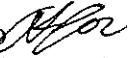


REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE: June 8, 2015

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso 
Chief Legislative Analyst

Council File No: 15-0002-S55
Assignment No: 15-06-0431

SUBJECT: Resolution (Koretz – Huizar) to SUPPORT SB 208 (Lara) Disadvantaged Communities/Non-profit Organizations and the Integrated Regional Water Management Program

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution (Koretz – Huizar) to include in the City’s 2015-2016 State Legislative Program SUPPORT for SB 208 (Lara) which seeks to improve opportunities for disadvantaged communities and non-profit organizations to participate meaningfully in the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) Program.

SUMMARY:

Resolution (Koretz – Huizar), introduced on May 22, 2015, states that integrated regional water management plans were originally intended for disparate communities, water agencies, and interests to cooperate regionally to solve intractable water and resources issues; and to prioritize and implement a region’s water resources needs.

According to the Resolution, the Integrated Regional Water Management Planning Act of 2002 provides regional water management groups with authority to prepare and adopt a plan to identify and advance regional collaboration on water supply, water quality improvements and natural resource protection. The plan typically includes a list of projects that will help achieve various goals and objectives; and identification of water-related needs that disadvantaged communities seek.

The Resolution notes that regional water management groups throughout the state have proactively encouraged the participation of non-profit organizations and disadvantaged communities in the IRWMP process to provide broad community support.

However, the state’s administration of the IRWMP program has created payment delays for implementation of plans that threaten the success of regional programs and continued participation of all interested stakeholders.

SB 208 (Lara), introduced February 11, 2015 in the state legislature, seeks to improve opportunities for disadvantaged communities and non-profit organizations to participate

meaningfully in the IRWMP program. The measure would provide up to 50% advanced payment of an IRWMP grant award to a non-profit organization or disadvantaged community.

SB 208 contains important accountability and reporting provisions to protect the state's fiscal interests while balancing the need to ensure appropriate cash-flow for non-profit organizations as they participate in the program. Therefore, the Resolution requests that the City support SB 208.

BACKGROUND:

Supporters of the measure maintain that the state's IRWMP reimbursement process has been a real problem for some non-profit organizations. While local and regional water agencies can usually carry invoice billing as a receivable for a few months, many non-profit organizations, with limited budgets, cannot.

The state's IRWMP process is notoriously difficult and costly for non-profit organizations and disadvantaged communities. Despite statutory requirements that no less than 10% IRWMP funds be granted to disadvantaged communities, the program application and approval process is not designed to accommodate communities that do not hire a costly consultant to apply for and negotiate funding.

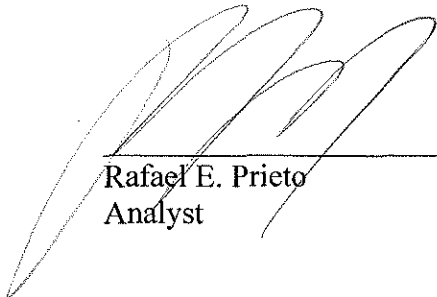
Additionally, even if the community or organization successfully navigates the IRWMP application process, delays in funding to pay consultants/contractors have added to the difficulty of pursuing projects.

DEPARTMENTS NOTIFIED

Department of Water and Power;
Bureau of Sanitation

BILL STATUS

6/2/15 Senate Floor - Passed and ordered to the Assembly



Rafael E. Prieto
Analyst

Attachment: 1. Resolution (Koretz – Huizar)

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations, or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state, or federal governmental body or agency must first have been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, integrated regional water management was originally intended to be an opportunity for disparate communities, water agencies, and interests to cooperate regionally to solve intractable water and resources issues and to prioritize and implement a region's water resources needs; and

WHEREAS, the Integrated Regional Water Management Planning Act of 2002 was enacted into law, and provides that regional water management groups are authorized to prepare and adopt an integrated regional water management plan to identify and advance regional collaboration and cooperation; and

WHEREAS, an integrated regional water management plan is intended to coordinate the activities of public agencies and nonprofit organizations to support water supply reliability, water quality improvements, and natural resource protection in a defined region; and the plan typically includes a list of projects that will help to achieve the goals and objectives established in the plan, and it is also required to include an identification and consideration of the water-related needs of disadvantaged communities within the boundaries of the plan; and

WHEREAS, general obligation water bonds approved by voters, including Proposition 84 and Proposition 1, have provided funding through the Department of Water Resources to regional water management groups to assist in funding locally-developed and approved integrated regional water management projects; and

WHEREAS, regional water management groups throughout the state have proactively encouraged the participation of nonprofit organizations and disadvantaged communities in the integrated regional water management planning and grant program to provide broad community support and credibility to the implementation of grant-funded projects, which has resulted in more collaborative solutions to water challenges within regions; and

WHEREAS, administration of the integrated regional water management program has created challenges and delays of payment for implementation of plans at the regional level that threaten the success of regional programs and continued participation of all interested stakeholders, including smaller nonprofit organizations, disadvantaged communities, and watershed groups; and

WHEREAS, State Senator Ricardo Lara has introduced Senate Bill (SB) 208 in the California Legislature to improve opportunities for disadvantaged communities and nonprofit organizations to continue meaningful participation in the integrated regional water management program; and

WHEREAS, SB 208 would provide up to 50 percent advanced payment of an integrated regional water management plan grant award to a project sponsor that is a nonprofit organization, disadvantaged community, or assisting a disadvantaged community; and

WHEREAS, SB 208 contains important accountability and reporting provisions to protect the state's fiscal interests while balancing the need to ensure appropriate cash-flow for small organizations to allow continued participation in the integrated regional water management program; and

WHEREAS, the City should support SB 208 in order to remove administrative challenges and hurdles, and allow for the continued meaningful participation of all regional interests in the integrated regional water management program process.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2015-2016 State Legislative Program SUPPORT for SB 208 (Lara), to improve opportunities for disadvantaged communities and nonprofit organizations to continue meaningful participation in the integrated regional water management program.