

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



May 7, 2021

Proposed Resolution W-5237

Agenda ID: 19490

To: All Interested Persons

Enclosed is Proposed Resolution W-5237 of the Water Division, which authorizes Golden State Water Company to acquire Robbins Water System from Sutter County Water Works District No. 1. Proposed Resolution W-5237 is scheduled to appear on the June 24, 2021 Commission Meeting Agenda (ID#19490).

The Commission may act on this resolution or it may postpone action until later. When the Commission acts on a proposed resolution, the Commission may adopt all or part of the proposed resolution, as written, or amend or modify the proposed resolution; or the Commission may set the proposed resolution aside and prepare a different resolution. Only when the Commission acts does the resolution become binding.

Interested persons may submit comments on Proposed Resolution W-5237 via email to Water.Division@cpuc.ca.gov on or before **June 10, 2021**. Please reference **"Proposed Resolution W-5237"** in the subject line.

Interested persons must also serve a copy of their comments on the utility on the same date that the comments are submitted to the Water Division. If email is unavailable, please submit comments to:

California Public Utilities Commission
Water Division, Third Floor
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

Comments should focus on factual, legal, technical errors, or policy issues in the proposed resolution.

Persons interested in receiving comments submitted may contact the Water Division at Water.Division@cpuc.ca.gov or (415) 703-1133. Please reference "Proposed Resolution W-5237."

/s/TERENCE SHIA

Terence Shia, Director
Water Division

Enclosures: Proposed Resolution W-5237
Certificate of Service
Service List

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PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

WATER DIVISION

RESOLUTION W-5237

June 24, 2021

RESOLUTION

**(RES. W-5237) GOLDEN STATE WATER COMPANY. ORDER
AUTHORIZING GOLDEN STATE WATER COMPANY TO
ACQUIRE ROBBINS WATER SYSTEM FROM SUTTER
COUNTY WATER WORKS DISTRICT NO. 1.**

**By Golden State Water Company's Advice Letter 1818-W;
submitted on May 27, 2020.**

SUMMARY

By Advice Letter 1818-W submitted on May 27, 2020, Golden State Water Company (Golden State) requests Commission authority to: 1) acquire the Robbins Water System (Robbins) from Sutter County Water Works District No. 1 (Sutter County), based on Robbins being an Inadequately Operated and Maintained Small Water Utility (IOMSWU) as defined in Decision No. 99-10-064; 2) consolidate Robbins into the Arden-Cordova Customer Service Area; 3) allow Robbins' customers to remain on their current flat rate tariff for a 12-month grace period, then merge them on the Arden-Cordova metered rate tariff; 4) recognize/acknowledge the needed capital improvements to the Robbins system; 5) establish an Unanticipated Repair Cost Memorandum Account (URCMA) for Robbins; and 6) establish the Robbins Tax Memorandum Account to track tax liabilities and expenses (including costs associated therewith) resulting from approval of Golden State's proposed actions in this filing that are not otherwise provided for in a general rate case application or decision.

This Resolution grants Commission authority for the following to Golden State: 1) to acquire the Robbins Water System for the purchase price of \$1,000 under the terms and conditions set forth in the August 25, 2020 Second Amendment to Water System Purchase and Sale Agreement, 2) to add Robbins to its Arden-Cordova Customer Service Area; 3) to allow Robbins' customers to remain on their current flat rate tariff for

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a 12-month grace period; and 4) to grant authority to establish the Robbins Tax Memorandum Account.

This Resolution rejects Golden State's request to establish the Unanticipated Repair Cost Memorandum Account due to the approval of Golden State consolidating the Robbins Water System with the Arden-Cordova Customer Service Area. Standard Practice U-14-W requires recovery of the URCMA from only IOMSWU customers and since Robbins' customers are being consolidated with Arden-Cordova's, the request is moot. In addition, Golden State will receive grant funding to assist with the well and treatment facility construction.

This Resolution finds that Golden State's ability to provide safe and reliable drinking water to the Robbins Water System is in the best interest for the Robbins' customers.

