ITEM 7.6  REGIONAL CONVEYANCE SYSTEM STUDY – PHASE B

ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

THE ATTACHED CORRESPONDENCE WAS RECEIVED AFTER POSTING OF THE AGENDA PACKET AND SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS FOR THE AUGUST 27, 2020 BOARD MEETING
August 26, 2020

Chair Jim Madaffer and Members of the Board of Directors
San Diego County Water Authority
4677 Overland Avenue
San Diego, CA 92123

Dear Chair Madaffer and Members of the Board of Directors,

I wish to express support of the Phase B study for the SDCWA Regional Conveyance System (RCS) Feasibility project.

Otay Water District staff evaluated both the CWA and Member Agency Managers reports and expressed support for the Phase B study to the Otay Water District Board of Directors at their August 24, 2020 Special Meeting. During this meeting, the Board members also expressed support in continuing the RCS Feasibility project and the Phase B study.

We feel that a project of this magnitude is exactly the type of project that CWA should be evaluating. The potential positive benefits for our region, including the long-term cost savings of this project, is significant and, because of this, a thorough analysis must be performed.

The analysis of this project must be broader and more robust than the initial Phase A studies performed by either CWA or the Member Agency Managers. The landscape is complex and, therefore, a more thorough investigation is required concerning the simple fiscal evaluation of construction, financing, and operational costs that were covered by the Phase A study.

There are various agreements, lawsuits, perspectives, water rights, sensitive timing, partnerships, and a long-range time horizon, that needs to be incorporated into this evaluation. There are also multiple financial factors, which can be modified slightly, that have a large fiscal impact. All these issues need to be considered. As the Phase B study is expected to expand on these issues, Otay Water District supports Phase B.

Sincerely,

Jose Martinez
General Manager
San Diego County Water Authority Board:

As a San Diego County resident and ratepayer, I am writing to express my disapproval of SDCWA's continued study of the proposed Regional Conveyance System.

The Regional Conveyance System would increase energy consumption and emissions at a time when it is crucial to find ways to lower them, would cut through valued natural landscapes and unstable fault lines, and commits generations of San Diegans to even higher water rates.

Continued study of this environmentally and economically untenable project wastes ratepayer money during a time when it is imperative SDCWA focuses on ensuring the affordability of services for low-income residents. I urge you to vote against advancing further study of the RCS at your August 27 meeting.

Sincerely,

Linda Badii

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August 24, 2020

Ms. Sandy Kerl
General Manager
San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA)
4677 Overland Ave
San Diego, CA 92123

Sent via email

Dear General Manager Kerl:

On behalf of the below signed organizations and our many thousands of members working to advance environmental and social justice and equity throughout the San Diego region, we’re writing to express our opposition to the advancement of Phase B of the Regional Conveyance System (RCS) study and project.

It is telling to us that 18 of the Authority’s 24 member agencies felt it necessary to spend additional public funds to commission their own independent Member Agency Managers (MAM) study to verify the assumptions used by the SDCWA’s consultants in development of the Phase A RCS report, and to ensure ratepayers and the public interest were represented during these proceedings. We believe the findings of the MAM Independent Consultant study are more than enough to demonstrate this project is misguided, unaffordable, and inequitable.
If implemented, this $6-plus Billion project would dig, tunnel, and pump water over 100 miles through San Diego state parks, a national forest, several active earthquake fault lines, and some of our region’s most prized wild lands. As the MAM study shows, if implemented, this project would increase energy demands by 40% over our current conveyance, significantly increasing greenhouse gas emissions while bringing minimal long-term economic or community benefits to San Diego.

