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ATTEST: OCT 08 2014

VERONICA A. FERGUSON, Clerk/Secretary
BY C Woodson
DEPUTY CLERK/ASST SECRETARY

Item Number: 34

Date: October 7, 2014 Resolution Number: 14-0404

4/5 Vote Required

Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Water Agency, State of California, Adopting the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Management Plan; Determining that Adoption of the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Management Plan will not have a significant adverse Effect on the environment; and Authorizing the Water Agency's General Manager to file a Notice of Exemption.

Whereas, for purposes of this Resolution, the Santa Rosa Plain includes the Santa Rosa Plain watershed as defined by the United States Geological Survey, which includes the Santa Rosa Plain groundwater subbasin (California Department of Water Resources groundwater subbasin 1-55.01), the Rincon Valley groundwater subbasin (California Department of Water Resources groundwater subbasin 1-55.03), the northern half of the Kenwood Valley groundwater basin (California Department of Water Resources groundwater basin 2-19), the eastern portions of the Wilson Grove Formation Highlands groundwater basin (California Department of Water Resources groundwater basin 1-59), the southern portion of the Alexander Valley groundwater basin (California Department of Water Resources groundwater basin 1-55), and eastern portion of the Lower Russian River Valley groundwater basin (California Department of Water Resources groundwater basin 1-60); and

Whereas, the groundwater system beneath the Santa Rosa Plain provides numerous benefits to the region, including rural residential and municipal water supplies, irrigation water for agriculture, and baseflow to streams and surface water bodies which helps support habitat and ecosystems; and

Whereas, an integrated strategy being undertaken statewide by many local agencies to manage groundwater resources is to develop and implement non-regulatory, voluntary Plans in compliance with the 1992 Assembly Bill 3030 and 2002 Senate Bill 1938. Such plans typically include public involvement, groundwater level and quality monitoring, and management strategies; and

Whereas, active public participation is critical to the success of development of any groundwater planning effort; and

Whereas, based on the outcome of a stakeholder assessment conducted by the Center

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for Collaborative Policy in 2009, the Water Agency's Board of Directors directed staff in January 2010 to work with the Center for Collaborative Policy to convene a Steering Committee to guide preliminary planning, conduct outreach to solicit input regarding Planning, and to develop recommendations on whether groundwater planning should proceed based on these activities; and

Whereas, the Steering Committee met six times in 2010, held three public workshops, and conducted briefings with over 20 organizations. Based on these efforts, the Steering Committee unanimously recommended that the Sonoma County Water Agency Board of Directors authorize the development of an Assembly Bill 3030 groundwater management plan; and

Whereas, on May 3, 2011, the Water Agency's Board of Directors authorized staff to develop a workplan for developing an Assembly Bill 3030 groundwater management plan and to develop an agreement with partners to fund development of a groundwater management plan; and

Whereas, on October 18, 2011, the Water Agency's Board of Directors authorized staff to enter into a cooperative agreement with County of Sonoma Permit and Resources Management Department, City of Cotati, City of Rohnert Park, City of Santa Rosa, City of Sebastopol, Town of Windsor and California American Water Company to fund development of a groundwater management planning process in the Santa Rosa Plain compliant with Assembly Bill 3030 and Senate Bill 1938; and

Whereas, as part of initiating a groundwater management planning process in the Santa Rosa Plain, the Center for Collaborative Policy worked with stakeholders to identify and form a Basin Advisory Panel (Panel) to lead development of the Plan for the Santa Rosa Plain; and

Whereas, the Panel, which includes stakeholders from throughout the Santa Rosa Plain broadly representing agricultural interests, local citizen groups, environmental groups, business interests, local well owners and government interests, has been participating in meetings since December 2011 to discuss and make recommendations on the groundwater management planning process; and

Whereas, on October 23, 2012, after a noticed public hearing, the Water Agency's Board of Directors adopted Resolution 12-0507, declaring its intent to prepare a groundwater management plan for the Santa Rosa Plain; and

Whereas, Water Agency staff coordinated and staffed the Panel meetings, which served as one of several forums for public outreach, took steps to ensure active public participation in the groundwater management planning process, and developed a program for public involvement that included:

1. The formulation of a Technical Advisory Committee to guide development of

the groundwater management plan;
2. Preparation of a Communication & Outreach Plan;
3. Holding over 30 briefings to interested organizations, attended by over 350 people;
4. Convening of five evening public workshops attended by over 250 people;
5. Provision of public review and comment periods, and public hearings pursuant to Water Code Section 10753 et seq.; and

Whereas, the Panel developed the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Management Plan (Plan) that contains the following components in accordance with the California Water Code:

1. Basin Management Objectives;
2. Components relating to the monitoring and management of groundwater levels, groundwater quality, inelastic land surface subsidence, interaction of surface water and groundwater, and hydrometeorological conditions;
3. Monitoring protocols to track changes in conditions related to the above components and to generate information for the purpose of meeting Basin Management Objectives and establishing effective management of groundwater;
4. A plan to involve other local agencies, water purveyors, and private well owners in the implementation of the Plan;
5. A map depicting the Santa Rosa Plain, along with associated groundwater basins and subbasins as defined by the California Department of Water Resources, and other local agencies and water purveyors in the Santa Rosa Plain; and
6. Maps identifying the recharge areas for the Santa Rosa Plain.

Whereas, on August 14, 2014, in accordance with procedures defined in its charter, the Panel voted to recommend that the Water Agency's Board of Directors adopt the Plan; and

Whereas, California Water Code Section 10753.5 requires that before a Plan can be adopted, a local public agency must provide notice and hold a second hearing to consider adoption of the Plan; and

Whereas, the Water Agency provided notice to the Department of Water Resources, to the Santa Rosa Plain groundwater mailing list, and in local newspapers regarding the intention of the Water Agency's Board of Directors to consider adoption of the Plan which included a summary of the Plan and information regarding obtaining copies of the Plan, as required by law; and

Whereas, a majority protest to adoption of the Plan pursuant to Water Code Section 10753.6 does not exist; and

Whereas, the Water Agency was formed in 1949 by a special legislative act of the State of California ("Agency Act") and is a stakeholder of the Basin Advisory Panel; and under the Agency Act, the Water Agency may provide for the protection and preservation of groundwater

resources in Sonoma County for current and future beneficial uses and may develop, adopt, and implement a plan to manage groundwater resources in the Santa Rosa Plain; and

Whereas, the Water Agency's Board of Directors has reviewed the Plan and has determined that adoption of the Plan is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15306, because the implementation of the Plan contemplates basic data collection and research that will not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource and are for information gathering purposes which will help meet the objectives of the Plan, and Sections 152307 and 15308, because the Plan provides a framework support coordination of public and private groundwater management and protect groundwater resources and to support all beneficial uses, in an environmentally sound, economical, and equitable manner; and

Whereas, by adopting a Plan, existing and future State funding may be available for Plan implementation; and

Whereas, a hearing has been duly noticed and held as required by law.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Water Agency hereby finds, determines, and declares as follows:

1. All of the above recitals are true and correct.
2. The Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Management Plan is adopted, in accordance with the process required by law.
3. The adoption of the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Management Plan is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15306, because it consists of basic data collection that would not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource and involves planning studies for possible actions that the participating agencies have not yet approved, adopted or funded, and Sections 15307 and 15308, because it provides a framework to support coordination of public and private groundwater management and protects groundwater resources.
4. The General Manager of the Sonoma County Water Agency is authorized and directed to file a Notice of Exemption for the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Management Plan.
5. The General Manager is authorized and directed to publish a copy of this Resolution and submit it to the California Department of Water Resources as required by law.
6. The General Manager is authorized and directed to take such steps as are necessary to implement the Santa Rosa Groundwater Management Plan under the governance structure described in the Plan.
7. The General Manager shall report back to the Board periodically on implementation activities.
8. The General Manager shall take such steps as are necessary to ensure active public participation during implementation of the Planning process and shall coordinate

and staff the Basin Advisory Panel meetings which will serve to provide a forum for public involvement in the implementation of the Plan.

9. The General Manager is authorized to terminate implementation the implementation Plan if determined to be in the best interest of the Water Agency. Should the implementation of the Plan be terminated, the public would be informed through a published public notice.

Directors:

Gorin: Aye Zane: Aye McGuire: Aye Carrillo: Aye Rabbitt: Aye

Ayes: 5 Noes: 0 Absent: 0 Abstain: 0

So Ordered.