BACKGROUND

The Robbins Water System (Robbins) is a public water system operated by the Sutter County Water Works District No. 1 (Sutter County), a dependent district of the County of Sutter. Robbins contains approximately 94 connections on a flat monthly charge. In 2000, the State Water Resources Control Board granted a water supply permit amendment #01-02-93(P)51002-A1 to Robbins to construct and operate a new well with iron and manganese removal treatment known as the Wagner Aviation Well.

On January 2, 2009, Sutter County was issued a compliance order by the State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water (DDW) to lower the average arsenic concentration of the treated water at the Wagner Aviation Well. Samples collected at the Wagner Aviation Well detected arsenic levels that exceeded the maximum contaminant level ("MCL") established for arsenic. Sutter County does not possess the financial capacity necessary to upgrade Robbins to comply with State and Federal drinking water standards and is subject to this outstanding compliance order from DDW.

On August 29, 2008, Golden State submitted Application (A.) 08-08-022 to grant Golden State a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) to construct a new non-contiguous service area in the southern portion of Sutter County. Decision (D.) 14-06-051 approved the CPCN and also approved a Settlement Agreement that included the potential future acquisition of Robbins by Golden State. In D. 14-06-051, the Commission did not "pre-approve" Golden State's acquisition of Robbins, rather the

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Commission would review the acquisition of Robbins when Golden State comes before the Commission to seek approval of the acquisition.

On December 11, 2015, Sutter County received an amended compliance order, due to the Wagner Aviation Well's continued exceedance of the arsenic MCL in the treated water supply.¹ Furthermore, as specified in the amended compliance order, the failure of Sutter County to bring the potable water from the Wagner Aviation Well into compliance with the arsenic MCL, as specified in Section 64431 and 64432 of the California Code of Regulations, by December 31, 2018, could result in penalties, citations, and/or suspension or revocation of its water system operating permit. On March 1, 2018, DDW issued an additional Compliance Order for Violation of Secondary Drinking Water Standards² (total dissolved solids [TDS], specific conductance, and chloride) and in July 2019, Robbins entered into an Administrative Order on Consent with the US EPA.³ EPA's Administrative Order requires that the system meet the elements of their compliance plan by January 1, 2022.

On March 11, 2016, Golden State submitted Advice Letter No. 1653-W to acquire Robbins. Advice Letter No. 1653-W was supplemented on April 12, 2016 to extend Golden State's California Alternative Rates for Water program to the customer service area, if the Commission granted approval for the acquisition. Advice Letter No. 1653-WA was rejected due to the State Water Resources Control Board's rules at the time against extending loans or grants for constructing a well in a recognized flood plain. As such, Golden State's acquisition of Robbins requiring private capital investment would have been a negative cost-benefit acquisition for existing customers in Golden State Water's Arden-Cordova Customer Service Area. Since this rejection, Golden State has continued working with Sutter County to determine a viable approach to acquiring the Robbins System.

On May 27, 2020, Golden State submitted Advice Letter (AL) No. 1818-W in a second attempt to acquire Robbins, an Inadequately Operated and Maintained Small Water Utility (IOMSWU), and add Robbins to Golden State's Arden-Cordova Customer

¹ Amended Compliance Order

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/programs/documents/ddwem/dwp%20enforcement%20actions/Sutter/2015/01_21_15R_008_5100107_02.pdf

² Violation of Secondary Drinking Water Standards,

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/programs/documents/ddwem/dwp%20enforcement%20actions/Sutter/2018/01_21_18R_001_5100107_MA.pdf

³ Golden State AL 1818-W Exhibit X-13

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Service Area. Golden State references Decision 99-10-064 which authorizes utilities the use of an Advice Letter process to acquire an IOMSWU. General Order 96-B, Water Industry Rule Section 7.3.3(10) provides further guidance that a utility acquiring an IOMSWU must submit a Tier 3 Advice Letter which will be disposed of by a Commission resolution pursuant to General Rule 7.6.2.

AL 1818-W outlines Golden State's proposal to drill a new well and install a treatment facility, expected to cost \$3.8 million, to comply with the arsenic MCL and secondary MCLs. Golden State also applied for principal-forgiveness funding through the State Water Resource Control Board DDW's Safe Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) program to pay for the new well and treatment facilities for the Robbins' customers. Golden State requested to continue applying Robbins' current flat rates to the customers for a 12-month grace period and transition the customers to Arden-Cordova's current metered rates. Sutter County previously installed meters to all connections within the Robbins territory without charging metered rates, and no further meter installations are necessary after Golden State acquires Robbins and transitions the customers from flat rates to metered rates. The 12-month grace period will ease the transition for Robbins' customers to move from flat rate service to metered tariff rates while Golden State will inform these customers of their water usage and potential costs under metered rates.

