

Waterwise: Self-Help Enterprises to lead tank program

June 28, 2017

By: Luis Hernandez

Self-Help Enterprises will become the lead agency in the Household Tank Program, following a decision from County Supervisors.

Previously, Supervisors had voted to end the program by the end of the month, which also marks the end of the fiscal year.

The Household Tank program installs 2,500- to 3,000-gallon water tanks paid for with state dollars for home with dry wells.

The Supervisors' initial move came when the state ended funding for the California Disaster Assistance Act, which included the Household Tank Program. County officials there is no local money to continue the program.

On Tuesday, Supervisors, following a recommendation from county administrators, approved an agreement with Self-Help Enterprises to become the program's leading agency, establishing a successor.

There are 451 household tanks in the Tulare County.

That's the very reason for the program's continuation.

"We still have folks affected by the drought," said Tom Collishaw, Self-Help Enterprises CEO. "They only have water because they are getting it delivered."

More: [Waterwise: Additional funding needed for drought relief](#)

More: [Waterwise: Drought-relief well in Porterville nearly done](#)

Collishaw said Self-Help Enterprises is taking over similar programs in Kings, Kern, Fresno, Merced, Mariposa and Stanislaus counties. But Tulare County has more household water tanks than all other counties combined.

"Tulare County has been the most impacted in the state," he said.

Self-Help Enterprises are planning on applying for state funds, which will be used to pay for water deliveries.

But, to qualify for the substitute program, homeowners will have to plan to connect to a permanent water source, either hooking up to a municipal system or digging a new well.

Collishaw said state officials will continue financing the program for 12 months, the same timeframe residents have to find the permanent solution.

And while it is impossible to ensure all residents will have a solution, Collishaw said locals are encouraged to get involved.

"We are telling them to get signed up for a permanent solution and have a plan," he said.

Collishaw said he wants Tulare residents to keep in mind the drought. Conservation, preservation and good use are good practices.

One wet winter is not enough to revert all drought effects, Collishaw said.

"It's great we have water in the rivers and reservoirs," he said. "But the groundwater depletion will take more than two wet winters to replenish."

The agreement Supervisors approved has four parts:

- Ensure tanks are either removed or they come into building code compliance and land use restrictions before June 3, 2018. County building officials will likely allow temporary permits.
-
- Remove references to the county and the Household Tank Program from documents and agreements. The program will be run solely by Self-Help Enterprises.
-
- Self-Help Enterprise will assume responsibility and liability for the successor program.
-
- Self-Help Enterprises will remove surplus tanks from county facilities by Sept. 30.
-

Already, county officials budgeted \$18,000 for two months of source water expense in case Self-Help Enterprises couldn't pay reimbursement. The officials said the expense is included in the 2017-2018 budget.

Waterwise is a news and notes column Reporter Luis Hernandez compiles. Send ideas and suggestions for the Waterwise column to the reporter on twitter @lfhernanvtd.