

For Immediate Release

February 21, 2020

Contact: Barry Fisher, 805-654-7740

City of Ventura requests 6-month extension for people to file answers in watershed adjudication lawsuit

The City and other large water users continue working together on physical solution for Ventura River Watershed

Yesterday, the City of Ventura requested a six-month extension for property owners to decide whether to file an answer in the Ventura River Watershed lawsuit. The City expects the court will make a decision on the City's request at a court hearing on February 27, 2020 at 1:45 p.m. in Los Angeles Superior Court. To date, the City is unaware of any parties that oppose the City's request for the extension. The City will share the court's decision as soon as possible after the hearing.

Stemming from a 2014 lawsuit filed by environmental nonprofit Santa Barbara Channelkeeper against the City of Ventura and the state of California, the City — who reached an interim settlement agreement with Santa Barbara Channelkeeper in 2019 — is in ongoing discussions with the large water users to develop a collaborative, local "physical solution" to protect the Steelhead population and maintain its least expensive and oldest water resource, the Ventura River. If a settlement is reached, the City's cross-complaint, an action taken to initiate the collaborative solution, would not be litigated.

In January of this year, notices and summons were sent to 10,472 and 1,701 property owners respectively, as a result of a court order requiring the noticing in order for the court to recognize any settlement agreement. City officials acknowledged the inadequate messaging efforts prior to sending out the notices. The City has taken rapid strides in developing a new communications approach to reach those impacted and ensure the public has accurate information about the pending litigation and settlement talks, and more importantly, understands what's next and how it impacts water users.

The City has developed a website dedicated exclusively to providing information about this topic, which includes a comprehensive FAQ section, a resources page that includes links to the recordings of the public meetings the City has held on this topic, and a news section which will be regularly updated.

In the meantime, the City is asking the court for a six-month extension for property owners to file answers, to allow those who received Notices or Summons additional

CITY OF VENTURA
NEWS RELEASE

501 Poli Street
Ventura, CA 93001

time to decide if they would like to join the lawsuit. The case is not being actively litigated during the mediation process. The City is optimistic that it will make sufficient progress toward a settlement agreement during that time.

To learn more about the proceedings, please visit <http://www.venturariver.com>.

This release is available on the City of Ventura website at www.cityofventura.ca.gov

###