



Santa Clara Valley Water District

File No.: 19-0248

Agenda Date: 3/26/2019

Item No.: 4.2.

BOARD AGENDA MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT:

Environmental and Water Resources Committee's Recommendations and Associated Staff Analyses from the Committee's January 28, 2019, Meeting.

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider and act on the following recommendations by the Environmental and Water Resources Committee:

- A. Consider keeping the Agricultural rate as low as possible and equitable while finding other sources. If it is not equitable then the larger farmers should pay the higher rates; and
- B. Consider having staff analyze and propose two pathways:
 - 1. A one-half percent (1/2%) increase every year over 8 years up to 10%; and
 - 2. Keep staff's recommendation with an added administrative task and associated costs with the co-oping of smaller farms that don't meet the acreage qualification of the Williamson Act/Conservation Easement, and come up with best management practices and water conservation measures.

SUMMARY:

At the Environmental and Water Resources Committee's Meeting on January 28, 2019, the Committee took the following action:

Recommendation 1:

Voted by majority to encourage that the Board of Directors consider keeping the Agricultural rate as low as possible and equitable while finding other sources. If it is not equitable then the larger farmers should pay the higher rates.

Staff Analysis 1:

The District cannot legally penalize a farmer just by the size of their operation. However, it should be noted that the District's groundwater production charge applies uniformly to each acre-foot of water pumped such that those who pump more pay more. The staff analysis of the Open Space Credit policy is an on-going effort and the results will be presented to the Board in the near future, and will be shared with the Committee. Staff hours to address this issue is unknown at this time.

Recommendation 2:

Voted by majority to encourage that the Board of Directors consider

having staff analyze and propose two pathways:

1. A one-half percent (1/2%) increase every year over 8 years up to 10%, and
2. Keep staff's recommendation with an added administrative task and associated costs with the coping of smaller farms that don't meet the acreage qualification of the Williamson Act/Conservation Easement, and come up with best management practices and water conservation measures.

Staff Analysis 2:

At the Board's direction, staff could easily calculate the Committee's request of raising the agricultural rate ½% per year over 8 years up to an amount equal to 10% of the Municipal and Industrial groundwater charge. However, to address the second part of the Committee's request would be too costly to administer and difficult to verify compliance with best management practices and water conservation measures specific to the farming community. Currently, staff does not have the expertise in this agricultural area, thus a budget, staffing plan and an organization entity would need to be created to comply with this request.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact associated with this item.

CEQA:

The recommended action does not constitute a project under CEQA because it does not have a potential for resulting in direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.

UNCLASSIFIED MANAGER:

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