Even in the face of the MAM study that showed this project is not cost-effective and would further drive up our water rates, already among the most expensive in the State and country, the SDCWA staff is recommending the expenditure of an additional $1.3 million to further this project during a time of crisis – a time when all efforts should be made to ensure the affordability of essential services to San Diegans. Instead, the staff’s recommendation would waste an additional million-plus dollars of ratepayer money to further study an environmentally destructive pipe dream. This is the definition of throwing good money after bad. In a time when funds are scarce and San Diego families are facing a crisis unlike any other, we strongly urge this Board to reject moving forward with Phase B of the study and to reallocate these funds towards water rate assistance for low-income families in our community.

Our region is now positioned to address our water needs in a more environmentally and socially just way, by integrating management to achieve multiple benefits for our communities. For instance, a recent City of San Diego study showed that 20% of our water supplies could potentially come from urban stormwater capture, and yield a savings of over half a billion dollars.¹ Approaches such as wastewater recycling, stormwater capture, and green infrastructure bring equitable solutions and benefits to our urban environment and communities including additional supplies, green space development and restoration, improved water and air quality, reduction of flooding, creation of green jobs and job training, and carbon sequestration, to name just a few.² The RCS does exactly the opposite. It is, at its core, an 18th century attempt at a solution to our 21st century problems and needs, is an affront to ratepayer protections and good governance, and exemplifies the disconnect still present between the County Water Authority and the public and communities that depend on affordable, equitable water policies.

Our collective organizations urge you to vote no on furthering this project and allocate the money budgeted for further study towards rate-assistance for low income families struggling to pay their water bills during this time of crisis.

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¹ “Storm Water Harvesting Augmentation Analysis”, by Tetra Tech. Task Order 38, June 2016, City of San Diego.
² For more on the many water, climate, air, and community health benefits of incorporating and funding green infrastructure, see: https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/benefits-green-infrastructure.
We look forward to working with our local water agencies towards the development of a just, equitable approach to solving our water supply, water quality, and climate issues in our region.

Sincerely,

Matt O’Malley
Executive Director & Managing Attorney
San Diego Coastkeeper

Diane Takvorian
Executive Director
Environmental Health Coalition

Marco Gonzalez
Executive Director
Coastal Environmental Rights Foundation

Nicole Capretz
Executive Director
Climate Action Campaign

Dave Hogan
San Diego Chapter Chair
Sierra Club

Laura Walsh
Policy Coordinator
The Surfrider Foundation San Diego Chapter

Marie Chen
Public Policy Co-Chair
SanDiego350

Lydia Van Note
Board President
San Diego League of Conservation Voters

Dan Silver, MD
Chief Executive Officer
Endangered Habitats League

Pam Heatherington
Board of Directors Board Member
Environmental Center of San Diego

Laura Hunter
Escondido Neighbors United

Jim Peugh
Conservation Chair
San Diego Audubon Society

Zachary Plopper
Associate Director
WILDCOAST

David Garmon, MD
Tubb Canyon Desert Conservancy

Chelsi Sparti
Associate Director
Samuel Lawrence Foundation

Tara Hammond
Chief Environmental Officer
Hammond Climate Solutions

Kyra Greene
Executive Director
Center on Policy Initiatives

Duncan McFetridge
Executive Director
Cleveland National Forest Foundation
Save Our Forests & Ranchlands
Sam Mazzeo  
Partner  
Better.

Dr. Cindy Lin  
Founder  
Hey Social Good

Emma Jayne Harrison, Ph.D.  
Member  
Center for Interdisciplinary Environmental Justice

Connor Franklin Rey  
Partnerships Team Representative  
Sunrise Movement San Diego

Michael Torti  
Co-Chair, Environmental Committee  
Business For Good

Leslie Reynolds  
Executive Director  
Groundwork San Diego – Chollas Creek
San Diego County Water Authority Board:

As a San Diego County resident and ratepayer, I am writing to express my disapproval of SDCWA’s continued study of the proposed Regional Conveyance System.

The Regional Conveyance System would increase energy consumption and emissions at a time when it is crucial to find ways to lower them, would cut through valued natural landscapes and unstable fault lines, and commits generations of San Diegans to even higher water rates.

