

# Norco may take on wastewater

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A proposed water and sewer deal would bring the city of Norco two big wastewater customers — the state prison and Navy base on the city's west side — but likely would not come with a financial windfall, city Public Works Director Bill Thompson said.

Officials with the three agencies have been talking about water and sewer issues for about eight years, Thompson said. The Norco City Council will consider a preliminary agreement tonight, with sign-off by Navy and prison officials expected later.

The complex deal would solve several problems, including where prison and Navy sewage go, who pays for the Navy's water and sewer service, and how the historic lake on the base is kept full.

The situation that created the need for the water deal is complex. For years, the Navy base has not paid for water and sewer services, because a 1985 agreement called for the state to pay in exchange for a piece of land that contained drinking water wells, Navy spokesman Gregg Smith said.

But the well water was declared unfit for drinking

around 2000, and since then officials have been debating whether the Navy should start paying, Thompson said.

Sewage from the California Rehabilitation Center and Naval Surface Warfare Center has long flowed in a regional line to Orange County. The new deal would allow the sewage to be treated at a local plant operated by the Western Municipal Water District, and the Navy would pay its share of that.

"The prison gets the entire water bill right now and the entire sewer bill," Thompson said. "In simple terms, they will only get (a bill for) what they use in the

future."

The city would build infrastructure to take about 250,000 gallons of wastewater a day to the local treatment plant, and the city would take over the responsibility of filling Lake Norconian.

In exchange, the city would control the prison's and Navy's capacity in the industrial waste line, which could be sold or leased, and the city would receive a 14-acre parcel for a reservoir.

"There's no big windfall here. There's not a huge amount of money, but we will not lose money," Thompson said.