



Staff Reports

File #: 37-2022, **Version:** 1

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Phil Brun, Utilities Director

Prepared By: Joy Eldredge, Deputy Utilities Director

TITLE:

North Bay Aqueduct Alternate Intake Project ("Water+")

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Adopt a resolution supporting the proposed North Bay Aqueduct Alternate Intake Project (also known as "Water+") and determining the actions authorized by this Resolution will be subject to future CEQA analysis.

DISCUSSION:

The City of Napa relies on two local water supply reservoirs and water from the State Water Project ("SWP"). Depending on the year and a host of factors not limited to operational constraints, water quality, and water supply availability, the City may receive 40% - 65% or more of its annual water supplies from the SWP. This water is conveyed through the North Bay Aqueduct ("NBA"), a component of the SWP that is shared with major urban communities throughout Napa and Solano counties. These important facilities serve over 500,000 residents. The NBA, established in 1966, draws water from the Barker Slough Pumping Plant, located at the terminus of Barker Slough, a dead-end tidal channel connected to Lindsey Slough and in turn Cache Slough, and ultimately the Sacramento River.

Barker Slough is located within the Yolo Bypass-Cache Slough Complex ("YBCSC") region and has been identified as one of the last remaining refugia for endangered native fish species in the Delta. As water treatment staff are acutely aware, the NBA raw water supply generally exhibits some of the poorest water quality of all the SWP facilities and is subject to seasonal episodes of high turbidity. Unlike several of the other municipalities, City of Napa's other water sources are not in geographic proximity, therefore the ability to blend SWP water with other sources to improve the raw water quality is not currently available.

In addition to poor water quality, the NBA is periodically subject to regulatory pumping curtailments to minimize the entrainment of endangered native fish species between the onset of the rainy season and June each year. The YBCSC has been identified by State and Federal resource agencies as highly desirable for large scale tidal wetland restoration projects. These projects are intended to increase the abundance of endangered native fish species. The objectives of the ongoing and planned tidal wetland restoration projects - to increase the abundance of endangered native fish species - are in direct conflict with NBA operations at Barker Slough.

Relocating the NBA's intake out of Barker Slough and the YBCSC would not only preserve the viability of the NBA municipal drinking water supply, but also potentially provide ecological benefits that complement ongoing habitat restoration efforts in the YBCSC. As proposed, the North Bay Aqueduct Alternate Intake Project (aka "Water+"), is a multi-benefit project that enhances regional water supply resiliency and provides ecological benefits. The project is a means of resolving the myriad of water management issues associated with the existing North Bay Aqueduct intake at Barker Slough. Additional feasibility studies are needed to confirm the viability of the Water+ project.

Staff recommends City Council adopt the Resolution in support of the Project and requests for State and Federal assistance to advance the Water+ project. Similar resolutions are being adopted by other agencies in Napa and Solano counties that rely on the NBA system for critical water supplies.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS:

There is no financial impact to adopt the Resolution of Support. Staff will return to City Council at such time funds are needed for Feasibility Studies and grant procurement transactions.

CEQA:

City staff recommends that the City Council determine that the Recommended Action described in this Resolution is not in-and-of-itself a project (pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378) since it does not result in a physical change in the environment. However, the Recommended Action is a part of a larger project that will be subject to environmental review in accordance with CEQA at the earliest feasible time prior to any discretionary approval by the City consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15004 and 15352. The larger project is Alternate Intake Project or Water+ and staff plans to bring back a CEQA analysis of that project to Council prior to any discretionary project approval by the City.

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

ATCH 1 - Resolution

NOTIFICATION:

None