Lastly, Golden State requests in AL 1818 to establish two memorandum accounts: 1) the Unanticipated Repair Cost Memorandum Account (URCMA) and 2) the Robbins Tax Memorandum Account (RTMA). The URCMA will track any costs associated with unanticipated repairs to Robbins for later recovery in rates, subject to its prudent administration of such repairs. The RTMA will allow Golden State recovery of an estimated \$1.1 million from federal tax liabilities associated with the principal-forgiveness funding. The Tax Cuts and Job Act (TCJA) enacted on December 22, 2017 changed the tax code to cause grant funding to be treated as income, and thus counted as taxable, for private utilities.

On June 15, 2020, Public Advocates Office (CalPA) submitted a letter to Water Division supporting Golden State's acquisition of Robbins. CalPA acknowledges that Sutter County is unable to meet numerous primary and secondary drinking water standards and does not seek profit from its inability to maintain the system at a reasonable cost. CalPA stated that Sutter County's sale of Robbins "appears to be precisely the type of water utility acquisition that can help achieve every Californian's 'right to safe, clean,

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affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes.”⁴

Discussions between Water Division and Golden State were held on October 6, 2020, and November 10, 2020, to review strategies to unburden Golden State’s customers with the tax liability caused by the TCJA. Golden State recommended distributing the \$1.1 million surcharge among all customers to lessen the surcharge amount paid by Arden-Cordova customers. Water Division suggested that Sutter County request funding through the SAFER program and hire Golden State as an administrator to build the project. Hiring Golden State as an administrator would mitigate the tax liability while allowing Golden State to continue running the project with Sutter County as the grant recipient. Golden State would then acquire Robbins once the project was complete.

On February 23, 2021, Golden State responded via e-mail stating that Water Division’s recommendation for Sutter County to receive the grant funding would still incur a tax liability. Golden State cites to Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Sections 61, 115, and 118. IRC Section 61 which defines gross income and provides examples of items specifically included and excluded from gross income in IRC Section 71 to 140. Golden State considered Sutter County’s installation of the new well and treatment facility as a contribution in aid of construction (CIAC) where a Fair Market Value (FMV) will be assessed to the new installation. Golden State estimates a tax liability of at least \$1.1 million. Accordingly, Golden State contends that an income tax liability will be assessed on the sale regardless of when Golden State acquires Robbins.

NOTICE AND PROTESTS

In accordance with General Rules 4.3 and 7.2 and Water Industry Rule 4.1 of General Order 96-B, Golden State served copies of Advice Letter (AL) 1818-W to the service list which included customers of Robbins and the Arden-Cordova customer service area. In accordance with Water Industry Rule 3.3 (id.), Golden State also posted the advice letters on their website.

No protests were received in response to Advice Letter No. 1818-W.

⁴ CalPA’s response letter at p. 1.

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DISCUSSION

Golden State has provided water service to its Arden-Cordova Customer Service Area since 1964 and currently serves approximately 16,200 customers in this area. As a Class A water utility serving over 260,000 customers state-wide for more than 80 years, Golden State has the financial resources and technical experience in operating water systems to provide safe and reliable water service for the Arden-Cordova and Robbins' customers. In addition, the acquisition will allow Robbins' customers access to Golden State's extensive customer service and online resources, along with Golden State's low-income customer assistance program, or the California Alternative Rates for Water program.

Need for Robbins Acquisition and Consolidation with Arden-Cordova

Currently, Robbins is unable to adequately serve its customers with safe and reliable water service as its water quality exceeds the arsenic MCL established by DDW. Therefore, Robbins has been delivering to its customers bottled water, funded by a grant from DDW for potable water needs. Sutter County is applying for an extension of the grant in order to continue to receive funding for bottled water purchases. At the time of the acquisition, Sutter County will transfer the grant to Golden State, at which time Golden State will continue providing bottled water service until the construction of the new well and treatment facility is complete.

