

Memo

Date: November 17, 2014

Re: Acceptance of Public Comments on the Proposed 2015 Budget and Levy

In 2014, the Legislature made changes to the process of setting the upcoming budget and levy. The need to certify the levy by September 15 did not change, and the Board did so on September 11. What is now new is that local units of government, which would include watershed districts, must announce a subsequent meeting board meeting at which the public may speak to the budget and/or levy.

When the Board approved the budget/levy at its September 11 meeting, it did not announce the date of the public meeting. At the November 6, 2014, joint meeting of the Operations/Maintenance and Planning/Policy committees, interim administrator Spartz proposed that the Board schedule public comment on the MCWD's 2015 budget and tax levy for the Board's regular meeting on November 20, 2014. Notice of this time for public comment has been posted on the District's website homepage since November 7.

It is important to note that this item is to provide for public comment; it is not a public hearing. Staff recommends that the Board accept public comments (in person or submitted in writing), and respond to them if the Board wishes to amend its 2015 levy resolution in December. This process will give time for the Board to consider the comments and any reduction it may wish to make in the 2015 levy before it must be submitted to the Counties by late December. The Board could take such action on December 11 (preferred) or December 18 (deadline).

Possible actions:

- If, on the basis of public comment or for any other reason, the Board subsequently decides at the November 20 or a later meeting not to adjust the District levy, then no further action is required. In this case, no additional resolution regarding the 2015 tax levy and budget will be necessary.
- If the Board subsequently decides, on the basis of public comment or for any other reason, to reduce the District levy, then it will need to adopt a resolution accordingly for transmittal to the county auditors by late December.