Continued study of this environmentally and economically untenable project wastes ratepayer money during a time when it is imperative SDCWA focuses on ensuring the affordability of services for low-income residents. I urge you to vote against advancing further study of the RCS at your August 27 meeting.

Sincerely,

Ashley Goldman
San Diego, 92102
Submitted on: August 26, 2020 - 3:17pm

Submitted values are:

==============================================
Name
Vincent F Lazaneo

Email
vlazaneo@san.rr.com

Phone Number
8585784459

Question / Comment
I oppose allocating funds for Phase B of the RCS study. I believe this project is too costly and will harm the environment. It would be better to fund water reclamation projects to better use the water we a currently wasting.

Category
Conservation

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The results of this submission may be viewed at:
http://www.sdcwa.org/admin/structure/webform/manage/ask_a_question/submission/2075

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From: Mandy Love <MLove@swe-inc.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 26, 2020 9:44:34 AM
To: Hattam, Mark <MHattam@sdcwa.org>
Subject: Please stop the RCS feasibility study

San Diego County Water Authority Board:

As a San Diego County resident and ratepayer, I am writing to express my disapproval of SDCWA’s continued study of the proposed Regional Conveyance System.

The Regional Conveyance System would increase energy consumption and emissions at a time when it is crucial to find ways to lower them, would cut through valued natural landscapes and unstable fault lines, and commits generations of San Diegans to even higher water rates.

Continued study of this environmentally and economically untenable project wastes ratepayer money during a time when it is imperative SDCWA focuses on ensuring the affordability of services for low-income residents. I urge you to vote against advancing further study of the RCS at your August 27 meeting.

Regards,

MANDY LOVE
Marketing & Web Specialist

Phone: (800) 307-5700 ext. 213
Website: swe-inc.com
Address: 9060 Activity Rd.
        Suite F
        San Diego 92126
This email was sent by someone outside the Water Authority’s business network. Please exercise caution before opening any attachments or hyperlinks. Contact the Information Systems Service Desk(x6630) for assistance with any questionable email sources, content or requests.
Hello,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment publicly on San Diego Audubon Society's opposition to the $1.3 million Phase B of the Regional Conveyance System. This second phase of the project is not warranted due to the findings detailed in the MAM independent study, clearly showing that, on economics alone, it's a waste of money.

Our 3000+ members in San Diego are also very concerned about the impacts to birds, other wildlife and their habitat because of the construction, long-term habitat loss, and climate change impacts of a duplicative infrastructure project spanning the miles of sensitive habitat between San Diego and the state border. This area is hunting grounds for Golden Eagles and other birds of prey, important habitat for rare plants and reptiles, and critical habitat for multiple endangered birds.

This broad line of fragmenting infrastructure should be avoided, and the money should go to less destructive and more equitable projects such as defraying the cost of water for ratepayers in this economic recession and investing in positive projects such as stormwater recapture and other conservation measures.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Andrew Meyer

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San Diego County Water Authority Board:

As a San Diego County resident and ratepayer, I am writing to express my disapproval of SDCWA’s continued study of the proposed Regional Conveyance System.

The Regional Conveyance System would increase energy consumption and emissions at a time when it is crucial to find ways to lower them, would cut through valued natural landscapes and unstable fault lines, and commits generations of San Diegans to even higher water rates.

Continued study of this environmentally and economically untenable project wastes ratepayer money during a time when it is imperative SDCWA focuses on ensuring the affordability of services for low-income residents. I urge you to vote against advancing further study of the RCS at your August 27 meeting.

Sincerely,

Sandra Peters
San Diego County Water Authority Board:

I write to express my disapproval of SDCWA’s continued study of the proposed Regional Conveyance System.

The Regional Conveyance System would increase energy consumption and emissions at a time when it is crucial to find ways to lower them, would cut through valued natural landscapes and unstable fault lines, and commits generations of San Diegans to even higher water rates.

