



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of Santa Cruz and Soquel Creek Water District Announce Release of the Draft Environmental Impact Report and Public Hearings for the Proposed scwd² Regional Seawater Desalination Project

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. (May 10, 2013)

The City of Santa Cruz (City) and the Soquel Creek Water District (District) have partnered to evaluate the **scwd²** Regional Seawater Desalination Project (proposed project). A Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) (SCH# 2010112038) for the proposed project, which would be located in the greater Santa Cruz area and provide up to 2.5 million gallons per day (mgd) of supplemental water, will be released for public review on Monday, May 13, 2013.

Both agencies have conducted evaluations of their water shortage challenges and have identified the need for a reliable supplemental water source that will (1) provide needed supply during droughts, (2) allow for more water to be left in local streams and rivers to protect threatened and endangered fish, and (3) restore protective groundwater levels to help prevent contamination of our groundwater supply by seawater intrusion.

"While conservation and cutbacks during drought conditions have helped reduce overall water use, a supplemental supply is needed to meet customer needs and environmental obligations," said Bill Kocher, Water Director for the City of Santa Cruz.

The City's Integrated Water Plan (IWP) process and the District's Integrated Resources Plan (IRP) process both identified a diversified approach of prioritizing water conservation, curtailment (or cutbacks) during drought conditions, and seawater desalination as the preferred supplemental supply to meet short and long term needs. In 2007, the agencies partnered to form the **scwd²** Desalination Program to further evaluate desalination and have been conducting numerous studies to inform the environmental review of the proposed project.

The public is encouraged to review and comment on the Draft EIR.

"We have conducted a thorough analysis to identify and evaluate the environmental effects of the proposed project so that policy makers, community members and other stakeholders can be

*informed and able to participate in the environmental review process,” stated Heidi Luckenbach, **scwd**² Desalination Program Coordinator.*

The Draft EIR will be released for public review on Monday, May 13, 2013 and identifies the significant and potentially significant effects of the proposed project on the environment and considers feasible mitigation measures and/or alternatives to substantially lessen or eliminate the significant environmental effects.

*“We are often asked, ‘What about more conservation and water transfers instead of the proposed desalination project?’ These alternatives plus others that were raised in previous planning documents and through the public scoping period are addressed in the Draft EIR,” explained Melanie Mow Schumacher, **scwd**² Public Outreach Coordinator.*

The Draft EIR will be available for public review and comment from May 13, 2013 – July 15, 2013. Copies of the Draft EIR can be reviewed at the following locations:

- Project website at www.scwd2desal.org
- City of Santa Cruz Water Department, 212 Locust St., Suite C, Santa Cruz, CA
- Soquel Creek Water District Office, 5180 Soquel Drive, Soquel, CA
- Offices of the County Clerk of the Board and the City of Santa Cruz, City Clerk
- Local public library reference desks in the greater Santa Cruz area: Downtown Branch, Branciforte Branch, Garfield Park Branch, Live Oak Branch, Capitola Branch, Aptos Branch, La Selva Branch, Scotts Valley Branch and Porter Memorial Library

As part of the planning process, public hearings will be held to solicit comments on the draft environmental document for the proposed project. Public hearings are scheduled for:

- Monday, June 3, 2013 at Seacliff Inn, 7500 Old Dominion Ct, Aptos: 12:00 PM – 2:30 PM
- Monday, July 1, 2013 at First Congregational Church, 900 High Street, Santa Cruz: 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Each hearing will include an open house and presentation, followed by a public comment period. Generally the same information will be presented at each meeting.

Written comments on the Draft EIR should be sent by mail or email before 5:00 p.m. on July 15, 2013 to:

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For more information please contact Melanie Mow Schumacher at melanies@soquelcreekwater.org or by phone at (831) 475-8501 ext. 153. For more information about **scwd**², visit the website: www.scwd2desal.org

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