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BEFORE THE DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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In the Matter of Application 6584 of John J. Johnson to Appropriate from an Unnamed Spring Within the Watershed of Big Tujunga River in Los Angeles County for Domestic and Irrigation Purposes.

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DECISION A. 6584 D 286

Decided *April 30, 1931.*

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APPEARANCES AT HEARING HELD AT LOS ANGELES, MARCH 5th and 6, 1931

For Applicant

John J. Johnson

Clyde R. Moody

For Protestant

City of Los Angeles and
Department of Water and Power
of the City of Los Angeles

Kenneth K. Scott

EXAMINER: Everett N. Bryan, Hydraulic Engineer, Division of Water Resources, Department of Public Works, State of California.

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O P I N I O N

GENERAL FEATURES OF APPLICATION 6584

Application 6584 was filed on February 5, 1930, by John J. Johnson. It proposes an appropriation of 0.0556 cubic foot per second from an unnamed spring within the watershed of Big Tujunga River in Los Angeles County, throughout the entire year for domestic and irrigation purposes on 83 acres of land within Lots 2 and 3, Section 10, T 2 N, R 14 W, S.B.B. & M. The spring is within the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 2, T 2 N, R 14 W, S.B.B. & M. The application was protested by the City of Los Angeles.

PROTESTS

The protest of the City of Los Angeles was filed July 14, 1930. The City claims that all the waters tributary to Big Tujunga River constitute a part of the flow of the Los Angeles River to which the City has a paramount right; that the City has use for all the waters of said river at the present time and that the approval of the application would interfere with its vested rights.

HEARING HELD IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 1a OF THE WATER COMMISSION ACT

Application 6584 was completed in accordance with the Water Commission Act and the requirements of the Rules and Regulations of the Division of Water Resources and being protested was set for a public hearing in accordance with Section 1a of the Water Commission Act on Thursday March 5, 1931, at 9:30 o'clock A.M. in Room 1026 Associated Realty Bldg., Los Angeles, California. Of this hearing applicant and protestant were duly notified.

PHYSIOGRAPHY AND HYDROGRAPHY

The spring from which applicant seeks to appropriate is located within the Angeles National Forest about two miles due north of Sunland and about a quarter of a mile outside of the city limits of Los Angeles. The spring issues from the junction of a granitic formation and a natural earth fill in a canyon which is tributary to Big Tujunga River. The water flows on the surface through small pools in the bed of the canyon for about two hundred feet and gradually disappears to rise again at a point two or three hundred feet below in a much diminished quantity which flows on the surface a distance of about 200 feet and again disappears into a lava formation

from which point there is no evidence of any surface flow. The ordinary flow of the spring is about 1 miners inch but it appears a greater supply may be available by proper development.

The distance from the spring to the Tujunga River is about one and one-quarter miles. About 1000 feet from, and 200 feet above the junction of the canyon with the Tujunga River there is an abandoned oil well in which some water is collected. Whether or not this water is water from the spring in question or enters the well from side canyons between the point where the flow from the spring disappears and the well is not known.

The main Tujunga is a living stream throughout the entire season to a point within a mile or so of the mouth of the canyon and during the winter and spring months will normally continue as a surface stream to the San Fernando Road. Here the water enters the underground gravels and as it reaches the floor of the valley it turns and flows in a direct line to what is known as Dayton Avenue Narrows, referred to in the City's litigation as the "Old Pigeon Farm". Here the City of Los Angeles, according to the testimony presented at the hearing has its first diversion point consisting of three wells located about one-half mile above what is now Stonehurst Avenue, from which wells water is pumped directly from the underground gravels of Tujunga River.

Further down in the valley, at Lankershim Boulevard as a central point, extending east and west on Van Owen Street, there is a battery of wells with a capacity of 100 cubic feet per second. The next division is what is known as the "Head Work Diversion" at the upper end of Griffith Park consisting of two underground galleries and fourteen air lift wells sunk to bedrock. This plant supplies what is known as the City's "high gravity system".

The next diversion is at Crystal Springs where water is diverted by gravity during the winter months and by pumping from about forty wells during the summer months. This is known as the "Low Gravity System".

The next point of diversion is at the Pollock Pumping Plant where water is pumped from three 20-inch wells into the "low gravity system".

The next point of diversion consists of two wells located just above the Dayton Avenue Narrows.

From the diversion points described above and by the operation of the several plants the main portion of the City of Los Angeles is supplied and in particular all of that portion of the City lying east of the Los Angeles River.

USE OF WATER BY CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Testimony presented at the hearing indicated that the waters of the Los Angeles River to which Big Tujunga River is tributary averages 40% of the total domestic supply of the City of Los Angeles. There is no direct connection from the Los Angeles Aqueduct with that portion of Los Angeles east of the river. The Los Angeles River supply has proven to be insufficient to meet this demand and each year the city has been obliged to turn aqueduct water into the Los Angeles River at Diaz Avenue and allow it to flow down the river and percolate into the underground gravels to augment the supply from the wells and galleries from which water is supplied to that portion of Los Angeles lying east of the river.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED DIVERSION UPON CITY'S WATER SUPPLY

It is impossible to determine from the testimony presented at the hearing as to what proportion if any of the waters from the spring in question would be available for the use of the City of Los Angeles or would contribute to its underground supply.

It appears entirely evident however that a large proportion of the water which applicant seeks to appropriate would be lost by evaporation and transpiration and possibly by deep percolation before reaching the intakes of the City. The nearest intake is more than four miles from the spring and it appears reasonable to assume that very little, if any, of the water after passing through and over the boulders and gravels of the canyon would be available to the City.

The property which applicant proposes to serve is within the City limits of Los Angeles and in the event that diversion is not made as proposed the applicant would be compelled to either obtain a supply from the City by paying the cost of pumping the water through a head of about 500 feet in addition to the usual acreage assessment or else abandon his project.

CONCLUSION

It is difficult if not impossible, to trace the course of the waters originating at the spring after they last disappear about an eighth of a mile below the spring. While apparently of the opinion that the waters of the spring contribute to the supply diverted below by the City of Los Angeles at its several intakes on Los Angeles River, the engineer of the City would not undertake to estimate what portion might be lost and what portion so recovered. Except in times of storm there is no direct surface connection between the waters of the spring and the water at the City's intakes and we are of the opinion that normally much, if not all, of the waters of the spring may be lost by evaporation, transpiration, and deep percolation. We are the more inclined to absolve doubts in favor of applicant because the area which he would serve lies within the City limits and if he does not have this supply he must draw from the mains of the City

directly and apparently at an increased cost to himself and with no apparent advantage to the protestant. We therefore conclude that Application 6584 should be approved.

O R D E R

Application 6584 for a permit to appropriate water having been filed with the Division of Water Resources as above stated, a protest having been filed, a public hearing having been held and the Division of Water Resources now being fully informed in the premises:

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that said Application 6584 be approved and that a permit be issued thereon subject to the usual terms and conditions.

WITNESS my hand and the seal of the Department of Public Works of the State of California, this *30* day of *April*, 1931.

EDWARD HYATT, State Engineer

WES:MP

BY *Harold Conkling*
Deputy

