Extension to Cooperative Agreement Provides Local Water for Western’s Customers

Western’s Purchase Saves Both Riverside and Western Water Customers Money

Riverside, Calif. – Western Municipal Water District and the City of Riverside have reached an agreement for a short-term purchase of local water, a decision that will save the District about $740,000 and provide the city $3.5 million in additional revenue. During today’s Riverside City Council meeting, an amendment was passed to the 2009 Cooperative Agreement, allowing Western to purchase a limited volume of water through February 2017.

“This cooperative agreement between Western and the City of Riverside provides a short-term cost savings for our customers,” shared Western’s General Manager John Rossi. “By purchasing locally, Western avoids purchasing higher cost imported supplies, which come from northern California. Rising energy costs associated with delivery over hundreds of miles from the source contribute to higher rates. Having a local water source reduces this expense; therefore, keeping our customers’ rates as low as possible. By purchasing water from Riverside, Western’s purchase benefits Riverside customers by creating a valuable revenue stream for the city.”

In the landmark 1969 Western-San Bernardinio court case, the City of Riverside was granted the rights to extract and export groundwater from the Bunker Hill Basin in San Bernardino County. Each calendar year, Riverside is permitted to export approximately 51,000 acre-feet (AF) of water from the Bunker Hill Basin; however, if less than the annual right is produced, a portion of this water is left behind and is lost.

In the absence of a reliable local water supply, Western purchases imported water from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Today’s amended agreement approved by the City Council, allows Western to purchase up to 5,000 AF of local water through February 2017 at approximately $143 less per acre-foot than the cost of imported water. A single acre-foot is equal to 325,851 gallons of water – enough to meet the indoor water needs for an average Western single-family residential customer for five years.

“We continue our commitment to sound, long-term planning and investments in local water supplies for today and future generations,” added Rossi. “Purchasing water from Riverside enhances our other local supply efforts, including groundwater desalting, recycled water and groundwater storage. We hope that a long-term purchase agreement with the city, can become a reality in the near future.”

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*Western Municipal Water District provides water supply, wastewater disposal and water resource management to the public in a safe, reliable, environmentally sensitive and financially responsible manner.*