

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Governing Board Members

**FROM:** Chip Merriam, Deputy Executive Director, Water Resources Management

**DATE:** January 09, 2008

**SUBJECT:** Consideration of an Order for the purpose of water supply relief for the City of West Palm Beach, Florida

**Background:** The City of West Palm Beach (City) is authorized to use water to provide drinking water to a service area of approximately 111,000 people, including hospitals, businesses, the Town of Palm Beach, Town of South Palm Beach, and unincorporated sections of Palm Beach County. Currently, the south Florida region is experiencing a severe drought condition that is manifested in both substantially below normal rainfall combined with deficiencies in surface water storage. This condition has necessitated a number of emergency orders and restrictions on water use to protect the public's health, safety, and welfare and the water resources from serious harm. The City receives its drinking water from two lakes whose surface water supplies may be delivered from the regional system or by groundwater supplies, if an offsetting recharge source exists. During non-drought dry times, lake Okeechobee provides surface water via gravity flow to the L-8 which recharges the City's drinking water supply. Recharge to the City's lake system from Lake Okeechobee is not currently feasible due to low levels. As a result of anticipated, diminished surface water flows into the City's lake system, concerns exist regarding the sustainability of City's potable water withdrawals through the 2008 dry season. Therefore, the City seeks an alternative source of water to either supply its lake system and / or recharge its wellfield. The city proposes use of water from the L-8 Reservoir Project. The L-8 Reservoir is a project constructed for the purpose of storing and conveying water for the restoration and preservation of natural systems associated with the North Palm Beach County Comprehensive Water Management Plan and Loxahatchee River Restoration Plan and a component of the C-51 and Southern L-8 Reservoir which is a part of the Part 1 Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project. The L-8 Reservoir is currently partially constructed and operational. The L-8 contains formational water that has slightly elevated concentrations of chlorides and specific conductance. On April 23, 2007, the City passed Resolution No. 200-07 implementing Phase III water restrictions for the water utility system service area; these restrictions continue to be implemented.

**How this helps meet the District's Mission:** Providing an alternative recharge supply source will help protect water supply for the public's health and safety during drought conditions.

**Funding Source:** There is no funding source associated with this item.

**This Board item impacts what area of the District, both resource area and geography:** This item impacts water supply and environmental resources in Palm Beach County

**What concerns could this Board item raise?** The City has concerns regarding its ability to provide potable water supplies to its service area. Environmental interests may be concerned about the use of water from the L-8 Reservoir project to recharge the City's lake system.

**Why should the Governing Board approve this item?** The Governing Board should approve this item to provide a temporary, alternative supply source to recharge the City's water supplies.

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