NEWS RELEASE

September 16, 2020

CAL AM WITHDRAWS COASTAL COMMISSION PERMIT APPLICATION
Company seeks to reengage Marina stakeholders on issues of social and environmental justice

MONTEREY, Calif. – California American Water announced today that it is withdrawing its application to the California Coastal Commission for a Coastal Development Permit to construct the slant wells for the Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project, the company’s desalination proposal to replace pumping from the environmentally-sensitive Carmel River. California American Water plans to resubmit its application at a future date.

Given the high level of interest from the local community and expectation of extensive public comment, the Coastal Commission hearing had been scheduled as a special stand-alone, virtual meeting on Thursday September 17. The Commission has now cancelled tomorrow’s hearing and will reschedule after the company has refiled its application.

“Many factors contributed to our decision to withdraw,” said California American Water president Rich Svindland. “We recognize the social and environmental justice concerns and want to spend more time with Marina stakeholders on those issues, as well as with our own customers on our proposed enhanced customer assistance program. Because the Commission must meet deadlines associated with the Permit Streamlining Act, withdrawing and refiling our application is the best way to allow more time for these things to occur.”

California American Water is under an order from the State Water Resources Control Board to reduce its pumping from the Carmel River. Given the already low water consumption in the area, the substantial reduction required by the order can only be accomplished through development of an alternative water supply. The Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project is the result of years of effort, including a six-year environmental review process conducted by the California Public Utilities Commission and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, which found the project to be the most environmentally sensitive solution of all feasible options to satisfy the state order and provide for the long-term water needs of the Monterey Peninsula community. The California Public Utilities Commission issued a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for the project in 2018.

“We certainly feel this decision to withdraw and refile our application is in the best interest of our customers and increases the likelihood of receiving the permits necessary to construct the project,” said Svindland. “We will keep the State Water Board informed of these events and believe this decision supports our intent to decrease pumping on the river as quickly as possible while ensuring our customers have an adequate water supply.”

Public comments the Commission has received to date on the project will be preserved as part of the official record for the project’s application and have been shared with the Coastal Commission members.

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