

Memorandum

To: Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors
From: G. Patrick O'Dowd, Executive Director /GM
Date: January 26, 2023

Re: Update on US Army Corps of Engineers Feasibility Study

On December 16, 2022 a commemorative signing of the formal agreement – “Agreement Between The Department of the Army and The California Department of Water Resources and The Salton Sea Authority for the Imperial Streams Salton Sea and Tributaries Feasibility Study, CA” - was held at the North Shore Beach & Yacht Club. A copy of that fully executed agreement is contained in the Board packet.

On Tuesday, January 24th, an inaugural meeting was held in this regard to outline the process moving forward, beginning with scoping the project. The Corps, the State, and the Authority explored at a high level the pathway to defining the project. Of principal concern to both the State and the Authority was the determination of a water supply assessment which would inform in a critical manner the feasibility of any project developed. It was agreed by all that information in that regard would need to be developed as a priority, and with a high level of confidence both to the Project principals but to all stakeholders, as it will be foundational to the feasibility of any project developed.

We also briefly discussed the State’s long range plan which will be foundational to the plan’s development, but acknowledged that while the State’s plan targeted in large part on its responsibility under the Water Board order (without diminishing all the other efforts the State is undertaking in the region, including its Community Benefits assessment), that the Water Resources Development Act authorization took into account the Salton Sea proper as well as the “streams” that act as its source of supply, the limiting factor being the development of a plan that can be deemed “feasible”. It was also acknowledged that there were likely unlimited potential “rabbit holes” that could be explored as part of such a study, and it was stressed and agreed that the focus on this effort would be bias towards getting a project defined that can actually be developed and will be generationally sustainable.

We also discussed areas of responsibility and resources available to meet the project requirements, with the Corps, the State, and the Authority each contributing to this effort. Specific to the Authority, it was acknowledged that due to our local presence and influence we would take a leading role in public outreach and engagement to ensure that this process is properly socialized amongst the vast group of stakeholders, with a goal that at the end of the

day that all who wished to have input into the development of this project plan will have had a meaningful opportunity to do so.

This effort is by design a three year process, and given the scale of the problem being addressed represents a very tight timeline. The Corps is working on a preliminary schedule which will inform the critical milestones along the way. When that information is finalized we will place this matter on the Board agenda for a more thorough briefing.