

Pajaro River Watershed Long Term Drought Preparedness

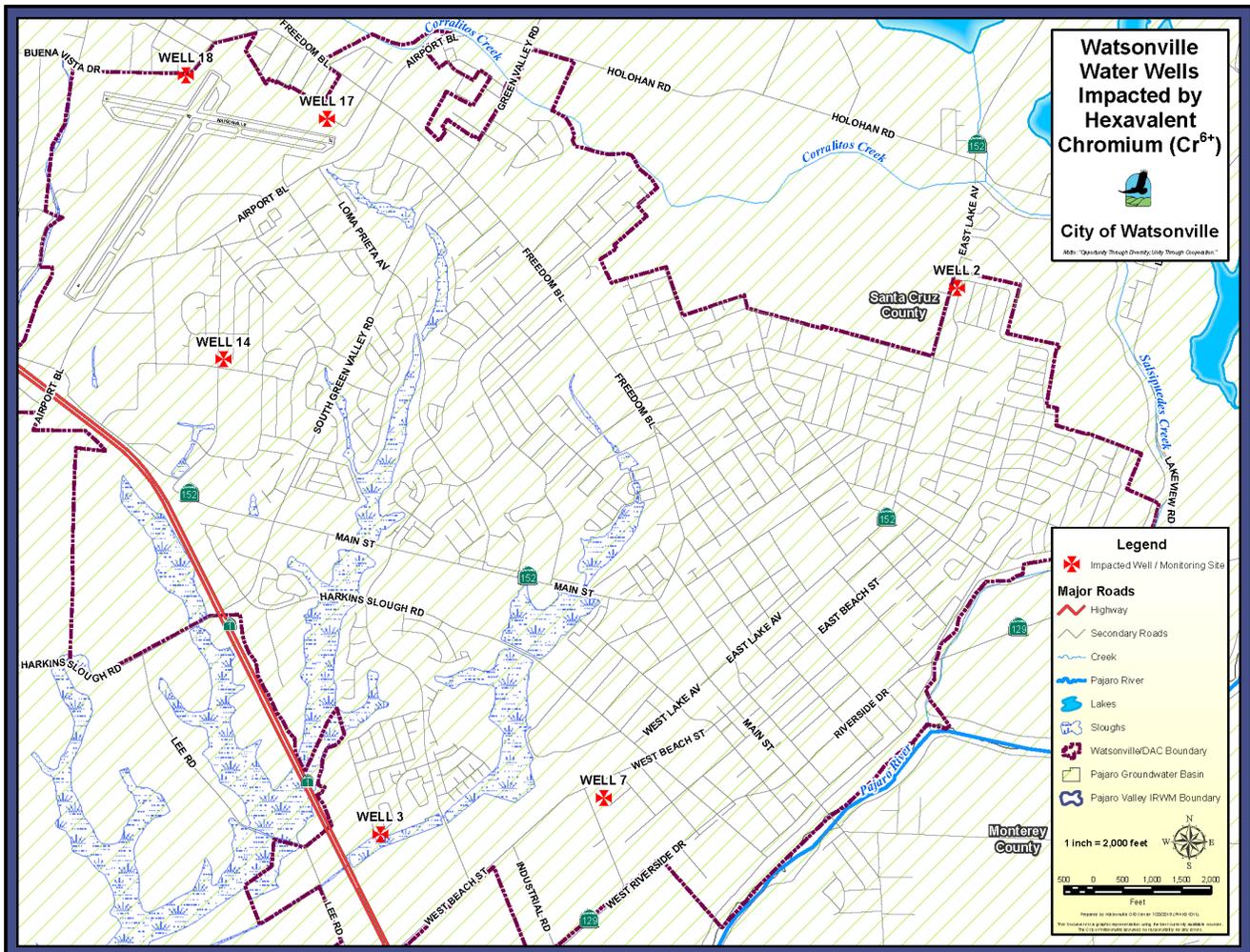
ATTACHMENT 7: DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE

Attachment 7 is required for the City of Watsonville request for a waiver match. The City of Watsonville is a Disadvantaged Community (DAC) and the Hexavalent Chromium Treatment Project specifically addresses direct water-related need of the DAC, as documented below.

7.1 DETERMINATION OF DAC STATUS

A DAC is defined as a community with an annual median household income (MHI) that is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median household income. An MHI of less than \$48,875 is the DAC threshold. The City of Watsonville has an MHI of \$43,905, based on the 2009-2013 American Community Survey data, which is below the threshold and confirms its DAC status. As shown in Figure 7.1, the entire City of Watsonville is within the DAC defined boundary.

