



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

Town of Paradise to Begin Coordination with City of Chico on Regional Sewer Project

Paradise, CA – On Tuesday February 2, 2021, Chico City Council voted unanimously in a 7-0 vote to analyze and study the current and future needs of the Chico Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) for a proposed regional sewer connection from a specified area in the Town of Paradise called the Sewer Service Area. The proposed Sewer Service Area, or SSA, contains many parcels along Skyway, Pearson, and Clark Road. The Chico City Council also appointed their Mayor and Vice Mayor to a Sewer Regionalization Project Advisory Committee that will include the Mayor and Vice Mayor of Paradise and will be facilitated by the Regional Water Quality Control Board for the duration of the planned 18-month Environmental Impact Review process. Advisory Committee meetings will be publicly noticed and provide avenues for public participation and transparency. This EIR study, Phase II of the project, is fully grant-funded with no cost to the City of Chico or Town of Paradise for the work. A copy of the Phase I Report can be found here: <https://www.townofparadise.com/index.php/17-news-events/333-paradise-sewer-project-phase-1-report>

The Paradise Sewer Project is a Tier 1 Town-Led Priority Project in the Long-Term Community Recovery Plan and has been studied at length for over 50 years. The Town of Paradise has been in need of a wastewater solution for many years, because perpetual treatment and dispersal was not sustainable due to high groundwater, limited land available and poor soils – ultimately restricting multi-family housing and commercial operations that rely on water usage like restaurants. Post-Camp Fire, Paradise lost 83% of its population and 90% of its housing stock, and the City of Chico's population has grown by 20%. Despite this spike in population, Chico did not see proportional revenue growth for increased wastewater flows due to more people sharing households. A Sewer Service Area in Paradise would allow for the development of Multi-Family housing along evacuation routes to ease the housing crisis and build back safer, while also providing additional revenue to the City of Chico as Paradise would become a paying customer to their Water Pollution Control Plant. (WPCP)

“The Paradise Sewer Project has been studied for decades and, after the Camp Fire, the Chico City Council was eager to hear the results of Phase I completed by HDR Engineering in 2020. Now, with the Phase II Environmental Impact Review process of a regional sewer connection between Paradise and Chico, we are just beginning the true vetting process with a Cooperative Work Agreement with the Town and a grant-funded opportunity to study the impacts and opportunities for Chico's Water Pollution Control Plant,” stated Chico Mayor Andrew Coolidge. He continued, “I'm pleased to join the Mayor and Vice Mayor of Paradise with Vice Mayor Reynolds

on the Sewer Regionalization Project Committee. Facilitation by the Regional Water Quality Control Board will ensure an objective and productive process, with the meetings open to public participation and regular reports back to our respective Councils. We look forward to seeing what develops during this 18-month EIR process and certainly support efforts to improve our regional economy and the wastewater infrastructure in Chico.”

The EIR studying the regional sewer connection has not been fast-tracked, and will take approximately 18 months to complete. This report will seek to determine, among a myriad of other questions brought forward by the Project Committee and the public, the desired pipe alignment, capacity impacts to the WPCP and whether a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) will be formed in the future.

Paradise Mayor Steve Crowder stated, “The Paradise Sewer Project is vitally important for the recovery of Paradise after the Camp Fire. There are also substantial benefits for the City of Chico to regionalize their Water Pollution Control Plant. I look forward to working with Mayor Coolidge and Vice Mayor Reynolds on the Sewer Regionalization Project Advisory Committee to move this project forward. While there are many questions yet to be answered regarding this project, I look forward to working through the Environmental Impact Report process to answer those questions and ensure our community and the community of Chico are well informed and well served by this project.”

The Paradise Sewer Project is one of the largest infrastructure projects of its kind in the State. It is the largest in the Central Valley Region including Roseville and Stockton and the largest in the North State by far. After many decades of study, a universal understanding among Federal and State officials is that a regional approach is our best path forward.

“The proposed connection would also provide much needed upgrades to the water treatment infrastructure in the City of Chico where many residents of Paradise relocated, “said Congressman Doug LaMalfa in support of the project.

Assemblyman James Gallagher agreed, saying, “This option also provides for economies of scale, benefitting both jurisdictions by distributing permitting, operation, and maintenance costs.”

Please visit paradisesewer.com for regular updates on the Paradise Sewer Project, including Committee meeting dates and times.

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