

CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: December 11, 2025

PREPARED BY: Pedro Rodriguez, Code Compliance & Support Services Manager

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION DIRECTING STAFF TO PREPARE AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 8.50 OF THE PALM DESERT MUNICIPAL CODE AND CREATE DRILLING AND MAINTENANCE PERMIT REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS FOR WATER WELLS

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a Resolution entitled “A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA, DIRECTING STAFF TO PREPARE AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 8.50 OF THE PALM DESERT MUNICIPAL CODE RELATING TO DRILLING AND MAINTENANCE PERMIT REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS FOR WATER WELLS.”

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

Earlier this year, the City became aware of a drilling permit issued by Riverside County for the installation of a new private well within a residential neighborhood. The County of Riverside maintains exclusive authority to issue permits for the construction, reconstruction, abandonment, destruction, and maintenance of water wells within City boundaries. The Palm Desert Municipal Code currently provides limited ability for the City to impose local operational conditions that protect the surrounding community during drilling or maintenance activities.

The purpose of this agenda item is to obtain City Council direction for staff to prepare amendments to Chapter 8.50 that establish local requirements, operational standards, and conditions for drilling and maintenance activities associated with water wells. These amendments will enhance the City’s regulatory ability to protect public health, safety, and welfare by ensuring that drilling and maintenance operations are conducted responsibly and with appropriate environmental and quality-of-life safeguards.

Key provisions proposed for inclusion in the draft ordinance include:

- **Submittal Requirements:** Site plans, work timelines, construction fencing, and adequate visual screening.
- **Operational & Environmental Standards:** Hours of operation; noise attenuation; dust, vibration, and traffic controls; safety measures; and compliance with applicable environmental regulations.
- **Financial Assurances:** A bond to guarantee site restoration or abatement of violations.
- **Public Notification:** Community outreach requirements and on-site public postings before commencement of drilling or maintenance activities.
- **Monitoring & Reporting:** Ongoing compliance reporting and operational monitoring obligations.
- **Enforcement Tools:** Authority to issue fines, stop-work orders, and other corrective measures as needed.

The proposed amendments would also authorize the City Manager, or their designee, to impose reasonable, site-specific conditions on drilling or maintenance activities to mitigate potential impacts.

Adoption of this resolution will direct staff to prepare draft amendments to Chapter 8.50 and return to the City Council with a proposed ordinance for consideration at a future meeting. This action will strengthen the City's ability to ensure that drilling and maintenance operations are conducted in a manner consistent with the City's standards, policies, and community expectations.

Legal Review:

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed this report.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact related to this action.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution