

Western Regional Water Commission

STAFF REPORT

DATE: May 12, 2016

TO: Chairman and Members, Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission ("NNWPC")

FROM: Chris Wessel, Water Management Planner

SUBJECT: Discussion and possible approval of a Second Amendment to the Interlocal Agreement with Washoe County (the "County") for the "Septic Nitrate Baseline Data and Risk Assessment Study . . .Phase II", to authorize the County's use of data obtained to provide timely notification to residents in certain study areas; and if approved, authorize the Chairman to execute a Second Amendment for that purpose

SUMMARY

Washoe County Community Services Department ("CSD") staff has completed domestic well sampling and lab analysis data compilation tasks for the *Septic Nitrate Baseline Data and Risk Assessment Study, Phase II: In-Depth Analysis of Prioritized Study Areas, Creation of Baseline Data Set and Risk Assessment* ("the Phase II Study"). As field work proceeded during 2015 and 2016, lab analysis reports were received and results and recommendations were mailed to residents whose wells were sampled. Nitrate concentrations approaching and locally exceeding drinking water maximum contaminant levels ("MCL") were noted and discussed among NNWPC and CSD staff. Increased concern about the number of wells exceeding the nitrate MCL, and the magnitude of the exceedances in east Washoe Valley led to discussions with Truckee Meadows Water Authority and Washoe County Health District.

In March 2016, CSD notified NNWPC staff of its intent to use information obtained from the data gathered as part of the Phase II Study to provide timely notice to residents of four study areas where nitrate analysis reports indicate that MCLs are exceeded, and to make a recommendation to the WRWC to that effect with the delivery of the final report. Notice will include a summary of information gathered, in addition to information regarding current drinking water standards, domestic wells and resources for further testing and analysis.

NNWPC staff and legal counsel agreed that the County should proceed as proposed, prior to compilation of the data in deliverable form and presentation of the final report to the WRWC. Counsel has prepared an amendment to the interlocal agreement to formalize the County's use of information obtained from the data to provide notice to residents of the study areas with identified nitrate levels at or above the MCL, prior to delivery of the final report. In the meantime, NNWPC staff has encouraged the County to make full use of the information at its earliest convenience to notify residents of the study areas where identified nitrate levels equal or exceed the MCL.

BACKGROUND

The, Phase II Study is being conducted by Washoe County through an interlocal agreement with the WRWC. The project is a follow up to the initial study *Septic Nitrate Baseline Data and Risk Assessment Study for Washoe County, Phase I: Prioritization of Study Areas & Assessment of Data Needs*, which was also funded by the Regional Water Management Fund and conducted by Washoe County staff. The Phase I study identified areas of historic high density septic system clusters and attempted to rank them based on their potential for nitrate contamination of groundwater. The final report acknowledged data gaps for several of the high density septic system areas identified and recommended follow up work. The Phase II Study is designed to provide the data that is needed to complete the risk assessment of the areas in question.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WRWC approve a Second Amendment to the Interlocal Agreement for the Phase II Study, to authorize the County's use of data obtained to provide timely notification to residents in certain study areas with identified nitrate levels at or above the MCL.

POSSIBLE MOTION

“Move to approve the proposed Second Amendment to the Interlocal Agreement for the “Septic Nitrate Baseline Data and Risk Assessment Study . . .Phase II”, and authorize the Chairman to execute the Amendment.

CW:jd