

# Western Regional Water Commission

## STAFF REPORT

DATE: August 8, 2018

TO: Chairman and Members, Western Regional Water Commission ("WRWC")

FROM: Jim Smitherman, Water Resources Program Manager

SUBJECT: Presentation of the draft 2018 Washoe County Consensus Population Forecast; discussion and possible approval of a recommendation by the Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission ("NNWPC") to make a determination that the draft Consensus Forecast population for 2038 can be supported by the sustainable water resources set forth in the Regional Water Management Plan ("RWMP"); and possible direction to staff.

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### **SUMMARY**

The Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency ("TMRPA") has prepared the draft Washoe County Consensus Forecast 2018-2038 and submitted it to staff for comparison with the estimated population that can be supported by the sustainable water resources as set forth in the RWMP. The comparison consists of 4 parts: the 20-year population projection for Washoe County provided in the draft Consensus Forecast, the sustainable water resources estimate in the adopted RWMP, a 20-year water demand projection based on the Consensus Forecast, provided by the Truckee Meadows Water Authority ("TMWA"), and a comparison of the water demand projection to the sustainable water resources estimate set forth in the RWMP.

Since 2010, the NNWPC has made the comparison and advanced a recommendation to the WRWC as to whether the Consensus Forecast population can be supported by the sustainable water resources identified in the RWMP. Two years ago, the WRWC approved the NNWPC's recommendation and found that the draft Consensus Forecast population for 2036 (548,159 persons) was less than the estimated population that can be supported by the sustainable water resources set forth in the RWMP, and directed staff to inform Reno, Sparks, Washoe County, and the TMRPA that the forecasted population can be supported by the sustainable water resources as set forth in the RWMP.

The draft 2018 Consensus Forecast (attached) projects that the total population in Washoe County will grow from 451,923 (2017 certified estimate) to 558,746 in 2038. Compared to the 2016 version, which estimated a 20-year increase of about 106,000 persons, the projected growth increment is similar. The 2018 Consensus Forecast projects a 20-year population increase of 106,823 persons

The 2016 RWMP includes an estimate of potentially available, sustainable water resources of approximately 190,500 acre feet per year. This estimate includes groundwater in basins to the north for which water rights owners have shown interest in water importation projects. The

Water Resources Baseline Table for Washoe County is attached for reference. Staff recently reviewed the water resources estimate, and considered the impacts of implementation of the Truckee River Operating Agreement and only those groundwater basins presently producing municipal and industrial water in southern Washoe County to determine if those sources might support the Consensus Forecast population without additional water importation. Approximately 143,800 acre feet per year were identified, including the Fish Springs Ranch importation project.

Using 2018 retail customer water use data and the 2018 Consensus Forecast, TMWA has provided a County-wide water demand projection of approximately 111,875 acre feet for the 2038 population projection of 558,746.

**Analysis and Conclusion:**

- The current draft 2018 Washoe County Consensus Forecast projects a 2038 population of 558,746;
- The 2016 RWMP includes an estimate of potentially available, sustainable water resources of approximately 190,500 acre feet per year, and on closer review, 143,800 acre feet per year without additional water importation;
- The water demand estimate to serve the projected 2038 population of 558,746 is approximately 111,875 acre feet; and,
- By this comparison, the draft 2018 Washoe County Consensus Forecast population for 2038 is significantly less than the population that can be supported by the sustainable water resources identified in the RWMP.

**BACKGROUND**

In January 2010, the Regional Planning Governing Board (“RPGB”) adopted certain amendments to the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan (“Regional Plan”), and the RPGB Regulations on Procedure, identifying the NNWPC and the WRWC as the entities to perform a comparison, prior to the adoption of the Consensus Forecast, of the draft Washoe County Consensus Forecast and the estimated population that can be supported by the sustainable water resources as set forth in the RWMP. In April 2014, the TMRPA assumed the responsibility for preparing and publishing the Consensus Forecast. The RPGB Regulations on Procedure were amended at that time to reflect this change, and to make minor adjustments to the data sources and time frames for compilation and distribution of draft and final versions of the forecast.

According to the amended RPGB Regulations on Procedure, the NNWPC, upon receiving the draft consensus forecast document, will compare the draft population forecast with the estimated population that can be supported by the sustainable water resources as set forth in the RWMP and advance a recommendation for consideration to the WRWC. The WRWC will then make a determination based on the NNWPC’s recommendation concerning the comparison described above and inform Reno, Sparks, Washoe County, and the TMRPA as to its finding. In addition, the RPGB Regulations on Procedure state that if the WRWC determines the draft Consensus Forecast is less than or equal to the estimated population that can be supported by the sustainable water resources identified in the RWMP, the WRWC will submit the draft Consensus Forecast to Reno, Sparks, Washoe County, and the TMRPA with a finding that the forecasted population can be supported by the sustainable water resources as set forth in the RWMP.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The NNWPC recommends that the WRWC make a determination that the draft Consensus Population Forecast for 2038 is less than the estimated population that can be supported by the sustainable water resources set forth in the RWMP, and a finding that the forecasted population can, therefore, be supported by such water resources.

**RECOMMENDED MOTION**

Should the WRWC agree with the recommendation, a possible motion is: “Move to determine that the draft Consensus Forecast population for 2038 can be supported by the sustainable water resources set forth in the RWMP, and direct staff to submit the draft Consensus Forecast, with a finding that the forecasted population can be supported by the sustainable water resources set forth in the RWMP, to Reno, Sparks, Washoe County, and TMRPA.”

JS:jp