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Agenda Item: ID#14-561 (5:00 P.M.)

Date: 11/20/14

CITY CLERK, FRESNO CA **FRESNO CITY COUNCIL**



## Supplemental Information Packet

Agenda Related Items – ID#14-561 (5:00 P.M.)

Supplemental Packet Date: November 20, 2014

### Item(s)

Receive report of findings and summary of discussions from the Recharge Fresno Community Forums and direct City staff to initiate the Proposition 218 hearing process for proposed changes to the schedule of rates, fees, and charges for public water service and setting the public hearing for February 5, 2015, at 5:00 p.m.

#### **Supplemental Information:**

Any agenda related public documents received and distributed to a majority of the City Council after the Agenda Packet is printed are included in Supplemental Packets. Supplemental Packets are produced as needed. The Supplemental Packet is available for public inspection in the City Clerk's Office, 2600 Fresno Street, during normal business hours (main location pursuant to the Brown Act, G.C. 54957.5(2)). In addition, Supplemental Packets are available for public review at the City Council meeting in the City Council Chambers, 2600 Fresno Street. Supplemental Packets are also available on-line on the City Clerk's website.

#### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):**

The meeting room is accessible to the physically disabled, and the services of a translator can be made available. Requests for additional accommodations for the disabled, sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, or translators should be made one week prior to the meeting. Please call City Clerk's Office at 621-7650. Please keep the doorways, aisles and wheelchair seating areas open and accessible. If you need assistance with seating because of a disability, please see Security.

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**LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS of FRESNO**  
CITY CLERK, FRESNO, CA  
**1345 Bulldog Lane \* Fresno, CA \* 93710**

November 18, 2014

Yvonne Spence, City Clerk  
City of Fresno  
2600 Fresno Street  
Room 2133  
Fresno, CA 93721

Re: November 20, 2014 Agenda ID# 14-561 Recharge Fresno

To: Fresno City Council

From: League of Women Voters of Fresno


The League of Women Voters of Fresno (LWV Fresno) supports the proposed Recharge Fresno capital investment plan for water infrastructure improvements that will be before the City Council on November 20, 2014. We have some concerns about the amount of funding for water conservation programs, as outlined in comment #8 below.

With the exception of the completion of the Northeast Surface Water Treatment Plant in 2004, the community has put off, for at least 25 years, major upgrades to Fresno's water infrastructure to better utilize Fresno's existing allocation of surface water from the San Joaquin and Kings rivers. This project including infrastructure to capture, treat and deliver high quality surface water to Fresno water users is long overdue. Further delays will only increase costs and may subject the City and its residents to State intervention to enforce water quality and groundwater management laws and regulations. It's time for the City and its residents to stop "kicking the can down the road" and take action to finance and construct needed water system upgrades.

1. The November 7, 2014 California Water Resources Control Board letter provides a detailed description of the reasons why this project is needed if the City is to comply with State water quality and groundwater management laws and regulations. Of particular concern are impending water quality regulations for 1, 2, 3 – TCP, which has been detected in 80 wells in Fresno, and meeting the requirements of the 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, recently passed by the California legislature.
2. Diversifying the City's water sources will allow the City to more fully utilize its surface water allocation, thereby decreasing groundwater pumping to allow for recharge of Fresno's overdrafted groundwater.
3. We are pleased with Staff's efforts to reduce the cost of the Southeast Surface Water Treatment Plant by reducing its initial capacity while designing the plant in such a way as to accommodate additional capacity at a later time, if needed.

4. We agree with continuing groundwater recharge efforts through the construction of additional “intentional” groundwater recharge basins.
5. We support this \$429 million capital investment plan because it contains \$82.5 million for pipeline and well rehabilitation. We understand that the City has sizeable water infrastructure repair and replacement issues in Downtown Fresno and other older areas of the City. It is important to address repair/replacement/rehabilitation issues with our aging infrastructure to maintain system reliability and prevent costly failures.
6. We support Staff’s November 10 recommendation to conduct a Water Capacity Fee Study for new and expanded connections to the water system, so that information will be available to set fees and charges so that new development pays its full share of water infrastructure, operation, and maintenance costs.
7. We are fully aware that it will be a challenge for the City to balance the cost of implementing the project with the need to keep water rates at a level that is acceptable to water users. In the real world of finances in which the City must operate, it is necessary to adopt rates, fees, and charges that provide the reliable revenue stream necessary to secure the bond funding and low cost loans needed to carry out the project.
8. In addition to \$429 million for capital infrastructure investments, the proposed rate plan contains approximately \$1.1 million dollars over the five-year period of the rate plan for continued **water conservation programs. These programs are a crucial component of this water plan as they enable residents, especially those with low or fixed incomes, to have better control over the amount of water they use, as well as, the total amount of their water bill.** It seems that conservation programs are underfunded compared to capital investments unless the City is reasonably certain that it will be able to obtain a substantial amount of grant, or other, funding for conservation programs. If this funding is uncertain, it would be prudent to make adjustments in the rate plan to allow for increased conservation program funding.
9. The current average monthly water bill for residential users with a 1-inch service is \$24.49, a relatively low fee reflecting our community’s reluctance over the years to make needed investments in our water infrastructure. It is substantially lower than the rate for water service for most other cities in the San Joaquin Valley and throughout California. Under the proposed rate plan for capital investment and conservation programs, the average monthly water bill would rise over 5 years to approximately \$52.18, still a bargain compared with other cities.

Thank you for carefully considering our comments.

  
Mary Savala

Vice President, Natural Resources  
League of Women Voters of Fresno

Cc: Yvonne Spence, City Clerk, City of Fresno- Please distribute to City Council  
Thomas Esqueda, Director, City of Fresno Department of Public Utilities