

**STAFF REPORT**  
**City of Lancaster, California**

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07/15/08
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Date: July 15, 2008

To: Mayor Parris and City Council Members

From: James R. Williams, Public Works Director

Subject: **City Council Workshop Pertaining to Water Resources Supply, Preservation and Development**

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**Recommendation:**

Consider, discuss and direct staff to take steps that will preserve and enhance local water supply, protect existing citizens and businesses, and promote the continuing growth and prosperity of the City of Lancaster and surrounding areas.

**Fiscal Impact:**

The fiscal impact is yet to be determined but may include investments in water production and delivery infrastructure, investments that reduce water use through the installation and practice of water conservation measures, assistance through loans or grants to citizens and businesses that can benefit from water conservation retrofit opportunities, rising prices of water service for each unit of water delivered by service providers, new expenses to administer and enforce wise water-use programs and the potential loss of new industry or commerce – which translates to reduced potential sales tax revenue – because adequate water supply is uncertain.

**Background:**

Some residents of the Antelope Valley believe that abundant water supply to support agriculture, industry, commerce, and urban development has long been part of our heritage; in today's environment of groundwater adjudication hearings, drought, projected long-term shortages of imported water supplies, and growing demand, clearly water is not abundant to us. Many residents realize that living in the desert dictates all users must be vigilant about using water only in its most beneficial applications.

Three times during the last two decades Lancaster's primary water delivery service provider has discontinued the issuance of "will serve letters" citing inadequate supplies. This action has on each occasion brought to a stand-still the orderly development of the City of Lancaster. At this writing, several developers whose projects would bring new jobs and prosperity to Lancaster cannot obtain the necessary certifications to go forward because they cannot obtain a guarantee that water for their projects will be provided.

These and other events have prompted the City of Lancaster to take a proactive role in preserving Lancaster's – and surrounding areas of the Antelope Valley – water supply future. Several workshops to learn about water history and current conditions have been conducted by the Lancaster City Council beginning most recently in May 2005. The Council directed that another workshop be conducted at this time with a more purposeful objective being to give specific direction to staff. Still, recent developments that may not be common knowledge to the City Council and attending citizens should be presented for the Council to consider as they determine future actions. Therefore, brief updates and reports of late-breaking developments are included in the workshop agenda.

JRW:kw

**Attachment:**  
Workshop Outline