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WATER RESOURCES INSTITUTE AND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WATER COMMITTEE ANNOUNCE UNIQUE COLLABORATION TO DEVELOP URBAN WATER PLANNING ASSISTANCE
New Grant Funds Development of Much-Needed Resource for Regional Water Suppliers

Runcho Cucamonga, CA - The Water Resources Institute of California State University, San Bernardino (“WRI”) announced today it has collaborated with the Southern California Water Committee (“SCWC”) and successfully secured a $45,000 grant from the California Department of Water Resources (“DWR”) to manage the preparation of a Water Management Planning Report with Practical Recommendations for Southern California Water Agencies (“Report”). The project comes at a critical time for water suppliers, who are working to prepare and adopt updates to their 2005 Urban Water Management Plans (“UWMPs”).

The Report developed under this collaboration will differ from the guidance documents prepared by DWR for updating Urban Water Development Plans. The difference will not be in terms of recommended form, but rather in the emphasis on actual water conditions and management options in Southern California that connect them to other Southern California water agencies, including State Water Project Contractors, and the State. The Report will also include a qualitative assessment of best practices in past plans that have dovetailed into funded projects included in Integrated Regional Water Management (“IRWM”) Plans.

The effort comes as a result of conversations between WRI, SCWC and academic institutions in Southern California about the need to conduct a qualitative assessment of past plans and to identify effective strategies for future planning. The award of the grant from the DWR marks a unique and collaborative opportunity for the WRI and the SCWC. SCWC played a crucial role in the grant application and will be donating expertise and time from its member water agencies, attorneys and engineers. Together, the two groups will work, along with the Southern California Water Dialogue and other regional stakeholders, to provide a new and valuable resource tool for Southern California water suppliers, who are facing unprecedented challenges in documenting the availability and reliability of water supplies during normal, single-dry and multiple-dry year periods over the 20-year projection, as required by the UWMP laws.

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Every urban water supplier that provides water to 3,000 or more connections, or that provides more than 3,000 acre-feet of water annually, must prepare a UWMP and must update its UWMP every five years. UWMPs are commonly used as source documents to analyze water supply issues for specific projects in accordance with SB 610, SB 221 and the California Environmental Quality Act. Under new legislation, wholesale water agencies must complete their UWMP updates by December 31, 2010 and retail water suppliers must complete their Plans by July 1, 2011.

“We are very pleased to kick off this important water management planning effort and thank Southern California Water Committee’s leadership team for playing a critical role in securing this grant,” said Susan Lien Longville, director of WRI. “With the level of collaboration proposed in this project, we will be able to share lessons learned in the past and provide valuable assistance and support for future decision-making by water agencies at a critical time.”

“This project comes after several years of discussions about how we could provide assistance in water resource planning at the local and regional levels in Southern California,” said Jill Willis, partner with the Best, Best and Krieger law firm and chair of the SCWC Urban Water Planning Task Force. “This is a challenging time in our state’s water history. We look forward to developing this new and useful resource for Southern California.”

UWMPs are complex, and will become more so given new legislative mandates concerning statewide per capita water use reductions. In a further challenge, water supplies to cities, businesses, industries and agriculture are facing serious constraints because of drought conditions, environmental restrictions and growing pressure on the state’s water storage and delivery system.

“One of California’s ambitious water conservation goals will take a strong partnership between government, universities, water agencies, business and farming interests, community organizations and the public,” said Mark Cowin, director of the California Department of Water Resources. “DWR is pleased to support this important effort that will enable water suppliers to comply with new state requirements and ensure we have reliable water supplies for all Californians in the years to come.”

The grant is aimed at delivering practical advice for water supply agencies in eight Southern California counties: Kern, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, Riverside and San Bernardino. Among the project’s goals:

- Provide information to water suppliers on compliance with laws governing urban water plans, including California Senate Bill SBX7 7 (Steinberg), which passed as part of the 2009 comprehensive water legislative package and calls for a twenty percent (20%) reduction in statewide per capita water use by 2020.

- Catalog accomplishments of various water agencies and gather best practices and “collective wisdom” to guide the development of the next round of plans, which must identify water conservation targets and blueprints for attaining results.

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- Identify best practices in existing plans of record that include effective responses to local conditions which link to State policies and plans.

- Supply guidance on the important linkages between UWMPs and IRWM plans. Such connections are essential for tapping critically needed funding from past water and resource bonds.

- Work with the SCWC and other stakeholders to document court challenges to past plans and to gather advice from legal experts on preparing sound plans that meet all applicable legal mandates.

- Evaluate research findings and best practices through a formal Peer Review Committee.

- Present the Report and recommendations at a Southern California Symposium for water suppliers and the public, hosted by WRI, SCWC and the Peer Review Committee.

“Legislative changes since the last plans were updated in 2005 will require agencies to navigate significant new compliance requirements and water use calculations,” said Mary Lou Cotton, senior water resources manager with Kennedy/Jenks Consultants and SCWC Urban Water Planning Task Force member. “The new grant will enable us to identify methods employed by the “best of the best” that have addressed challenges common to the Southern California region and provided an efficient, transparent blueprint for water supply planning.”

**Founded in 1999, the Water Resources Institute of Cal State San Bernardino is an academic partnership with the Southern California communities that it serves. The Institute is driven by the vision that sustaining water resources rests on sound research, analysis and public policy collaboration. The Institute is active in the areas of science, public policy and history, and serves as a regional hub for providing information on water resources. For more information, go to Water Resources Institute.**

**Established in 1984, the Southern California Water Committee is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, public education partnership dedicated to informing Southern Californians about our water needs and our state’s water resources. Spanning Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, San Bernardino, Imperial, Riverside, Ventura and Kern Counties, the SCWC’s members include representatives from business, government, agriculture, water agencies, labor and the general public. Visit us at [www.socalwater.org](http://www.socalwater.org) and find us on Facebook.**

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