

# Western Regional Water Commission

## STAFF REPORT

DATE: August 11, 2016

TO: Chairman and Members, Western Regional Water Commission ("WRWC")

FROM: Jim Smitherman, Water Resources Program Manager  
Jeremy Smith, Ph.D., Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency ("TMRPA")

SUBJECT: Presentation of the draft 2016 Washoe County Consensus Population Forecast; discussion and possible determination that the draft consensus population forecast for 2036 can be supported by the sustainable water resources set forth in the Regional Water Management Plan ("RWMP"); and possible direction to staff

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### SUMMARY

The Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency ("TMRPA") has completed the draft Washoe County Consensus Forecast 2016-2036 and submitted it to staff for comparison with the estimated population that can be supported by the sustainable water resources as set forth in the RWMP. Jeremy Smith of TMRPA will present the draft Consensus Forecast, which projects that the total population in Washoe County will grow from 450,747 in 2016 to 548,159 in 2036, an increase of 97,412 persons.

Two years ago, the WRWC found that the draft Consensus Forecast population for 2034 (563,779 persons) was less than the estimated population that can be supported by the sustainable water resources set forth in the RWMP, and directed staff to inform Reno, Sparks, Washoe County, and the TMRPA that the forecasted population can be supported by the sustainable water resources as set forth in the RWMP.

A review of the draft 2016 Consensus Forecast shows that population growth projections are reduced as compared to the version completed in 2014. The 2014 Consensus Forecast estimated that the 2034 population would be 563,779 persons whereas the 2016 version forecasts a population of 539,687, a decrease of 24,092 persons, for the same year, a 4.3 percent decrease.

The 2011 RWMP includes an estimate of potentially available, sustainable water resources of approximately 183,250 acre feet per year. The Truckee Meadows Water Authority ("TMWA") 2016-2035 Water Resource Plan ("WRP") includes a new long-range water demand projection for its projected service area. Using TMWA's methodology, the water demand associated with the projected 2036 Washoe County population of 548,159 is approximately 116,000 acre feet.

In conclusion:

- The current draft 2016 Washoe County Consensus Forecast projects a 2036 population of 548,159;
- The 2011 RWMP includes an estimate of potentially available, sustainable water resources of approximately 183,250 acre feet per year;
- The water demand estimate to serve a population of 548,159 is approximately 116,000 acre feet per year; and,

- The estimated population that can be supported by the sustainable water resources set forth in the RWMP is significantly in excess of the projected 2036 population of 548,159 persons.

By this comparison, the draft 2016 Washoe County Consensus Forecast population for 2036 can be supported by the sustainable water resources identified in the RWMP.

### **BACKGROUND**

In January 2010, the Regional Planning Governing Board (“RPGB”) adopted certain amendments to the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan (“Regional Plan”), and the RPGB Regulations on Procedure, identifying the Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission (“NNWPC”) and the WRWC as the entities to perform a comparison of the draft Washoe County Consensus Forecast and the estimated population that can be supported by the sustainable water resources as set forth in the RWMP prior to the adoption of the Consensus Forecast.

In April 2014, the TMRPA assumed the responsibility for preparing and publishing the Consensus Forecast. The RPGB Regulations on Procedure were amended at that time to reflect this change, and to make minor adjustments to the data sources and time frames for compilation and distribution of draft and final versions of the forecast.

According to the amended RPGB Regulations on Procedure, the NNWPC, upon receiving the consensus forecast document, shall compare the draft population forecast with the estimated population that can be supported by the sustainable water resources as set forth in the RWMP and advance a recommendation for consideration to the WRWC. The WRWC will then make a determination based on the NNWPC’s recommendation concerning the comparison described above and inform Reno, Sparks, Washoe County, and the TMRPA as to its finding. In addition, the RPGB Regulations on Procedure state that if the WRWC determines the draft Consensus Forecast is less than or equal to the estimated population that can be supported by the sustainable water resources identified in the RWMP, the WRWC will submit the draft Consensus Forecast to Reno, Sparks, Washoe County, and the TMRPA with a finding that the forecasted population can be supported by the sustainable water resources as set forth in the RWMP.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

NNWPC recommends that the WRWC make a determination that the draft Consensus Forecast population for 2036 can be supported by the sustainable water resources set forth in the RWMP.

### **RECOMMENDED MOTION**

Should the WRWC agree with the recommendation, a possible motion is: “Move to determine that the draft Consensus Forecast population for 2036 can be supported by the sustainable water resources set forth in the RWMP, and direct staff to submit the draft Consensus Forecast, with a finding that the forecasted population can be supported by the sustainable water resources set forth in the RWMP, to Reno, Sparks, Washoe County, and TMRPA.”

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Attachment: Draft 2016 Washoe County Consensus Forecast