

AMADOR WATER AGENCY

SPECIAL MEETING

OF THE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
AMADOR WATER AGENCY

HAS BEEN CALLED BY THE PRESIDENT FOR

August 27, 2015

2:00 P.M. or as soon thereafter as may be heard

Amador Water Agency

12800 Ridge Rd

Sutter Creek CA 95685

Public Notice:

Members of the public will have the opportunity to directly address the Agency Board of Directors concerning any item listed on this Special Meeting Notice before or during consideration of that item.

There is a three minute time limit per person.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. LEGISLATION

A. Discussion and possible action regarding the Agency positions on pending bills.

B. Discussion and possible action regarding the Association of California Water Agencies Outreach Alert of a potential new statewide tax on water bills.

3. ADJOURNMENT

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you are a disabled person and you need a disability-related modification or accommodation to participate in this meeting, then please contact Cris Thompson at (209) 223-3018 or (209) 257-5281 (fax). Requests must be made as early as possible, and at least two-full business days before the start of the meeting.



OUTREACH ALERT

Aug. 19, 2015

Proposal for New Statewide Tax on Water Bills Could Emerge in Final Weeks of Session *Letters, Calls Will Be Needed to Oppose Last-Minute Legislation on Public Goods Charge*

As the Legislature returns from recess for the final weeks of the session, there are signs that a proposed public goods charge or other tax on water bills could emerge in a policy bill or in budget trailer bill form. In anticipation, ACWA is meeting with legislative leaders and potential coalition members to oppose a possible bill or other last-minute effort to advance a public goods charge / water tax before the Legislature adjourns Sept. 11.

Though it remains to be seen exactly what will be proposed and when, ACWA anticipates the proposal could be billed as a “drought response” measure that would generate funding to assist disadvantaged communities that lack safe drinking water and / or have been severely impacted by the ongoing drought. While ACWA agrees that some disadvantaged communities need assistance to address their water supply challenges, we do not believe a public goods charge imposed on water bills is the appropriate mechanism to fund solutions.

Get Prepared Now

To prepare for a potential legislative proposal and subsequent debate, ACWA is urging its member agencies to take a formal position now opposing the concept of a public goods charge or other water tax, and begin drafting letters of opposition that can be sent to the Legislature and Gov. Jerry Brown on short notice.

ACWA is asking members to take this action proactively because there will be little time to react and mobilize once a proposal emerges. As ACWA members may recall, budget trailer bill language on mandatory water system consolidation and drinking water fees appeared in print and passed both houses of the Legislature in a matter of days before the July 1 deadline.

A public goods charge proposal could follow a similar trajectory.

Basis for Opposition

Establishing a permanent statewide tax on water bills under the heading of emergency drought relief is illogical and misleading. Water agencies have made, and continue to make, significant local investments in water management programs and infrastructure. According to a recent report by the Public Policy Institute of California, local water and wastewater agencies are spending more than \$25 billion a year on local water-related programs and projects. State and federal agencies spend just a fraction of that on water in California each year.

These local investments prepared local water managers to respond successfully to the current drought and have shielded the state's economy from the drought's most severe impacts over the past four years.

While there is clearly a need to fund sensible long-term solutions and assist disadvantaged communities that do not have safe drinking water, a tax on water bills paid by a subset of Californians is not the solution. Further, by redistributing local ratepayer dollars to areas that have been unable to fund water system investments, agencies that already have made significant investments in water efficiency and local water supply needs would be unfairly penalized. A public goods charge on water also would make it more difficult and costly for agencies to fund critical local projects and programs.

A public goods charge on water is contrary to local control and accountability – local water managers are best suited to identify ways to spend locally-generated revenues at their respective agencies. Layering an additional tax on water bills in order to send money to Sacramento, where a portion will be carved out to fund another layer of administration, is not efficient and is not an appropriate solution or sound policy. It will make water less affordable. More appropriate funding sources – such as the state's general fund – should be pursued to address a problem that is in the general public's interest to solve. With income tax making up a good part of the state's general fund, Californians with higher incomes would be contributing more and Californians with lower incomes would contribute less.

The issue is far too important to resolve in a last-minute bill that would be jammed through in the final weeks of the session. ACWA believes a more thoughtful, transparent process is needed to examine alternatives and find appropriate long-term solutions.

Take Action Now

If your agency has not previously adopted a formal position opposing a public goods charge on water, ACWA recommends that you take a resolution to your board of directors as soon as possible. A sample resolution is available [here](#).

In addition, we recommend that you draft a letter expressing your opposition so it is ready to go when needed. A sample letter is available [here](#) to edit and send. Please be sure to edit and personalize the sections of the letter referencing your agency name, and send a copy of your final letter to ACWA by fax at (916) 325-4927 or email to mariem@acwa.com.

In addition, a sample fact sheet is available [here](#) for use in briefing various audiences on the issue.

Watch for additional outreach materials from ACWA and updates as events unfold.

Questions

Questions may be directed to ACWA Director of State Relations Wendy Ridderbusch at (916) 441-4545 or wendyr@acwa.com.