



# San Diego County Water Authority

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September 20, 2015

Randy Record and  
Members of the Board of Directors  
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California  
P.O. Box 54153  
Los Angeles, CA 90054-0153

**MEMBER AGENCIES**

- Carlsbad Municipal Water District
- City of Del Mar
- City of Escondido
- City of National City
- City of Oceanside
- City of Poway
- City of San Diego
- Fallbrook Public Utility District
- Helix Water District
- Lakeside Water District
- Olivenhain Municipal Water District
- Otay Water District
- Padre Dam Municipal Water District
- Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base
- Rainbow Municipal Water District
- Ramona Municipal Water District
- Rincon del Diablo Municipal Water District
- San Dieguito Water District
- Santa Fe Irrigation District
- South Bay Irrigation District
- Vallecitos Water District
- Valley Center Municipal Water District
- Vista Irrigation District
- Yuima Municipal Water District

RE: Board Memo 9-1: Potential Regional Recycled Water Supply Program

Chair Record and Members of the Board:

The staff recommendation set forth in Board Memo 9-1, to create a new recycled water supply program, is premature because the MWD board has not yet completed – indeed, it has hardly begun – the process of updating MWD’s Integrated Resources Plan (IRP). Without current information and an analysis of available supplies and demand, the board cannot know whether this water supply is needed by MWD or whether it is preferred to other available water supplies.

MWD and its member agencies are also currently updating their respective urban water management plans. These plans will provide vital information regarding water supply and demand forecasts necessary to evaluate the need for MWD to incur costs to develop additional water supplies. Among many other changed circumstances that must be evaluated, it is likely that the demand for MWD water will be less than in the last IRP. This is to be expected given the most recent updated population projections by the Southern California Association of Governments and San Diego Association of Governments, and all of the long-term water conservation measures that have been implemented in response to the drought. New MWD projects of any kind should follow, not precede, these planning processes and be evaluated in the context of all alternatives.

Later, or as part of the IRP planning process, we request that staff analyze and bring back to the board the following issues and information.

**OTHER REPRESENTATIVE**

County of San Diego

**Proposed Regional Recycled Water Supply Program**

Recycled water supply and reuse projects already exist throughout the MWD service area – with more on the drawing board. These projects, including the Orange County project noted in the board memo, have been created through the formation of joint powers authorities

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and paid for by local ratepayers who benefit from the development of local water supplies. The Water Authority supports local water supply development and believes that it will continue to grow as a percentage of the Southern California water supply portfolio even if no subsidies are provided by MWD. Indeed, local agencies developing these projects often cite the current and anticipated future cost of MWD water as a principal motivation to develop local water supplies including recycled water projects.

We do not understand -- and the Board Memo does not explain -- why MWD believes a new recycled water program is necessary or why MWD believes it should become a "partner" in projects that involve multiple local agencies and parties and legal and financial risks that MWD is in no position to control or manage.

In fact, Board Memo 9-1 does not describe a new MWD "program;" rather, it describes a specific potential project with specific parties. If staff intends to recommend the creation of a new MWD water supply "program," then it should outline the need for the program, how it will be consistent with the updated IRP (once that process is concluded) and how it would differ from the current Local Resources Program - which provides funding but does not involve MWD becoming a "partner" in local water supply projects. Staff should also identify a source of funding other than the existing rates that have been declared illegal by the San Francisco Superior Court.

We request that a cost of service analysis be conducted to identify which agencies will benefit in order to determine how the costs of this project should be allocated before it is presented to the MWD board for approval. It is abundantly clear from numerous recent cases that the mere declaration of regional benefit is insufficient to justify the imposition of regional water rate increases to pay for a project that will benefit some but not all member agencies.

#### Partnership with Los Angeles County Sanitation District

For the reasons described above, we do not believe that the "form" of the operating entity -- here, a proposed "partnership", changes the responsibility MWD has in setting rates and charges for the services it provides.

In order to evaluate the proposed project -- either as a stand-alone or in the context of the IRP, we ask that staff provide a written analysis addressing the following questions:

- 1) What are the projected capital and operating costs over the project life?
- 2) What is the marginal cost per acre-foot and how does that compare to other projects that could be developed to meet MWD resource targets?
- 3) What service category will the costs be allocated to? And how will MWD price the water?

- 4) Who are the project beneficiaries?
- 5) What benefits have been identified for each of the parties (for example, avoided cost of additional outfall capacity).
- 6) How does the project rank in relationship to other water resource alternatives MWD has with respect to cost, reliability, and environmental and legal risks?
- 7) What groundwater basins would be recharged by the project water?
- 8) Are the relevant groundwater basins adjudicated? If so, will the judgments be amended to allow MWD to have the right to store and withdraw water?
- 9) What is the plan for how the water would be made available or stored in normal, dry, and wet years? Will MWD control that decision?
- 10) What are the other legal constraints associated with the groundwater basins that must be addressed to ensure MWD has the ability to withdraw the water?
- 11) Who will own the project? Who will own the project water?
- 12) What rate increases are anticipated over the project life to pay for and operate the project?
- 13) How many agencies, cities and third parties have existing water rights in the groundwater basins?
- 14) Who will bear the cost of any environmental challenges?
- 15) Who will bear the cost of any rate challenges?

Finally, similar to several other memos, Board Memo 9-1 was not available with the regular board mailing. MWD's consistent late delivery of a majority of the board reports makes it extremely difficult for our staff to provide the technical support necessary for our deliberation of MWD staff recommendations. We renew past requests that board memoranda be distributed at least seven days in advance of MWD board meetings.

Sincerely,



Michael T. Hogan  
Director



Keith Lewinger  
Director



Fern Steiner  
Director



Yen C. Tu  
Director