
Meeting Date: November 19, 2014
Staff Contact: Charles Leder, Manager – Plant Operations Division

TITLE: OB-14-20 - Response Plan to Surface Water Source Contamination Events

SUMMARY:

Some members of the public previously raised concerns regarding how the Water Authority would respond in the event of a disaster that contaminated the Rio Grande supply to its surface water treatment plant. The Water Authority already has a response plan in place for disasters such as algal blooms that could develop in the river or petroleum product pipeline breakage and which resulted in contamination of the river.

The Water Authority's primary response would be to stop diverting river water, shut down the surface water treatment plant, and temporarily increase pumping from wells which can meet 100% of customer demand and which historically supplied all customer needs. The Water Authority would resume river water diversions only after first making sure that contamination from a disaster was no longer present. The Water Authority routinely participates in simulation exercises with other local emergency management agencies for situations like this so that its operations staff are ready to respond if and when needed.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None

The Water Authority's Response Plan to:

Surface Water Source Contamination Events



This briefing considers our response to:

- Natural events e.g., algae blooms that impact source water quality
- Events caused by man-made features e.g., pipeline crossings of Rio Grande that break and contaminate river water



Reminder about our water supply:

- Depending on season and river flow conditions, surface water normally supplies between 50-80% of customer demand
- Groundwater supplies the rest
- Groundwater can supply 100% of demand when needed



Response to a natural event e.g., algal bloom:

- Shut-off intake pumps at river
- Temporarily run system using 100% groundwater
- Resume withdrawals when river conditions improve
- Same response if a fish kill event was observed at SJCWTP storage ponds



Response to a pipeline crossing break of Rio Grande

- Petroleum product pipelines cross Rio Grande \approx 15 miles upriver from our intake
- Notification would be initiated by Sandoval County Emergency Operations Center
- Water Authority's response is the same i.e., shut-off river intake pumps
- Temporarily run system using 100% groundwater
- Resume withdrawals when river conditions improve
- Water Authority participates in "table top" exercises & drills to be ready for situations like this

