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Huge Mid-County Annexation Looms For Water District

Residence rolls of the Soquel Creek County Water District may climb by some 7,000 persons in the near future.

Ed Hanna, executive officer of the Local Agency Formation Commission, said he will recommend to his board at its next meeting that the entire mid-county from Borregas Gulch to La Selva Beach be annexed to the water district — except for the area serviced by the Central Santa Cruz County Water District.

Hanna said LAFC had been slated to act on a request for annexation of Rio del Mar prepared by that community's improvement association. Since then, however, the Seacliff Improvement Association has asked to join and the La Selva Beach Improvement Association has indicated it may make a similar request.

Hanna thinks, then, the proper action would be to annex the entire area, and that is the move he will recommend to the commission.

And it may come in a hurry. "We'd like to move as fast as we can so the people will be eligible to vote in the November election," Hanna reported. Two water board seats will be on the line in that balloting, and the annexation would make all voters of the area eligible to cast ballots.

Principal effect of the annexation, Hanna noted, will be a

\$1 reduction on the district's bi-monthly basic water bills. The district already serves most of the area proposed for annexation, but after the action is completed, those customers then will qualify for the lower in-district rates.

That will bring a short-term reduction in the district's revenues, Hanna said, but water use and new connections are increasing so rapidly in the area the district's revenue level soon will be back to its current position. He foresees no hike in the water bills to compensate for the lower in-district charge.

The reason the mid-county is jumping on the Soquel Creek bandwagon is the water board's recent dropping of its 10-cent tax, Hanna noted. District Manager Bob Johnson reported that action was taken because the district's business has increased to the point it can operate on revenues alone.

Thus, new members of the district have a vote to gain and nothing to lose by joining, Hanna pointed out. "I see no disadvantage to the people in the area from annexation," the LAFC official reported.

He said the water board can reinstitute a tax without a popular vote, but saw little chance of that happening because of the district's good business level.

He called Soquel Creek a "well-run, well-managed" district.