

# Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission

## STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** July 28, 2016

**TO:** Chairman and Members, Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission

**FROM:** Jim Smitherman, Water Resources Program Manager

**SUBJECT:** Presentation of the draft 2016 Washoe County Consensus Population Forecast; discussion and possible recommendation to the Western Regional Water Commission (“WRWC”) to make a determination that the draft consensus population forecast for 2036 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 completed the draft Washoe County Consensus Forecast 2016-2036 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. Jeremy Smith of TMRPA will present the draft Consensus Forecast, which projects that the total population in Washoe County will grow from 450,747 in 2016 to 548,159 in 2036, an increase of 97,412 persons.

Two years ago, the WRWC found that the draft Consensus Forecast population for 2034 (563,779 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.

A review of the draft 2016 Consensus Forecast shows that population growth projections are reduced as compared to the version completed in 2014. The 2014 Consensus Forecast estimated that the 2034 population would be 563,779 persons whereas the 2016 version forecasts a population of 539,687, a decrease of 24,092 persons, for the same year, a 4.3 percent decrease.

The 2011 RWMP includes an estimate of potentially available, sustainable water resources of approximately 183,250 acre feet per year. In 2014 however, staff reviewed the RWMP Water Resources Baseline Table as part of the RWMP 5-year review. Nevada State Engineer records, updated since the initial Water Resources Baseline Table was compiled, provide for an estimate of potentially available, sustainable water resources of approximately 190,580 acre feet per year. This new estimate will be recommended for the RWMP 2016 update, but the estimate in the 2011 RWMP is used in this comparison.

The Truckee Meadows Water Authority (“TMWA”) 2016-2035 Water Resource Plan (“WRP”) includes a new long-range water demand projection for its projected service area. Using

TMWA's methodology, the water demand associated with the projected 2036 Washoe County population of 548,159 is approximately 116,000 acre feet. The same methodology shows that the estimated population that can be supported by the identified sustainable water resources (183,250 acre feet) is approximately 863,000 persons.

In conclusion:

- The current draft 2016 Washoe County Consensus Forecast projects a 2036 population of 548,159;
- The 2011 RWMP includes an estimate of potentially available, sustainable water resources of approximately 183,250 acre feet per year;
- The water demand estimate to serve a population of 548,159 is approximately 116,000 acre feet per year; and,
- The estimated population that can be supported by the identified sustainable water resources of 183,250 acre feet is approximately 863,000 persons.

By this comparison, the draft 2016 Washoe County Consensus Forecast population for 2036 is less than the estimated 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 Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission ("NNWPC") and the WRWC as the entities to perform a comparison 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 prior to the adoption of the Consensus Forecast.

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 consensus forecast document, shall 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**

Staff recommends that the NNWPC advance a recommendation to the WRWC to make a determination that the draft Consensus Forecast population for 2036 is less than the estimated population that can be supported by the sustainable water resources set forth in the RWMP.

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Attachment: Draft 2016 Washoe County Consensus Forecast