# MARINA COAST WATER DISTRICT

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### **COASTAL COMMISSION STAFF REPORT: CAL-AM PROJECT FURTHERS “DISCRIMINATORY LAND USE PRACTICE” IN MARINA**

*Marina Coast Water District supports commission staff’s call for environmental justice*

**MARINA, Calif.–August 31, 2020:** The Marina Coast Water District (MCWD) supports the findings of a California Coastal Commission staff report released August 25 recommending denial of the desalination project proposed by California American Water (Cal-Am). The report calls out the environmental injustice of the project and backs the expansion of Pure Water Monterey (PWM) as a viable alternative.

According to the report, the Cal-Am project will result in “adverse coastal resource effects within the community of Marina that is already disproportionately burdened by many other industrial uses and would receive none of the project benefits. There is a long history of government institutions allowing unwanted industrial development to be concentrated in underserved communities of color without their consent. Approving yet another would perpetuate this discriminatory land use practice in Marina.”

MCWD, a 60-year old water district formed by voters, supports the Commission staff’s recommendation for denial and its recognition of the many drawbacks and adverse impacts of Cal-Am’s proposed project.

“The groundwater basins that Cal-Am would destroy with this project are important,” says Keith Van Der Maaten, MCWD general manager. “So are the coastal resources, ecosystems, and the hardworking low-income households in the Fort Ord and Marina area that have been, and would continue to be, mistreated by Cal-Am throughout this process.”

The staff report also finds that the “Pure Water Expansion Project is a feasible alternative to the proposed Project with fewer environmental justice impacts than Cal-Am’s Project. It would provide adequate current and future water supplies to meet the area’s water needs in a more affordable manner and would also eliminate adverse coastal impacts and reduce environmental justice concerns.”

MCWD has been a leading proponent of a PWM expansion as a more economically feasible and equitable water solution for the region. An April 21 [report](#) by nationally renowned water supply and demand expert Peter Mayer, engineer and founder of Water DM, demonstrated that a PWM

expansion could provide sufficient additional water supply to meet the needs of Cal-Am's Monterey District for at least two decades, providing an additional 2,250 acre-feet per year of supply to Cal Am's available water resources, creating sufficient supply potential to meet annual future demand in 2040 by more than 1,200 acre-feet (an 11.9% surplus).

Van Der Maaten and MCWD urge the Commission to deny the project when it comes to a vote September 17, to stop Cal-Am from profiting at the expense of the people of Marina and Fort Ord, the groundwater basin, and groundwater-dependent ecosystems. MCWD is a groundwater sustainability agency (GSA) and as such works collaboratively to protect the region's groundwater through groundwater sustainability plans.

"There is a better way forward that allows our communities and coast to be protected *and* solve the water supply needs--the expansion of the current Pure Water Monterey Project," says Van Der Maaten.

The Commission is scheduled to consider the Cal-Am desalination project during a special meeting held virtually on September 17, 2020. To read the full staff report, access the meeting, or submit speaking requests in advance, go to <https://www.coastal.ca.gov/meetings/agenda/#/2020/9>.

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#### **About Marina Coast Water District and MCWD Groundwater Sustainability Agency**

The Marina Coast Water District (MCWD) was formed in 1960 as the Marina County Water District by a group of local citizens. It was first a municipal-owned water system with boundaries to coincide with the existing Marina Fire District. In 1966, voters authorized the sale of water bonds to acquire a privately-owned water company serving the area. With the closure of the Fort Ord military base in 1997, the Army contracted MCWD to operate its water and wastewater systems and, in 2001, officially transferred the systems to MCWD. Today, MCWD is an exclusive groundwater sustainability agency (GSA) in both the Monterey sub-basin and the 180/400 sub-basin, responsible for developing groundwater sustainability plans. MCWD is governed by a five-member board of directors elected by the voters. For more information, please visit [www.mcwd.org](http://www.mcwd.org).