

City Council Votes To Purchase Desal Water for 'Drought Insurance'

Carlsbad City Council has entered into a intent to sign a contract with San Diego County Water Authority to buy 12.5 percent of its water directly from the proposed Carlsbad Desalination Project.

By [Oren Goodman](#)



At Tuesday's city council meeting, the council, in its role as the board of directors for the [Carlsbad Municipal Water District](#), voted to enter into contract to purchase 2500 acre feet of desalinated water from the San Diego County Water Authority. One acre-foot is 325,900 gallons, enough for two four-person households for one year.

As a member of the water board, Council member Farrah Douglas has been closely involved with project for the last two years. "We have to do it to have complete water reliability," she said adding the city is currently dependent on water from Northern California and the Colorado River, and that supply of water would end if there were to be a drought. She said the project is important for the future of the San Diego county region. "It's an investment in the future of our children, our businesses, our job growth." Douglas also said that the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce wrote a strong letter of support, which she asked be distributed to the members of the water district board.

Council Member Keith Blackburn was disappointed in the changes of the contract, saying that the agreement was now not going to be a benefit for Carlsbad, but he is "pleased that it's going to be a benefit to the entire county."

Council Member Mark Packard was hesitant to vote for the agreement going into Tuesday's meeting, especially the 19% rate hike for consumers. During the meeting, Packard came to the conclusion that it would benefit Carlsbad more than it would cost, so he voted to support it. "We have

learned through some painful experiences...that diversification of our supply is very valuable," said Packard.

About 20 percent of Carlsbad's future water supply could come from the [desalination project](#). Quoted in a city press release, Carlsbad Mayor Matt Hall stated, "This is like buying insurance against future droughts, which we know are coming...Investing in this new water supply today will pay off for generations to come."

For the average homeowner in the Carlsbad Municipal Water District service area, when the project comes on line in 2016 monthly water rates would increase about \$8 to cover the regional supply of desalinated water from San Diego County Water Authority and about \$3.50 a month for the local supply of desalinated water. The total monthly cost would be about \$11.40 a month, an increase of about 19 percent over the current water rate, according to the [city's website](#).

The San Diego County Water Authority is expected to vote Nov. 29 on the draft water purchase agreement with [Poseidon Resources](#).

If approved, Poseidon can move forward with financing and construction on the plant, which would be built next to the Encina Power Station along the Carlsbad coastline.