News Release

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Western Awarded $2.9 Million in Grants to Expand Desalination Efforts
Chino Desalter expansion will increase local water supply and improve basin water quality

RIVERSIDE, CA – May 27, 2011 – Western Municipal Water District today announced the award of $2.9 million in state and federal grants to fund a portion of the Chino Desalter’s Phase 3 Expansion. When completed, the $130 million expansion will create an additional 10.5 million gallons per day of new water, benefitting more than 1.5 million people in the Inland Empire. To date, Western, which is the lead agency in a consortium of inland water agencies representing the Chino Basin Desalter Authority (CDA), has secured $15.7 million in grant awards for the project. Local property taxes and federal funds will serve as a match for state resources to complete funding.

“Western recognizes that managing the salinity of our watershed is one of the District’s core responsibilities, and we have been proactive in seeking state and federal funding to support these efforts,” said John V. Rossi, general manager of Western. “But the Phase 3 Expansion of the facilities at Chino is about more than improving the basin’s water quality; it will also expand local potable water supply, reducing our dependence on expensive and unreliable imported water, and ensure that we are respectful of our downstream neighbors.”

The $2.9 million in grants were awarded for the development of new wells in the Chino Creek Well Field, which will supply additional groundwater to be treated at the Chino Desalters. Increased groundwater pumping, coupled with upgraded treatment capacity at the Chino I and Chino II Desalters, will provide much needed water for the cities of Chino, Chino Hills, Norco, Ontario Jurupa Community Services District, Santa Ana River Water Company and Western. The desalination facilities will also improve local groundwater quality by removing salts, nitrates, and volatile organic compounds from the basin’s water, while dramatically reducing the flow of degraded water into the Santa Ana River, protecting downstream water supplies and ecosystems.

To secure the grants, Western’s Water Resources Department prepared two applications: one was submitted to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) through the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority as part of the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan; the other was submitted to the United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). Recognizing the importance of salt management for watersheds around the country, the DWR grant awarded the per-project maximum of $1 million, while the Reclamation grant provided the maximum 25 percent federal match of $1.9 million. All $2.9 million will go toward construction of the Chino Creek Well Field.

These two additional funding sources bring the total grant awards for the project to $15.7 million. Most importantly, the Reclamation grant award appropriates $2 million of the $26 million authorized under the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, which will allow Western to seek additional federal appropriations for the Chino Desalter in the upcoming fiscal year.

CDA agencies, including major partners Inland Empire Utilities Agency, Jurupa Community Services District and the city of Ontario, have worked strategically to fulfill the objectives of the CDA as quickly as possible.

“The awarding of these grants is an affirmation of the importance of our mission,” said Charles D. Field, member of Western’s Board of Directors and the District’s representative on the CDA and the Chino Basin Watermaster Board. “Western will continue to stay on the forefront of salinity management, implementing treatment technology in a way that is sensitive to the environment as well as to the pocketbooks of our ratepayers.”

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.

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