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## **Coastal Commission Publishes Report Confirming Risks of Groundwater Depletion from Cal Am Desalination Project**

(Marina, CA, November 5, 2019) – The California Coastal Commission released the findings of an Independent Hydrogeological Review of the potential groundwater impacts from Cal Am’s proposed desalination project. Coastal Commission staff noted that the Review findings “further support” staff’s recommendation that the Commission deny the two Project Coastal Development Permits.

“The City of Marina has voiced its concerns, supported by expert hydrogeologic studies, regarding how Cal Am’s Project would harm our only source of fresh drinking water,” said Marina Mayor Bruce Delgado. “We have a societal and environmental responsibility to protect the groundwater basin, and now this independent analysis reveals Cal Am’s proposed desalination project could irresponsibly threaten this critical resource.”

The Review was conducted by Weiss Associates and analyzed data and studies in order to assess the potential effects of Cal Am’s slant well drilling and extraction on local and regional groundwater resources. It specifically examined the potential for seawater intrusion, capture of freshwater vs. brackish water, and possible methods to reduce impacts.

The Commission’s Staff Report concluded “that current evidence does not support a finding that Cal Am’s proposed project is consistent with the groundwater protection provision of Coastal Act Section 30231.” This determination is based in part on the following overall Review findings:

- Cal Am’s wells would extract greater volumes of non-seawater than identified in Cal Am’s models and there are several significant data gaps regarding the groundwater flow paths in the Dune Sands Aquifer.
- Cal Am’s modeling appears to be flawed in that it did not account for potential fresh water capture beyond an identified capture zone.

The Staff Report also noted that these Impacts “raise public welfare concerns” for the Project that further support implementation of the Pure Water Monterey expansion project that is a feasible alternative.

“Clearly Cal Am cannot move forward with this dangerous project,” said Mayor Delgado. “There would be unacceptable risks to the depletion of groundwater supplies – Cal Am has not correctly modeled their groundwater impacts nor addressed their public welfare implications. The time has come for them to abandon this proposal and instead pursue the much more environmentally responsible and sustainable Pure Water Monterey expansion project that can meet the regional water supply needs at a fraction of the cost.”

A final decision will be issued by the Coastal Commission on November 14<sup>th</sup>.

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