

Board Meeting Agenda Special Meeting

Russ Baggerly, Director
Mary Bergen, Director
Bill Hicks, Director

Pete Kaiser, Director
James Word, Director

CASITAS MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT
January 22, 2014
3:00 P.M. – DISTRICT OFFICE
To be held following the regular board meeting

Right to be heard: Members of the public have a right to address the Board directly on any item of interest to the public which is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board. The request to be heard should be made immediately before the Board's consideration of the item. No action shall be taken on any item not appearing on the agenda unless the action is otherwise authorized by subdivision (b) of ¶54954.2 of the Government Code and except that members of a legislative body or its staff may briefly respond to statements made or questions posed by persons exercising their public testimony rights under section 54954.3 of the Government Code.

1. Public Comments (items not on the agenda – three minute limit).
2. Recommend approval of a letter to John Laird, Secretary for Resources, California Natural Resources Agency regarding Quagga mussels.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Motion approving recommendation

3. Adjournment

If you require special accommodations for attendance at or participation in this meeting, please notify our office 24 hours in advance at (805) 649-2251, ext. 113. (Govt. Code Section 54954.1 and 54954.2(a).

January 22, 2014

John Laird, Secretary for Resources
California Natural Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Eminent Threat to the Santa Clara and Ventura Rivers Resulting from Releases of Water Contaminated with Quagga Mussels from Lake Piru in Ventura County

Dear Mr. Secretary:

It has been reliably reported that United Water Conservation District has been frequently releasing water from Lake Piru even though it is has been documented by UC Davis Bodega Marine Laboratory that the lake is infected with Quagga Mussels. It was also reported that United's stated reason for the water releases was to comply with a mandate from the Federal National Marine Fisheries Service to help sustain a viable fishery for steelhead trout in the Santa Clara River.

While we have been following the steelhead issue for years and applaud United's efforts to comply with the mandated water release, we feel the situation has changed for the worse with the recent discovery of Quagga mussels in Lake Piru and the possibility that mussels could rapidly populate the entire Santa Clara River system including the estuary (and a nearby freshwater habitat) which are close to the City of Ventura Marina. If this were to happen, the mussels would be located approximately two miles away from the Ventura River Estuary (and its nearby freshwater habitat) and, then, could take one of several pathways or a combination of pathways (i.e., hydrologic, biologic and human) to enter Lake Casitas.

As you are aware, Section 2301 (a)(2)(D)(i) &(ii) of the *Fish and Game Code* provides the Natural Resources Agency with the authority to close, quarantine or restrict the spread of Quagga mussels (dreissenid mussels) in concurrence with the Director of Fish and Wildlife, Mr. Charlton H. Bonham.

In keeping with a situation that involves the release of water contaminated with invasive mussels from Lake Piru and the closeness of the Santa Clara and Ventura River estuaries and freshwater habitats close at hand, it is hereby respectfully requested that you and your staff immediately investigate the reported presence of Quagga mussels and concurrent water releases related to Lake Piru and, if the reports are found to be true, that the authority vested in your agency by Section 2301(a)(2)(D)(i)&(ii) of the *Fish and Game Code* be used to prepare and implement a plan to control or eradicate dreissenid mussels

within the system and to begin by immediately halting all water releases from Lake Piru. It is also requested that you require United to plan, build, and test a water treatment facility capable of destroying Quagga mussel eggs, veligers, juveniles and adults, before water releases are authorized again, so that mussels cannot invade the water systems operated by the cities of Fillmore, Santa Paula and Oxnard along with the water wells and distribution systems used by farmers in the Santa Clara Valley.

In retrospect and to be fair to all parties, neither United Water or the other agencies that participated in the recent relicensing of Santa Felecia Dam (which impounds Lake Piru) caused the lake to become infested with Quagga mussels, but now that the condition has been discovered and verified it is incumbent on each agency to take any and all actions possible within their purview to immediately stop discharging contaminated water from Lake Piru and secondly to postpone the implementation of the water release required by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission until all the Quagga mussels are killed in the lake and a 100 % effective water treatment facility has been installed and tested for effectiveness. In keeping with the above, the parties involved in negotiating and approving the water release requirement should prepare a memorandum of understanding concurring with United's immediate cessation of any release of water until further ordered to do so by a responsible agency or a court of competent jurisdiction.

In closing, it is hoped that the Natural Resources Agency can place the highest possible priority on preventing a potential environmental and economic disaster from taking place in western Ventura County due to the spread of Quagga mussels.

Sincerely,

Bill Hicks, President
Casitas Municipal Water District

cc: Charlton H. Bonham, Director, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Susan Ellis, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Dwight Maxwell, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Eloise Tavares, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
E. Michael Soloman, General Manager, United Water Conservation District
Sam Unger, Executive Director, Los Angeles Regional Water Control Board
Chris Yates, Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service
Gerard Maloney, FERC, San Francisco
John Aedo, FERC, San Francisco
John Krist, Ventura County Farm Bureau
David Rowlands, City Manager, Fillmore
Jaime Fontes, City Manager, Santa Paula

Karen Burnham, Acting City Manager, City of Oxnard
Mark Watkins, City Manager, San Buenaventura
Steve Bennett, Chair, Ventura County Board of Supervisors