TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER

DEPARTMENT: UTILITIES

DATE: JULY 10, 2006

CMR:290:06

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING IN SUPPORT OF THE BAY AREA WATER FORUM

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that the City Council approve and authorize the Mayor to sign the Memorandum of Understanding in support of the Bay Area Water Forum.

BACKGROUND
The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Executive Board established a CalFed Task Force in 2000. During 2004, the Task Force was re-structured to form the Bay Area Water Forum (BAWF). The BAWF includes stakeholders in addition to elected officials, such as representatives of Bay Area water agencies and members of non-governmental organizations from around the Bay. One of the main goals of BAWF is to foster regional cooperation between Bay Area agencies and to increase the chances that projects in the area can receive state grant funding under Proposition 50, which encourages integrated regional strategies of management of water resources.

DISCUSSION
BAWF is now independent of ABAG. The Chair of BAWF is Marin County Supervisor Cynthia Murray. Co-chairs are Greg Zlotnick, a Director of the Santa Clara Valley Water District and Grant Davis, Executive Director of the Bay Institute. BAWF participants include representatives of local and county governments, special districts, and interest groups. The collaborative efforts of the group have already reaped the benefits of securing state grant funds for preparing a Bay Area IRWMP.
BAWF has finalized a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (Attachment 2) to support the work of BAWF and has completed a work plan for 2006. The work plan (Attachment 3) contemplates four committees to conduct some of BAWF’s work: 1) Land Use and Water, to focus on the land use and water resource use nexus; 2) Outreach and Communications, to develop communications strategies among BAWF agencies and organizations; 3) Policy, Legislative, and Funding, to monitor legislative and policy initiatives that could impact Bay Area water resources; and 4) Ecosystem Restoration, to focus on ecosystem restoration efforts.

During the past year, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has assisted BAWF by providing support from the Center for Collaborative Policy, which has provided overall strategic planning, facilitation, and coordination of the meetings and agendas. BAWF is looking for broad support of the MOU and plans to use it to support a request of DWR to continue supporting BAWF in the future. If the City of Palo Alto signs the MOU, the City will signal its support for BAWF objectives of regional cooperation on Bay Area water resource issues.

**RESOURCE IMPACT**
Palo Alto staff will spend a limited number of staff hours participating at BAWF meetings and reporting to management on issues raised and opportunities discussed at the meetings.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**
Signing the MOU does not represent a change in existing City policies. BAWF itself does not have any authority and does not derive any authority from participating agencies. As stated in Section VII of the MOU, BAWF operates “without usurping the responsibilities and authorities of any participating agency or organization.”

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**
Signing the MOU does not constitute a project under the California Environmental Quality Act; therefore, no environmental assessment is required.

**ATTACHMENTS**
1. Resolution Approving the Memorandum of Understanding in Support of the Bay Area Water Forum
2. Memorandum of Understanding in Support of the Bay Area Water Forum

**PREPARED BY:** Jane Ratchye, Senior Resource Planner

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:**
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Director of Administrative Services

**CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:**
EMILY HARRISON
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