Continued study of this environmentally and economically untenable project wastes ratepayer money during a time when it is imperative SDCWA focuses on ensuring the affordability of services for low-income residents. I urge you to vote against advancing further study of the RCS at your August 27 meeting. There are better alternatives for our water supply.

Sincerely,
Katie

This email was sent by someone outside the Water Authority’s business network. Please exercise caution before opening any attachments or hyperlinks. Contact the Information Systems Service Desk(x6630) for assistance with any questionable email sources, content or requests.
San Diego County Water Authority Board:

As a San Diego County resident and ratepayer, I am writing to express my disapproval of SDCWA’s continued study of the proposed Regional Conveyance System. I strongly support the work of San Diego Coastkeeper, Sierra Club and other respected citizen organizations who have offered the strong criticism of this proposal.

The Regional Conveyance System would increase energy consumption and emissions at a time when it is crucial to find ways to lower them, would cut through valued natural landscapes and unstable fault lines, and commits generations of San Diegans to even higher water rates.

Continued study of this environmentally and economically untenable project wastes ratepayer money during a time when it is imperative SDCWA focuses on ensuring the affordability of services for low-income residents. I urge you to vote against advancing further study of the RCS at your August 27 meeting.

Sincerely,

Andrew Wiese
2936 Gobat Avenue
San Diego, CA
92122
As of 8/27/2020 at 8:21 a.m.

The below letter is an exemplar of roughly 499 duplicate e-mail letters generated through a computer site designated as “automail@knowwho.com” which the Water Authority received from various persons. The letters note that "This message was sent by KnowWho, as a service provider, on behalf of an individual associated with Surfrider. All e-mail public comments received on Board Item 7.6 will be part of the public record.

From: Scott and Gloria Kreger (scottkreger66@gmail.com) Sent You a Personal Message <automail@knowwho.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2020 9:19 AM
To: Hattam, Mark <MHattam@sdcwa.org>
Subject: Reject Phase B of the Regional Conveyance System Study

Dear San Diego County Water Authority,

I am writing to express my opposition to the advancement of Phase B of the Regional Conveyance Study (RCS).

The RCS project would force unnecessary pipeline construction over invaluable parks, a national forest, active fault lines, and wildlands. It will also increase energy demands by an estimated 40% compared to current conveyance demands, when we must be reducing regional greenhouse gas emissions (ghgs). One of California’s highest energy uses is related to managing and conveying water, and the San Diego County Water Authority’s Climate Action Plan sets a goal of achieving a 40% reduction in ghgs by 2030. Instead of contributing towards this goal, Phase B would be increasing electricity consumption and associated emissions.

The billions of dollars that would ultimately be needed for this project should be directed towards far more valuable endeavors; such as water rate assistance for San Diego’s low-income communities, as well as modern and creative options for managing water more effectively through wastewater recycling, stormwater capture, and conservation efforts that yield multiple community and climate benefits.

Our region is positioned to address our water needs in a more environmentally and socially just way; by integrating management to achieve multiple benefits for our communities. For instance, a 2016 report by Tetra Tech commissioned by the City of San Diego showed that 20% of our water supplies could potentially come from urban stormwater capture, and yield a savings of over half a billion dollars.

I urge the Water Authority not to spend any more time and resources on this disastrous project. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Scott and Gloria Kreger
PO Box 858
Pine Valley, CA 91962
scottkreger66@gmail.com
(619) 473-8659

This message was sent by KnowWho, as a service provider, on behalf of an individual associated with Surfrider. If you need more information, please contact Michelle Kremer at Surfrider at mkremer@surfrider.org or (949) 492-8170. This email was sent by someone outside the Water Authority’s business network. Please exercise caution before opening any attachments or hyperlinks. Contact the Information Systems Service Desk(x6630) for assistance with any questionable email sources, content or requests.