Western, Valley District, Water Conservation District Partner to Protect and Improve Regional Groundwater Reliability

San Bernardino, CA – Dec. 7, 2011 – Recognizing the importance of a reliable local water supply, Western Municipal Water District (Western), San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District (Conservation District) and San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District (Valley), have agreed to use their unique skills and resources in a comprehensive and collaborative partnership to protect regional groundwater reliability.

In a special joint board meeting held Tuesday, the Boards of Directors of all three agencies approved a 50 year agreement providing for interagency cooperation through a coordinated series of water recharge improvements. This cooperation would ensure that Western and Valley District have the increased capacity to capture water from the Santa Ana River, and with the Conservation District, use the water to recharge the groundwater basin. It would also provide the Conservation District long term financial resources it needs to support the recharge efforts.

“Planning for the long-term protection of our local groundwater resources is one of our most important priorities,” said Daniel Cozad, general manager at San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District. “This agreement shows how seriously agencies like Western and Valley take preserving our precious water resources. Partnering with these agencies ensures that the Conservation District can continue to play an important part in water supply of the watershed.”

The result of months of planning, the agreement’s terms will allow Western and Valley the rights to use more than 1,500 acres of land along with the accompanying water conveyance and recharge facilities controlled by the Conservation District in exchange for an annual payment of $400,000. This payment will also cover the operation and maintenance costs incurred recharging Western and Valley water.

“Increasing groundwater storage in the San Bernardino Basin Area is an essential component of meeting the current and future demand for water in our region,” said John V. Rossi, general manager of Western. “By working together, the three districts will provide substantial regional benefit, reducing both time and cost required to build necessary infrastructure, and operating and maintaining it as efficiently as possible.”

Recent wet weather conditions and the resulting increased availability of State Project Water have created an important opportunity to improve regional water supplies, making quick action essential.

“The favorable conditions we are currently experiencing mean time is of the essence,” said Douglas Headrick, general manager of the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District. “Developing an even more productive working relationship between agencies is in the best interest of all three districts and the public, and will help to increase available water supplies for all customers.”

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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.