

Urge Quick Start For Water Project

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water supply

Work on the Santa Cruz county water conservation and flood control district, signed into existence Friday by Gov. Knight, is expected to begin about August 1, according to opinions expressed today by supervisors.

Supervisor C. B. Harts said he favored adding a penny to the tax rate this year to finance preliminary engineering studies and recommendations. Supervisor Francis Silliman urged that the county immediately tax up to the 2 cent per \$100 valuation limit allowed under the measure signed by Gov. Knight.

Both supervisors urged that work begin immediately after the 30 day waiting period required by law after signature by the governor.

Silliman said that in the Pajaro district, which he represents, water is already beginning to be scarce during the summer dry season.

"My own well has already gone dry a couple times and I have had to shut off the pump," Silliman said.

Purpose of the district is to provide a political body to procure money from the state and federal governments for projects and to provide an administrative agency to solve the tough water problem facing the county.

The rich farm lands of the Pajaro valley are in most urgent need of help. Salt water has entered irrigation wells in some places, and in others, a serious shortage of water is occurring.

Directors of the district are the county supervisors.

Harts said, "We must get on this thing as soon as we can. Congress has appropriated a large sum of money for water conservation and we should be ready to apply for some of it."

A one-cent increase in tax rate would bring in about \$12,000, Harts said. This would be enough to finance a study of the county's needs. He added that directors of the district, who are supervisors also, would not cost the county anything and that the board's secretary could do much of the administration spadework required.

Harts mentioned that the city of Santa Cruz has already had a water survey of certain surface area resources and that numerous other surveys have been completed. He added, however, that none of the surveys would meet needs of the county for a comprehensive study of both surface and ground water resources, plus requirements for conserving them.

Silliman said that in the southern part of the county there are excellent sites for dams to store water on Salsipuedes and Corralitos creeks. He urged that the county "go all out" to get projects started immediately.

Possibility of appointing a permanent water district supervisor was also discussed, but necessity for employment of this official is not as urgent as other preliminary steps, it was agreed.