

Assembly Bill 2686 (Pedro Nava) Santa Ynez Valley Water District

Reason AB 2686 is Necessary

Over time, it has become apparent that the organization of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No. 1 (“Improvement District”) is causing unintended problems that were not foreseen when the district was initially formed. The Improvement District’s powers have overlapped with those of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District (“Parent District”), causing confusion. Jurisdictional issues have developed with the Santa Barbara County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) since LAFCOs did not exist when the Improvement District was formed.

Existing Law

The Improvement District was established in 1961 under **California Water Code §74000 et seq, the Water Conservation District Law of 1931**, by the Parent District in an effort to designate the upper Santa Ynez Valley as an assessment area to generate funds to build and operate water transmission and distribution facilities relating to the Cachuma Project.

In 1968, the Improvement District was empowered to act under its own board of trustees and take on conservation activities, such as water purveying under **California Water Code §75000 et seq.**

This Bill

AB 2688 (Nava):

- Creates the Santa Ynez Valley Water District (SYVWD), a new special act district, in Santa Barbara County.
- Establishes SYVWD as the “successor in interest” to the powers, duties, responsibilities, obligations, liabilities and jurisdictions of the Improvement District. Under AB 2686, the Improvement District would cease to exist.

- Authorizes SYVWD to:
 - Appropriate, acquire, and conserve water for any useful purpose
 - Distribute water that may be stored or controlled by the district, and
 - Undertake various actions relating to the provision of water service.
- Continues, uninterrupted for the most part, the powers and purposes of the Improvement District with the following exceptions:
 - Eliminates provisions allowing a district to conduct its own reorganization proceedings and instead, makes SYVWD subject to LAFCO jurisdiction
 - Grants SYVWD the authority to exercise the powers of a water replenishment district
 - Modifies existing sewage, storm water, and recycling powers slightly to allow independent exercise of those powers
 - Clarifies the authority of SYVWD to acquire, construct, and operate recreational facilities.

This Bill (cont'd)

- Authorizes SYVWD to impose a groundwater charge based on the extraction of groundwater within the district as a whole or within specified zones.
- Requires a person who operates a water-producing facility within a specified zone to register that facility, and, if required by the Board, to install a water-measuring device on that facility.

Facts

- Currently, the Improvement District serves municipal, industrial and agricultural water to nearly 10,000 customers.

Comments

- Throughout the last year, the Improvement District, Parent District, and Santa Barbara LAFCO have worked together to develop a strategy to eliminate the districts' many jurisdictional conflicts and issues. After extensive stakeholder discussions, it was determined that AB 2686 would be the best route forward.

Assemblymember Pedro Nava, through AB 2686, hopes to provide the residents of the Santa Ynez Valley with a more structurally and procedurally efficient water delivery system.

Support

(as of 05/16/08):

Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No. 1 (Sponsor)
Association of CA Water Agencies
City of Solvang
Santa Barbara LAFCO
Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District
United Water District

Opposition

None

Votes

04/09/08 Assembly Local Government 7-0
04/15/08 Assembly Water, Parks & Wildlife 13-0

For More Information

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