Golden State requests to fully consolidate Robbins to its Arden-Cordova Customer Service Area by continuing to charge Robbins' customers a \$70 per month flat rate for a 12-month period and transition them to Arden-Cordova's metered rates following this grace period. During the 12-month timeframe, Golden State will assist in familiarizing Robbins' customers to metered rates by including information in customer bills on their water usage and potential costs when they transition to metered rates.

The distance between Robbins and the closest Arden-Cordova service territory is approximately forty-six miles and both areas would continue to use independent water sources. Financial resources and facility operators are the only items shared among the two districts. However, Robbins is a disadvantaged community⁵, as defined by Health

⁵ "Disadvantaged community" means the entire service area of a community water system, or a community therein, in which the median household income is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median household income level.

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and Safety Code Section 116275, subd. (aa) and placing Robbins in a separate customer service territory with a separate rate design would make rates unaffordable for the Robbins' customers. Water Division finds that Golden State fully consolidating Robbins with Arden-Cordova is in the best interest for the Robbins' customers where they will receive safe and reliable drinking water. Existing Arden-Cordova's customers will benefit from the expansion of the overall customer base with the addition of Robbins customers. In addition, Water Division finds that allowing Robbins' customers to remain on their flat rates for one year while familiarizing them to metered rates is a reasonable method to transition these customers into the Arden-Cordova district.

Under the terms and conditions of the August 25, 2020 Second Amendment to Water System Purchase and Sale Agreement, Golden State has agreed to acquire Robbins for the purchase price of \$1,000. The impact on Golden State's rate base from the acquisition of Robbins will be of a nominal amount. Water Division finds that the \$1,000 purchase price is reasonable and should be added to the Arden-Cordova rate base due to Golden State's request for full consolidation of Robbins with Arden-Cordova. Golden State has the expertise to properly provide safe drinking water to Robbins' customers.

Robbins Tax Memorandum Accounts

Golden State applied for \$3.8 million in principle-forgiveness grant funds through DDW's SAFER program to construct Robbins' new well and treatment facility. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), enacted on December 22, 2017, amended Internal Revenue Code Section 118 to remove a section that exempted water utilities from paying taxes on monies received as grants from government agencies.⁶ Contributions that a utility receives to provide or encourage the provision of services to or for the benefit of the contributor must be reported as income by the utility. Golden State requests establishment of the Robbins Tax Memorandum Account (RTMA) to track the tax liabilities associated with the \$3.8 million grant funding, estimated to reach \$1.1 million to be amortized in full via a surcharge.

Golden State proposes two options for the tax liability recovery: 1) allocate the surcharge to Arden-Cordova customers only with an estimated \$0.22/CCF surcharge for metered rate customers and an additional \$6.60 surcharge for flat rate customers; or 2) allocate a surcharge across the entire customer base of Golden State with an estimated

⁶ IRC Section 118(c), 1996

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\$0.020/CCF surcharge for metered rate customers and an additional \$2.90 surcharge for flat rate customers. Golden State shall submit a Tier 3 advice letter or request in their next General Rate Case to amortize the RTMA, where the Commission will determine the appropriate basis for amortization. Water Division finds that establishing the RTMA complies with the Standard Practice U-27-W, where the costs associated with the RTMA can be tracked due to events of an exceptional nature that: a) are not under the utility's control; b) could not have been reasonably foreseen in the utility's last general rate case; c) will occur before the utility next scheduled rate case; d) are of a substantial nature such that the amount of money involved is worth the effort of processing a memo account; and e) have ratepayer benefits.

The tax liability is not under the utility's control and was enacted as part of the TCJA 2017 where grant funds are considered taxable income to utilities. The acquisition of Robbins was not foreseen in Golden State's 2017 GRC application. Further discussions were held between Golden State and Sutter County before a settlement agreement was reached. The Administrative Order on Consent (AOC) from the US EPA requires Robbins to comply with the Arsenic MCL and secondary MCL levels prior to January 1, 2022. Golden State's General Rate Case (GRC) for 2022-2024 is expected to be completed by December 2021. The one month between the completed GRC and Administrative Order on Consent is not enough time for Golden State to complete the necessary improvements.