FIGURE 7.1 CITY OF WATSONVILLE DAC BOUNDARY MAP



7.2 PROVIDING A DIRECT WATER RELATED BENEFIT TO A DAC

The Hexavalent Chromium Treatment Project (HCTP) provides a direct water quality benefit to the Disadvantaged Community of Watsonville. The project involves pilot testing and final design of a Chromium 6 groundwater treatment system.

In 2014 the California State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB) Division of Drinking Water (DDW), formerly the California Department of Public Health issued a final Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for hexavalent chromium (Chromium 6) at 10 ppb. Watsonville, a disadvantaged community, has six critical groundwater wells with Chromium 6 above the MCL and is actively pursuing long-term solutions for compliance with the Chromium 6 MCL (see Figure 7.1 for contaminated well locations).

Prior to the 2014 Chromium 6 rule, the MCL for total chromium in California was 50 ppb and all of Watsonville’s wells met that drinking water standard. However, on July 1st, 2014 the new MCL for Chromium 6 became effective. The Chromium 6 MCL is a Primary Drinking Water Standard, meaning that the regulatory limit is based on preventing adverse health impacts.

In 2013, the groundwater wells that have Chromium 6 above the MCL accounted for 74% of the City’s total potable water supply. While Watsonville very much intends to move forward with treating these supplies, the City will require outside funding sources to proceed with the requisite planning and engineering and environmental permitting in order to make the water safe and affordable.

The scope of the HCTP includes the planning, engineering, and permitting to provide Chromium 6 treatment systems, allowing the City to provide safe and affordable drinking water (Human Right to Water). Currently, Senate Bill 385 proposes to give water systems up to 5 years to come into compliance with the Chromium 6 standard. In order to meet that timeline Watsonville must move forward with the planning and engineering process as quickly as possible and will require outside funding sources to proceed. If the City can’t afford to proceed with design and implementation within the 5 years, then they will be in violation of the Primary Drinking Water Standard until they build treatment or develop an alternative water supply. Unfortunately, no additional surface water is available and it is not reasonable to transport this amount of water from another location. If the City does not meet the deadline, the SWRCB DDW will issue a compliance order with a timeline for the water system to return to compliance. The residents of Watsonville will need to be notified of the non-compliance quarterly, until the drinking water meets the Chromium 6 standard. If Watsonville fails to comply, the City could be subject to fines and enforcement actions and the community would not have access to a safe and affordable drinking water supply.

The physical water quality benefit for Chromium 6 concentration is calculated based on the existing flow-weighted average of the Chromium 6 levels in the six impacted wells as compared to the Chromium 6 levels after treatment is in place. As shown in Table 7.1, the current flow-weighted average Chromium 6 level is 14.9 ppb, without treatment. However, after treatment is in place, Chromium 6 levels will be reduced to no greater than 8 ppb, reduction of 6.9 ppb and below the MCL of 10 ppb. Completing the planning and design of the Chromium 6 treatment system will provide a direct water quality benefit to the entire service area which encompasses the City of Watsonville. Thus, the entire city population benefits from the HCTP and the entire City is a DAC.

Table 7.1 Chromium 6 Concentrations in City of Watsonville Groundwater Wells				
Well	Well Capacity (gpm)	Chromium 6 (ppb)	Annual Production (MG)	Well Capacity x Chromium 6
No. 2	1625	18	487	8766
No. 3	930	13	435	5655
No. 7	650	12	140	1680
No. 14	1900	14	280	3920
No. 17	1350	12	298	3576
No. 18	1640	19	207	3933
Total			1847	27530
FLOW WEIGHTED AVERAGE Chromium 6				14.9 ppb
Note: California DDW MCL for Chromium 6 is 10 ppb.				

7.3 NEED FOR EXPEDITED FUNDING

The City estimates the cost of compliance to be \$1.8 million for planning and design, and between \$12.4 and \$22.5 million for construction of the treatment systems, and an additional \$0.47 to \$1.2 million per year for operations and maintenance. The City's Water Division has an annual capital improvement budget of \$500,000 per year. The cost for compliance with the proposed regulation would need to be generated through a 50% rate increase. The cost of compliance would be devastating to our disadvantaged community. The residents of Watsonville should not have to choose between safe water or affordable water. While the City very much intends to move forward with treating these supplies, expedited funding is required to proceed immediately with the requisite planning and engineering and environmental permitting in order to make the water safe and affordable as quickly as possible.