Historic Water Supply Grant to Help Drought-Proof Inland Empire

$51 million is the largest water supply grant ever awarded to region

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – Thanks to a monumental $51 million California Department of Public Health grant, the Inland Empire is one step closer to drought-proofing its water supply.

“Receiving a grant of this size shows how critical water supply stability is to our region’s future,” said Western Board Member and Chino Basin Desalter Authority Representative Charles D. Field. “We’re grateful for the Department of Public Health’s analysis and historic support of this project; it’s a significant contribution toward a secure local water supply.”

The $51 million grant, awarded this week, will fund a portion of the planned Phase 3 Expansion of the Chino I and Chino II Desalter facilities, which will produce an additional 10 million gallons per day of new water benefitting more than 1.5 million people in the Inland Empire. “Western, in collaboration with the CDA, Jurupa Community Services District and the Inland Empire Utilities Agency, has been working to get the water in the pipes and get this project done,” added Western Board President Donald Galleano.

The grant comes through the department’s Division of Drinking Water and Environmental Management’s Prop 50 Chapter 4b: Southern California Projects to Reduce Demand on Colorado River Water. It will enable the distribution of drinking water and minimize brine discharge into the Pacific Ocean. Through ongoing collaboration and commitment to provide a reliable local water source, the agencies have successfully partnered to secure more than $70 million in grants, including $5.6 million in federal appropriations, to help the region expand the Chino Desalters, a $130 million project.

Terry Catlin, Board president of IEUA, added that in addition to increasing local water supply, the Chino Desalters help manage salt in the groundwater basins and protect downstream water quality for Orange County. “Staying in pace with innovation and technology is essential to the future of our region,” said Catlin. “We’re committed to looking for additional grant opportunities to fund local water.”

“Most of the water we get in our region comes from hundreds of miles away via the California Bay-Delta or Colorado River; the long-term reliability of these supplies has been greatly reduced in recent years,” said Harvey Sullivan, CDA Board president. “This project, as well as future water sustainability ventures, will put us on a track to reduce the amount of water we receive from these imported water sources. It also creates local jobs.”

The existing Chino I/Chino II Desalters currently provide 8 billion gallons annually (roughly 24 million gallons daily) of high-quality drinking water to the cities of Chino, Chino Hills, Ontario and Norco as well as the JCSD and the Santa Ana River Water Company. “We’re honored by the outcome of this competitive grant process. On behalf of all of our agencies, we thank Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein and Congressmen Joe Baca, Ken Calvert, Jerry Lewis, Gary Miller and Ed Royce for their strong support for our grant application,” added JCSD Board President Ken J. McLaughlin. # # #