Golden State is expected to incur a \$1.1 million tax liability from grant funds and is substantial in nature. Lastly, Golden State's request to establish the RTMA will allow Robbins' customers the resources needed to replace and/or upgrade their water system infrastructure to receive much needed potable water.

Unanticipated Repair Cost Memorandum Account

Golden State is requesting to establish the Unanticipated Repair Cost Memorandum Account (URCMA) to track costs during the construction of the new well and treatment facility. Standard Practice U-14-W Section 8(g) allows utilities to establish an URCMA when acquiring an Inadequately Operated Maintained Small Water Utility (IOMSWU) and recovery of the URCMA must apply to only the IOMSWU. However, Golden State is requesting to consolidate Robbins into Arden-Cordova and therefore the request is moot. In addition, Golden State is requesting \$3.8 million in grants to assist with the

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well and treatment facility construction. As Golden State is the entity receiving the grant funding it should not be allowed to establish an URCMA.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

The CEQA Guidelines define “responsible agency” as “a public agency which proposes to carry out or approve a project, for which a lead agency is preparing or has prepared an EIR or negative declaration.” (14 Cal. Code Reg. (“CEQA Guidelines”), Sec. 15381.) For purposes of CEQA, the term “responsible agency” includes all agencies other than the lead agency that have “discretionary approval power” over the project (Id.) The approvals referred to in the definition are those within the jurisdiction of the responsible agency, rather than approval of the project as a whole (See, e.g., Public Resource Code Sec. 21153(c).) In the present case the Commission is a responsible agency with respect to the actions requested in advice letter 1818-W.

To comply with CEQA, a responsible agency must consider the final CEQA document prepared by the lead agency and reach its own conclusions on whether and how to approve the project. (CEQA Guidelines 15096(a), (f).) Before reaching a decision, a responsible agency must consider the environmental effects identified in the CEQA document and must independently decide whether to require additional environmental documentation with respect to the parts of the project under its jurisdiction. (Public Resource Code Sec. 21001.1(d); CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15096(a), (f), (g)(1).)

An initial study and Mitigated Negative Declaration were adopted by Sutter County’s Water Works District No. 1 in accordance with CEQA guidelines on May 26, 2020. The study finds that the Robbins’ project could have a significant impact on the environment under Biological Resources; however, mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project which reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

A responsible agency must make the findings required by Public Resource Code Sec. 21081 and CEQA Guidelines 15091 in regard to the part of the project subject to its jurisdiction. The Commission has reviewed the lead agency’s Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program, and the findings supporting them and independently finds that they are adequate for our purposes.

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Permit Requirement

Pursuant to the provisions of California Health and Safety Code (CH&S) Section 116525(a), the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) requires any person or entity operating a public water system to obtain a domestic water supply permit (permit) to operate that water system. Golden State must therefore apply for and receive a permit from the SWRCB to operate the Robbins Water System. Prior to obtaining a permit, Golden State must demonstrate to SWRCB that they possess adequate technical, managerial, and financial (TMF) capability to assure the delivery of pure, wholesome, and potable drinking water. Golden State will send a copy of the completed TMF Assessment Form along with all necessary attachments to the Commission. Accordingly, the transfer of operations of Robbins to Golden State should therefore be conditioned on Golden State obtaining the required permit to operate the Robbins Water System under the new ownership.

Conclusion

The Commission authorizes the following: 1) the acquisition of Sutter County's Robbins Water System by Golden State for \$1,000 as stated in the terms and conditions of the Second Amendment to Water System Purchase and Sale Agreement dated August 25, 2020. The addition of the \$1,000 purchase price to Arden-Cordova's ratebase as Golden State requested a full consolidation of Robbins with Arden-Cordova, 2) Golden State is granted the authority to add Robbins to the Arden-Cordova Customer Service Area, 3) Robbins' customers may remain on their flat rate tariff for a 12-month grace period, after which they may be merged into the Arden-Cordova metered rate tariff, and 4) Golden State may establish a Robbins Tax Memorandum Account to track any income tax liability resulting from the purchase of Robbins.

