



Oregon

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Water Resources Commission

FROM: Brenda Bateman
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SUBJECT: Work Session Item E, September 10, 2009
Water Resources Commission Meeting

Integrated Water Resources Strategy Work Group Update

I. Introduction

The development of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy is in its first phase, during which a project team comprised of staff and the Water Resources Commission subcommittee members, have developed a preliminary work plan and a series of issue papers to set the context. In this work session, the project team will present materials drafted thus far, and invite the Commission's questions and comments.

II. Background

During the past two years, the Water Resources Commission and Department have been laying the groundwork for an integrated water resources strategy. The foundation includes funds from the 2007 Legislature, to begin a data-gathering exercise that is helping the state's ability to forecast water demands, as well as to identify opportunities for water conservation and water storage. This exercise, called the Oregon Water Supply and Conservation Initiative, began in 2007, and concluded in 2009. These modest data collection efforts set the stage for additional work the Water Resources Department needs to conduct to analyze the state's water needs and water supplies now and into the future.

In the 2008 Legislative Session, the Department received resources to investigate the feasibility of capturing and storing winter flows in underground storage aquifers. In 2008 and 2009, the Legislature also provided cost-share funding for communities engaged in long-term water planning.

During 2009, the Department worked with members of the 75th Legislative Assembly to secure resources for long-term planning efforts. HB 3369 authorizes two positions to assist in these efforts: a scientific coordinator and public policy coordinator. The Department has filled both positions with well qualified internal hires.

III. Discussion

Preliminary Work Plan. Attached is a 2009-12 draft preliminary work plan, for development of the integrated water resources strategy. Staff will review these materials with the Commission on September 10, 2009. This preliminary work plan was developed by a project team comprised of staff and the Water Resources Commission's Planning Committee, based on suggestions from stakeholders during process-related meetings held in 2009 (see February 2009 staff reports), and a review of similar efforts in other states.

Issue Papers. During the June 2009 Water Resources Commission meeting, Commissioner Meloy presented the first of a series of issue papers for Commissioner comment. Commissioner Meloy's paper is now available on-line:

http://www1.wrd.state.or.us/pdfs/2009_06_09_Issue_Statement.pdf.

This series of issue papers is meant to convey the urgency of planning for the future, starting immediately. These papers cover several topics from an Oregon perspective, including water quantity, water quality, ecological needs, economic needs, social needs, and the interaction between climate change and water. The papers describe the lost opportunities Oregon may face if we do not act today, and the benefits accrued if we do act right away. During the September 2009 meeting, Commissioners will discuss the water quantity, water quality, economic, social, and climate change papers. During the November 2009 meeting, Commissioners will discuss the remaining papers. At the conclusion of each Commission meeting, papers will be posted and available for public review and comment.

V. Conclusion

This work session will enable Commissioners to review work accomplished thus far discussing the preliminary work plan and initial issue papers with the project team.

Attachment 1: Preliminary 2009-11 Work Plan
Attachment 2: Issue Papers

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