



San Diego County Water Authority

4677 Overland Avenue • San Diego, California 92123-1233
(858) 522-6600 FAX (858) 522-6568 www.sdcwa.org

May 7, 2012

John V. Foley, Chairman
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 8-4 – OPPOSE
Authorize changes to water conservation incentives (subsidies) as described

Dear Mr. Foley:

The Water Authority and its member agencies have a long and proud record of leadership in water conservation planning and implementation, based on strategic initiatives that will continue to reduce the region’s reliance on imported water supplies at an affordable cost. Given MWD’s role as a supplemental wholesale water provider – and taking into account the state mandate for 20% water conservation by 2020 at the retail level – the San Diego delegation does not support Agenda Item 8-4, to provide additional “incentives” to encourage water conservation. We have written to you and the board many times on this subject (reference to past correspondence is included below but not attached), so we provide only the following brief summary of the basis of our analysis.

Due to reduced demand for MWD water – and associated higher water rates – there is no need for MWD to pay subsidies to encourage water conservation at the wholesale level.

Water sales are already down at MWD by more than 30%. When sales are reduced, water rates go up as ratepayers are forced to pay more for using less water. As outlined in our March 21 letter to you and the rest of the board, it is time to stop punishing water use efficiency efforts by Southern California ratepayers who are already paying for water use efficiency programs at the retail level to meet the 20x2020 mandate.

The Water Stewardship Rate which is collected to pay for MWD conservation subsidies violates California law. The Water Stewardship Rate does not fairly apportion or reflect the actual, reasonable and proportionate costs of the services for which the rate is imposed. The Water Stewardship Rate violates the legal requirements of MWD’s principal act, Proposition 13 and the statutes implementing it, Government Code § 54999.7, the California common law of utility rate-making and Proposition 26. The Water Authority has provided MWD with detailed analyses by expert consultants establishing that the Water Stewardship Rate is legally defective.

OTHER REPRESENTATIVE

County of San Diego

A public agency providing a safe and reliable water supply to the San Diego region

Mr. Foley and Members of the Board

May 7, 2012

Page 2

The so-called "Rate Structure Integrity" clause adopted and imposed on the Water Authority by the MWD board of directors precludes any possible benefit to San Diego ratepayers from many MWD conservation programs. The board memorandum does not disclose that San Diego ratepayers are precluded from participating in MWD subsidy programs to the same extent as other MWD member agencies. We request that you include information in future board memoranda to fully disclose that information.

From a water resource planning, budget and policy point of view, we strongly encourage MWD to develop and implement a water conservation program that is better suited to its role as a wholesale water provider, that is based upon a calculable demonstration of need and avoided water supply cost (e.g., reduced take from the Delta, elimination of subsidies for member agency seawater desalination, etc.). Unfortunately, rather than viewing water use efficiency as a key part of its water resource plan and cost containment strategy – as recommended by the Water Authority for many years and by NRDC in its April 6, 2012 letter to you – MWD continues to limit itself to subsidy programs that are more appropriate at the retail level where the statewide conservation mandate has been imposed.

Sincerely,



Lynne Heidel
Director

Keith Lewinger
Director

Fern Steiner
Director

Doug Wilson
Director

cc: Ed Osann, NRDC Senior Policy Analyst

Past correspondence to MWD RE water conservation programs and subsidies:

- August 16, 2010 letter on MWD staff analysis on opt-in/opt-out conservation program
- November 29, 2010 comments on MWD draft Long Term Conservation Plan (LTCP)
- July 20, 2011 comments on LTCP working draft Version 11
- August 15, 2011 letter opposing LTCP and revised policy principles
- November 13, 2011 letter RE turf replacement grant