The Commission denies Golden State's request to establish the URCMA. While Standard Practice U-14-W Section 8(g) allows utilities to establish an URCMA when acquiring an IOMSWU, recovery of the UCRMA applies only to the IOMSWU. However, Golden State is requesting to consolidate Robbins into Arden-Cordova and therefore the request is moot. In addition, Golden State is requesting \$3.8 million in grants to assist with the well and treatment facility construction. As Golden State is the entity receiving the grant funding, it should not be allowed to establish an URCMA.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

In February 2019, the Commission adopted an Environmental and Social Justice Action Plan (ESJ Action Plan) to serve as a roadmap to expand public inclusion in Commission decision-making processes to targeted communities across California. The ESJ Action Plan establishes a series of goals related to health and safety, consumer protection, program benefits, and enforcement in all the sectors the Commission regulates. With this Resolution, the Commission addresses Goals #1 and #3 of the ESJ Action Plan, “Consistently integrate equity and access considerations throughout Commission regulatory activities; and strive to improve access to high-quality water, communications, and transportation services for ESJ communities.”

The Commission acknowledges that some populations in California such as those served by Robbins, face higher barriers in accessing safe and affordable utility services. The ESJ Action Plan tasks the Commission with the responsibility to serve Californians in a way that helps address these inequities. The action proposed in this Resolution for the acquisition of Sutter County’s Robbins Water System by Golden State creates a pathway to provide safe and reliable water service for the Robbins community that currently does not have access to high-quality water with the previously mentioned water quality issues related to arsenic, TDS, chloride, and specific conductance.

Robbins is classified as a disadvantaged community, as defined by Health and Safety Code Section 116275, subd. (aa). The California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool, Version 3 (CalEnviroScreen 3.0) provided by the California Environmental Protection Agency, identifies disadvantaged communities by collecting multiple metrics and outputting a single value at the census tract scale. CalEnviroScreen 3.0 ranks Robbins in the 65-70th percentile of the highest scoring census tracts statewide, the census tract notably falls into the 98th percentile for Impaired Water, and in the 91st percentile for Groundwater Threats. Given these definitions and considerations, this action will provide direct relief to residents of Robbins which experience disproportionately poor water quality and demonstrates the Commission actively improving access to high-quality water for the Robbins Water System with this proposed Resolution.

COMPLIANCE

Golden State has no outstanding compliance orders, and the utility has been filing annual reports as required. Golden State is also in compliance with the SWRCB’s water

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quality standards for safe drinking water. Robbins is still subject to an outstanding compliance order as previously discussed in the Resolution.

P.U. Code Section 433(a) requires public utilities to pay an annual public utilities reimbursement fee (annual fee) to the Commission. The Division confirmed with the Commission's fiscal office that Golden State is current with its annual fee payments.

COMMENTS

Public Utilities Code section 311(g)(1) requires that a proposed resolution be served on all parties and be subject to a public review and comment period of 30 days or more, prior to a vote of the Commission on the resolution.

Accordingly, this proposed resolution was mailed to the utilities and their service lists and made available for public comment on May 21, 2021.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. In July 2019, Sutter County received an Administrative Order on Consent from the EPA for violations of the arsenic MCL and secondary MCLs with a compliance date of January 1, 2022, with respect to the Robbins water system.
2. By AL 1818-W, submitted on May 27, 2020, Golden State Water Company (Golden State) requested Commission authorization to acquire the Robbins Water System for a purchase price of \$1,000 under the terms and conditions set forth within the filing.
3. On June 5, 2020, Golden State requested funding from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), Division of Drinking Water's (DDW), SAFER program to construct a new well and treatment facility to comply with the US EPA's Administrative Order on Consent on Robbins' violation of arsenic MCL and DDW's Secondary MCLs for TDS, chloride, and specific conductance.
4. Golden State's request for the acquisition for Robbins by advice letter process is consistent with the process authorized by Decision 99-10-064 and General Order 96-B.

