

Bay Area Regional Desalination Project
Public Meetings Summary
Fall 2006

I. Overview

The Bay Area Regional Desalination Project is a partnership between the Bay Area's four largest water agencies, Contra Costa Water District, East Bay Municipal Utility District, and Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD), to explore the development of regional desalination facilities. The project is currently finishing a feasibility study on the three site alternatives and will implement a pilot facility at one of the sites in 2007.

As part of the public outreach effort during the feasibility phase, the partner agencies conducted two public meetings in October 2006 – an open house in San Jose and a presentation to the Bay Area Water Forum. The purpose of the public forums was to let people know about the project, what's been done to date, and next steps. The partner agencies have offered to brief any organization interested and will conduct additional presentations as the project proceeds.

II. Public Open House

The partner agencies held a public open house on October 11, 2006 from 7 pm – 8:30 pm at the Santa Clara Valley Water District board room in San Jose. The open house was publicly noticed through the following means:

- Newspaper ads
- Press release to local media
- Invitation letters to environmental stakeholders
- Notice on the project website (www.RegionalDesal.com)

The president of the SCVWD Board of Directors and SCVWD staff provided opening remarks. Information on the project was relayed through a series of exhibit boards, as well as a video on desalination, fact sheets, and background reports. The exhibit boards included information on the desalination process, project background, a map of potential desalination site alternatives, project costs, schedule, and environmental and other challenges. Project staff helped to explain the exhibits and answer questions.

Approximately 11 people attended, including members of the public, staff and students from San Jose State University, and representatives from consulting agencies. Comments and input were summarized from written comment cards and discussion among project staff and attendees.

III. Presentation to the Bay Area Water Forum (BAWF)

The partner agencies gave a presentation to the Bay Area Water Forum, an organization of local water agencies and other regulatory agencies, on Monday, October 30, 2006 at the Elihu Harris State Office Building in Oakland. The presentation was noticed on the project website, as well as through BAWF's own notification procedures. Approximately

25 representatives from various water-related agencies and interest groups attended the presentation, including various water districts, the Department of Water Resources, State Water Resources Control Board, ABAG, the Bay Area Council, and the Bay Area League of Women Voters.

IV. Summary of Public Comment

Following is a summary of key comments raised during both meetings, grouped by general topic for ease of review.

General

- How does desalination work?
- What public outreach efforts are being done for this project?

Technology

- Have the participating agencies looked at desalination technologies in countries with more advanced capabilities and experience in this field?
- Will you be testing multiple technologies in the pilot, or just one? What will be tested?

Environmental Issues

- Desal plants in other areas have closed due to environmental impacts.
- What happens to the brine that is created through the desal process?
- Brine discharge and environmental impacts, especially in the Delta, are a concern.
- Have the participating agencies looked at using brine?
- Impingement and entrainment and its negative impact on marine life, specifically fish, is a concern.
- What are the thresholds for determining acceptable levels of impacts to marine life?
- What are the energy requirements for desalination?
- Like that participating agencies are looking at green energy.

Cost

- What are the differences in cost between sites under evaluation?
- Why are the energy costs so variable between sites?
- What are the different costs for dry years versus wet years?

Pilot Plant Site Alternatives

- What is your process for ranking sites during the pre-feasibility phase? How long will it take to choose the pilot plant site?
- Where in East Contra Costa would the pilot plant be?
- Was a pilot plant at the Alviso aqueduct considered, where there is a wastewater outfall?
- Was a pilot plant in the South Bay refuge considered? The South Bay needs saltier water, so it could benefit from the discharge.

Water Supply

- Will water rights need to be acquired for the pilot plant? If so, will this pose difficulties for some of the sites?
- Like that participating agencies are looking ahead at how to fulfill our future water supply needs.
- Will the pilot plant run constantly, even during wet years?
- What percent of the combined agencies' water usage will the proposed desal plant produce?

V. Appendix

- Open house exhibit boards
- Open house notification materials
- Open house photos