

To: Butte County Water Commission

From: Paul Gosselin, Director, Water & Resource Conservation

Subject: Water Commission Subcommittee on the General Plan 2030 Update – Water Policy Recommendation

Date: October 27, 2008

The Butte County General Plan 2030 Update process has entered Meeting Series #5 - Goals and Policies Development. Policies related to water resource management are a critical component of the General Plan Update process. One of the Guiding Principles for the Butte County General Plan Update states, “The General Plan shall address the management and protection of water resources.” Additionally, the Board of Supervisors approved the development of a water element as a component of the General Plan Update.

The Board of Supervisors is scheduled to consider General Plan goals and policies in January 2009. The Board of Supervisors will base their consideration in part on recommendations from the General Plan Citizens’ Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Planning Commission. For water resource policies, the Board of Supervisors will also consider recommendations from the Water Commission.

On October 7, 2008 the Water Commission appointed a subcommittee to prepare recommendations for the Water Commission regarding water resource policies for the Butte County 2030 General Plan Update. The purpose of the Subcommittee is to provide water policy recommendations to the Water Commission for possible submission to the Board of Supervisors. Commissioners Jones, Skinner and Strachan were appointed to the Water Commission General Plan Update Subcommittee.

To assist in the framing of recommended goals and policies, county staff and the General Plan consultant prepared a discussion paper (dated September 22, 2008) that included key policy questions and potential policy options for the General Plan Update. The water resource policy questions were numbers 17, 18, 19 and 20:

17. How should the General Plan protect and enhance Butte County’s water supply?

18. How should the General Plan seek to maintain and enhance Butte County's water quality?

19. How should septic systems and packaged sewage treatment plants be regulated to support water quality?

20. How should the county minimize flood hazards?

On October 16, 2008, the CAC adopted recommendations for the water resource policy questions. The Subcommittee evaluated recommendations made by the CAC. Additionally, the Subcommittee evaluated existing ordinances, policies, programs and the Butte County Integrated Water Resources Plan to prepare their recommendations. The Subcommittee found that the policy recommendations from the Water Commission should account for existing programs and policies while recognizing that the specific implementation may change over the duration of the General Plan. The Subcommittee sought to have the initial recommendations be policy and goal oriented rather than reflect specific implementation steps.

The Subcommittee recommends that the Butte County Water Commission forward to the Board of Supervisors the attached water resource policy recommendations for their consideration.