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5. Golden State requests full consolidation of the Robbins Water System into the Arden-Cordova Customer Service Area.
6. Golden State requests that Robbins' customers remain on their current flat rate tariff for a 12-month grace period, then be merged onto the Arden-Cordova metered rate tariff.
7. Golden State requests to establish two memorandum accounts: 1) the Unanticipated Repair Cost Memorandum Account and 2) the Robbins Tax Memorandum Account. The Unanticipated Repair Cost Memorandum Account will track additional repair costs that are otherwise unaccounted for. The Robbins Tax Memorandum Account will be used to track the recovery of the estimated \$1.1 million tax liability resulting from the SWRCB grant funding to construct a new well and treatment facility for Robbins.
8. The acquisition serves the interest of the Robbins' customers by providing the "right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes."⁷
9. Existing Golden State's Arden-Cordova's customers will benefit due to the expansion of the existing customer base with the addition of Robbins' customers.
10. No protests were received for Advice Letter 1818-W.
11. On June 15, 2020, Public Advocates Office submitted a letter to Water Division supporting Golden State's acquisition of Robbins which provides Robbins' customers with safe, clean, affordable, and reliable drinking water.
12. An environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was completed by Sutter County on January 27, 2020.
13. The Commission reviewed the lead agency's Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program with the findings supporting them and independently finds that they are adequate for our purposes.

⁷ Water Code Section 106.3

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14. The Robbins Water System serves a disadvantaged community as defined by Health and Safety Code Section 116275, subd. (aa).
15. Golden State's request to acquire the Robbins Water System for \$1,000 under the terms and conditions set forth in the August 25, 2020 Second Amendment to Water System Purchase and Sale Agreement is reasonable. This request should be approved and the \$1,000 should be added to Arden-Cordova's rate base.
16. Golden State can provide Robbins' customers with safe, clean, affordable, and adequate drinking water through a full consolidation and should be approved.
17. Allowing Robbins' customers to remain on their current flat rate for a 12-month period, then merging them to Arden-Cordova's metered tariff will allow Robbins' customers to acclimate to metered billing cycles and should be approved.
18. Golden State's request to establish the Robbins Tax Memorandum Account complies with Standard Practice U-27-W and should be approved.
19. Golden State should be denied the request to establish an Unanticipated Repair Cost Memorandum account due to the consolidation of Robbins with Arden-Cordova. Recovery of the Unanticipated Repair Cost Memorandum Account applies only to the Inadequately Operated Maintained Small Water Utility and since Robbins is being consolidated with Arden-Cordova, the request is moot. In addition, Golden State is requesting grant funding to assist with the well and treatment facility construction.
20. Golden State should be granted authority to submit a Tier 1 Advice Letter to incorporate Robbins into the Arden-Cordova service territory.

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THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED THAT:

1. Pursuant to Public Utilities Code Sections 851-854 and Resolution ALJ-272, this Resolution authorizes Golden State Water Company to acquire the Robbins Water System for \$1,000 to be included in the Arden-Cordova Customer Service Area rate base, under the terms and conditions set forth in the August 25, 2020, Second Amendment to Water System Purchase and Sale Agreement.
2. Authority is granted to Golden State Water Company to submit a Tier 1 Advice Letter incorporating Robbins' customers into its Arden-Cordova Customer Service Area and allowing Robbins' customers to remain on their flat rate tariff for a 12-month period. After the 12-month period, Golden State Water Company must submit a Tier 1 Advice Letter transitioning Robbins' customers to Arden-Cordova's metered tariff.
3. Authority is granted to Golden State Water Company to submit a Tier 1 Advice Letter to establish the Robbins Tax Memorandum Account in its Preliminary Statements.
4. Golden State Water Company's request to establish an Unanticipated Repair Cost Memorandum Account is denied.

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This resolution is effective today.

I certify that the foregoing resolution was duly introduced, passed, and adopted at a conference of the Public Utilities Commission of the State of California held on June 24, 2021; the following Commissioners voting favorably thereon:

RACHEL PETERSON
Executive Director

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that I have electronically served all parties in these filings or their attorneys as shown on the attached service list who have provided an e-mail address for Proposed Resolution No. W-5237. I will cause a Notice of Availability of the document to be served by U.S. Mail on all parties listed on the attached service list for whom no e-mail address is provided.

Dated May 7, 2021, at San Francisco, California.

/s/ROBIN BRYANT

Robin Bryant

Parties should notify the Water Division, Third Floor, California Public Utilities Commission, 505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102, of any change of address to ensure that they continue to receive documents. You must indicate the Resolution number on which your name appears.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

Resolution W-5237
WD

June 24, 2021

GOLDEN STATE WATER COMPANY RESOLUTION NO. W-5237 SERVICE LIST

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