

# CEO BULLETIN



To: Board of Directors  
From: Norma J. Camacho, CEO

Week of December 27, 2019 – January 2, 2020

Board Executive Limitation Policy EL-7:

*The Board Appointed Officers shall inform and support the Board in its work. Further, a BAO shall 1) inform the Board of relevant trends, anticipated adverse media coverage, or material external and internal changes, particularly changes in the assumptions upon which any Board policy has previously been established and 2) report in a timely manner an actual or anticipated noncompliance with any policy of the Board.*

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## 1. Federal Fiscal Year 2020 Appropriations - Funding of Interest to Valley Water

On Friday, December 20, 2019, President Trump signed a federal Fiscal Year 2020 spending package, which includes \$1.4 trillion in funding for federal agencies through September 30, 2020. The federal government had been operating under a continuing resolution since October 1, 2019 and enactment of the FY 2020 appropriations came as the deadline was set to expire at midnight on December 20, 2019.

In March 2019, Valley Water submitted funding requests for several agencies and departments that fund Valley Water projects and priorities and continued to advocate for this funding throughout the year. The final FY20 spending package includes the following funding sources of interest to Valley Water:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Construction - \$2.68 billion: This account funds construction of projects such as the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Project and, if included in the USACE's Work Plan that is currently underway, could fund the Upper

#### Guadalupe River Flood Protection Project.

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Investigations - \$151 million: This account funds feasibility studies and, if included in the USACE's Work Plan currently underway, could help fund the Phase II study for the Shoreline Project and potentially the General Reevaluation Report for the Upper Guadalupe Project.
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Title XVI Reclamation and Reuse Program - \$63.62 million: This program is a potential source of funding for the San Jose Area Water Reclamation and Reuse Program. However, nationwide demand for these funds continues to far outpace supply.
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations - \$175 million: This nationwide competitive grant program is a potential source of funds for the Upper Llagas Creek Flood Protection Project. Staff has strongly advocated for continued funding for this account, which could help move construction of the Upper Llagas Project forward, as well as for the Project's grant funding application.
- California Bay-Delta Restoration (CALFED) - \$33 million: This program funds, among other projects, the San Luis Low Point Improvement Project, for which the Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project is currently the preferred alternative.
- Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act Storage - \$134 million: This account funds new water storage projects and could potentially help fund the Pacheco Project.
- Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development Program - \$1 million: This new nationwide grant program through the Environmental Protection Agency funds important water workforce training.

Now that the spending package has been signed, this starts the 60-day timeframe during which the USACE prepares their FY 20 Work Plan requests. Valley Water is working with our Congressional representatives to influence the Work Plan and advocate for Valley Water's projects and priorities with the USACE as well as other federal agencies.

For further information, please contact Rachael Gibson at (408) 630-2884.

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## 2. Hearing Conservation Program Requirements

Under Title 8, §5097, of the California General Industry Safety Orders, employers are required to develop and maintain a Hearing Conservation Program whenever employee noise exposures equal or exceed an 8-hour time-weighted average sound level (TWA) of 85 decibels. Valley Water conducted noise level monitoring and determined that Valley Water staff involved in tasks associated with vegetation removal and maintenance operations on creeks and dams/spillways using chainsaws, pole saws, movers, weed eaters, and wood chippers are potentially exposed to the regulatory TWA 85 decibels sound level that requires them to be monitored and protected by a Hearing Conservation Program. Other areas identified include construction/stream maintenance sites where heavy equipment, large pumps, circular saws, and jack hammers are being utilized.

For those employees identified as needing to be in the Hearing Conservation Program, on February 5 and 6, 2020, Valley Water is coordinating on-site audiograms (hearing tests). Audiograms are scheduled annually and are a critical component of Valley Water's Hearing Conservation Program.

The audiogram results provide verification that current safety practices and personal protective equipment are adequate in protecting staff from suffering hearing loss. Any staff that show signs of hearing loss are identified early, their work is reviewed for proper engineering controls, and affected staff are required to undergo a process of being fitted (or re-fitted) with hearing protectors, and retrained on the proper use of hearing protection devices.

For further information, please contact Tina Yoke at (408) 630-2385.

