



City of Santa Ana
20 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana, CA 92701
Staff Report
May 20, 2025

TOPIC: Agreement Amendment for Interagency Emergency Interconnection Study

AGENDA TITLE

First Amendment to Interagency Agreement with the Orange County Water District and Moulton Niguel Water District

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Authorize the City Manager to execute the first amendment to the agreement with Orange County Water District and Moulton Niguel Water District, to extend the term of the agreement to June 30, 2028, and to amend the scope of work to include a final design of the proposed infrastructure based on the preliminary design analysis (Agreement No. A-2025-XXX).

GOVERNMENT CODE §84308 APPLIES: No

DISCUSSION

The Public Works Agency's (PWA) Water Resources Division oversees and maintains the daily operations of the City's water distribution system which serves more than 45,000 customer connections. The water system is comprised of approximately 480 miles of water main, 21 groundwater wells, seven pump stations, 10 reservoirs with a storage capacity of 49 million gallons, four pressure regulating stations, and seven connection points to Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MET) water supplies.

The City pumps approximately 85% of its potable water from the Orange County Groundwater Basin, which is managed by Orange County Water District (OCWD), while the remainder of the City's potable water needs come from imported water sources via seven MET connections located within the City.

As a result of the City's investment in water supply capacity, the City's 2017 Water Master Plan identified that the City's water system has adequate capacity to supply the City's maximum daily demands for existing, near-term, and buildout scenarios using only groundwater wells.

Moulton Niguel Water District (MNWD), which serves more than 170,000 customers in Laguna Niguel, Aliso Viejo, Mission Viejo, Laguna Hills, Dana Point, and San Juan Capistrano, relies solely on imported MET water to meet its customers' potable water needs. MNWD is not able to draw from the Orange County Groundwater Basin, as the City of Santa Ana does, because the groundwater basin is only accessible to agencies in northern Orange County that fall within its boundaries. Due to MNWD's sole reliance on imported water, the district is vulnerable to natural disasters or infrastructure failure that cause outages in the MET system.

On May 17, 2022, City Council approved an Interagency Agreement (Exhibit 1) with OCWD and MNWD to complete a preliminary design study and environmental analysis to identify the needed environmental mitigations and the necessary infrastructure modifications to Santa Ana's water facilities and distribution system to enable Santa Ana to convey water from the Orange County Groundwater Basin to the water transmission pipeline that supplies south Orange County water agencies in an emergency. Data and information from the study has been used by MNWD to develop a scope of work for a potential program to convey groundwater to MNWD in the event an emergency renders the MET's water delivery infrastructure incapable of making deliveries. Through this potential program, MNWD would build resiliency and provide improved emergency preparedness benefits for the City through increased groundwater production, upgraded backup power, and other critical water infrastructure improvements. The potential emergency water supplies for MNWD would only be available when conditions would have no adverse impacts to Santa Ana's water supply operations.

The construction of any facilities recommended as a result of the design, study, and environmental analysis will first require approval by the governing boards of all parties and the development of a subsequent agreement for the construction, operation, and funding of the proposed interconnection. Staff recommends the approval of the recommended action to allow for the preliminary design study and environmental analysis efforts to continue and for final design to begin. There is no cost to the City associated to the study, all costs are borne by MNWD. The City, MNWD, and OCWD reserve the right not to enter into any subsequent agreement after the completion of the study and analysis. (Exhibit 2).

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

There is no environmental impact associated with the action.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with the action.

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EXHIBIT(S)

1. Item #30, May 17, 2022 Staff Report
2. Amendment to Interagency Agreement with the Orange County Water District and Moulton Niguel Water District

Submitted By: Nabil Saba, P.E., Executive Director – Public Works Agency

Approved By: Alvaro Nuñez, City Manager