

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board Members

FROM: Sharon M. Trost, P.G., AICP, Regulation Division Director

DATE: July 25, 2012

SUBJECT: Enter into an order authorizing the temporary withdrawal and use of surface water from the C-51 Canal by the City of West Palm Beach

Background

The City of West Palm Beach ("West Palm Beach") owns and operates a public water supply utility, located in Palm Beach County. West Palm Beach is authorized, under Water Use Permit No. 50-00615-W ("Permit"), to withdraw water from the Surficial and Floridan aquifers and Clear Lake.

On June 16, 2010, the South Florida Water Management District (District) issued an order authorizing West Palm Beach for one year to intercept and store water from the C-51 Canal when S-155 is releasing water to tide. The intercepted water is treated and then discharged to Clear Lake. On July 14, 2011, the District issued an order renewing the authorization in order to supplement and extend West Palm Beach's remaining supplies in Clear Lake. The authorization to withdraw C-51 Canal water expired on July 14, 2012, with a provision to grant an extension.

On March 23, 2012, West Palm Beach submitted the application to modify its permit. The application included a request to authorize long-term withdrawals from the C-51 Canal. Additional analysis is necessary to determine the amount of water available from the C-51 Canal and whether such withdrawal meets the conditions for issuance enumerated in Rule 40E-2.301, Florida Administrative Code.

On July 12, 2012, West Palm Beach transmitted correspondence to the District requesting a 1-year extension of the authorization to withdraw and use C-51 Canal water. To date, the District has not received complaints related to West Palm Beach's operations from existing legal users of the C-51 Canal or offsite land uses surrounding the C-51 Canal. District staff believes the issuance of an order extending the authorization to withdraw water from the C-51 Canal is warranted to analyze the availability of this source to meet West Palm Beach's long term water needs, bolster West Palm Beach's supply during the dry season, and prevent the discharge of excess water to tide.

How this helps meet the District's 10-year Strategic Plan: The District is authorized to allow for the interception and storage of water that is otherwise discharged to tide consistent with achieving District missions, including natural systems protection and restoration, and will assist the District in meeting its objective to provide water storage.

Funding Source: There are no funding needs associated with the proposed order.

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This Board item impacts what areas of the District, both resource areas and geography:
This project is located within the C-51/Water Conservation Area No. 1 Water Use Basin. The item affects the surface water within the Basin.

What concerns could this Board item raise?
None

Why should the Governing Board approve this item?
West Palm Beach will withdraw water from the C-51 Canal when S-155 is discharging or about to discharge. West Palm Beach will help reduce the amount of water discharged to tide while bolstering its water supplies in Clear Lake. In the event the District experiences a drier than normal wet season, West Palm Beach should be better positioned to avoid the more restrictive water use limitations necessitated during previous water shortages.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at extension 6814.

ST/jdb