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### **3. Water Utility Department Operations Center (DOC) Activation**

On Friday December 27, 2019, the Water Utility Enterprise activated its Department Operations Center (DOC) to coordinate and manage emergency repair work on the Almaden Valley Pipeline (AVP). The repair will be performed on a section of the pipeline that is approximately 120 feet in length and is located near the south end of Almaden Expressway where it crosses Alamos Creek. This section of the AVP was neither identified for repair nor repaired when the pipeline was out of service in 2017.

The planned return to service date for AVP is February 27, 2020, which will coincide with the end of the longer outage already under way for the Cross Valley Pipeline and thus will not have an incremental impact on retailers. Valley Water is reasonably confident that we can meet this return to service by date and are working on outreach and communications plans to inform our retailers, local residents and other stakeholders.

For further information, please contact Sam Bogale at (408) 630-3505.

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### **4. Keegan**

**Provide Board with Access Valley Water comments received on stream maintenance sorted by improved and unimproved channels  
R-19-0017**

The Access Valley Water (AVW) database is not configured to sort requests based on improved or unimproved channels nor by Valley Water property ownership. Requests for service are sorted by activity type, such as erosion repair, trash, encampments, graffiti, and recreation which are referred to and addressed by the Field Operations Unit. Other activities, including trees or weed abatement in stream vegetation and landscape are referred to and addressed by the Vegetation Field Operation Unit.

The Field Operations Unit logs an average of 1,500 referrals annually and Vegetation Field Operations recorded over 500 referrals in 2019. Of those, Valley Water staff estimates that about 25% to 35% of the requests are for work on private or other public entity property, a portion of which are requests for work along trails. Where applicable, staff creates a service request to the appropriate public agency on behalf of the caller or explains Valley Water's role relative to private property. All inquiries relating to property where there is no Valley Water land right are not captured as this type of inquiry is also answered directly and not logged into the AVW system.

Efforts are currently underway to replace the AVW customer interface software with a new system. As a part of that effort, Valley Water is working to include improvements into the new software, which would include access to our fee and easement GIS layers. Our goal is to enable auto generated responses to requests for service based on land rights that would provide information explaining the limitations for work requests outside Valley Water right of way along with referrals to other agencies. In the interim, Valley Water is exploring options for better accessibility to public

property ownership maps on our website.

For further information, please contact Sue Tippetts at (408) 630-2253.

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**5. Varela  
San Luis Transmission Project Rate Impact Analysis  
I-19-0020**

On November 7, 2019, Director Varela asked Valley Water staff for a rate impact analysis of the Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) proposed San Luis Transmission Project and for the potential impact on the benefit-cost analysis due to the pending Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) Order 841/841-A. The project is a proposed new transmission line that would convey federally supplied power, and perhaps State supplied power, to the south Delta pumps and also facilities in the vicinity of the San Luis Reservoir. Valley Water accordingly requested an analysis from Reclamation but this information has not yet been provided as Reclamation's economic analysis of the project continues to evolve.

On February 15, 2018, FERC issued Order 841/841-A with the intent to remove barriers that discourage participation in electric storage projects. This order, while generally helpful for electric storage projects, could negatively affect the economic viability of the San Luis Transmission Project. Reclamation will assess the impact of the FERC order in its economic analysis.

Valley Water will provide an estimate of Valley Water's costs due to the project once Reclamation provides its updated economic analysis.

For further information, please contact Garth Hall at (408) 630-2750.

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**6. Keegan  
Investigate homeless encampments on Guadalupe River between Willow and  
Minnesota, per Director Keegan's December 30, 2019 Email  
I-19-0026**

The area between West Alma Avenue and Willow Street along Lelong Street is an area frequented by the homeless population. The first scheduled encampment cleanup of the new year will be conducted during the week of January 13, 2020 and this location is included on that list.

In response to the constituent's concern about encampments at this location, even though the site is not a sanctioned encampment, there is a low success rate in permanently relocating campers following a cleanup and the likelihood of eventual re-encampment in this area remains a strong possibility. Valley Water continues to be responsive to community cleanup requests and support long term measures to reduce homelessness in the county.

For further information, please contact Sue Tippetts at (408) 630-2253.

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