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Expansion of West Coast Basin Seawater Barrier Project Approved by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board

*Use of Purified Recycled Water Protects Drinking Water Sources
Reduces Dependence on Imported Water*

Los Angeles, CA –The proposal to increase the use of purified recycled water to protect local drinking water sources from saltwater intrusion has been approved by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. Submitted by the West Basin Municipal Water District, the plan allows the West Coast Basin Barrier Project to use an additional eight million gallons of purified recycled water per day to maintain an underground hydrogeologic barrier and prevent salt-laden seawater from contaminating a drinking water aquifer. Since 1995, up to five million gallons of purified recycled water per day have been blended with imported potable water and injected into the ground. With the Regional Board’s approval, the percentage of purified recycled water will be increased in phases from 50% to 75% (12.5 million gallons per day) and then to 100% (17.5 million gallons per day). Simultaneously, the use of imported potable water will be decreased and then eliminated, reducing the cost of maintaining the barrier by approximately \$575,000 per year.

“It is critical that we safeguard and use wisely our very limited sources of drinking water,” said David Nahai, Chair of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. “The use of purified recycled water, instead of more expensive imported water, to stop seawater intrusion is safe, environmentally sound and economically prudent.” added Nahai.

A series of injection wells pumps a blend of imported potable and domestic recycled water into the ground between the freshwater aquifer and ocean. The injected water creates a hydraulic wall between the two bodies of water and keeps seawater from seeping into the drinking water source. The imported water comes from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, Colorado River and other distance sources. Successful water rights litigation, recent droughts and growing demand for potable water has reduced the availability and increased the cost of this water. The recycled water comes from the Hyperion Treatment Plant, located in El Segundo, and is readily available. The West

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Basin MWD and Los Angeles County Department of Public Works work together to supply the recycled water to the West Coast Basin Barrier Project.

“We are committed to enhancing water quality for our customers and maintaining a reliable cost-effective water supply,” said William B. Baker, West Basin Board President. “The use of 100% highly-purified water will achieve these goals and result in greater public health protection. We are very excited.”

Before the recycled water is used, it is purified using state-of-the-art technology, including microfiltration, reverse osmosis, ultraviolet disinfection and advanced oxidation processes. After meeting rigorous water quality standards set by the Regional Water Board, the purified recycled water is piped to several injection wells and used to maintain the underground barrier. The purification process is closely monitored by the Regional Board, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and West Basin MWD. It was reviewed by an independent panel of nationally renowned experts in groundwater recharge, public health and water quality and found to be protective of both human health and the environment.

The Los Angeles Water Board is one of nine regional boards in the State. Among its principal duties, the Board sets region-wide water quality standards and activity-specific waste discharge requirements, enforces both federal and state clean water statutes, regulates cleanup of sites which pose an immediate or potential threat to water quality and educates the public on water quality issues. The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board is comprised of nine individuals, each of whom is appointed by the Governor, and a small professional staff, comprised mostly of scientists, engineers and geologists. For more information please visit www.waterboards.ca.gov/losangeles/

West Basin is a public agency that wholesales imported water to cities, mutual water companies, investor-owned utilities and private companies in the South Bay and unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County, serving a population of more than 851,000. In addition, West Basin provides the region with recycled water for municipal, commercial and industrial uses. Formed in 1947, West Basin is committed to ensuring a safe and reliable water supply for the region. For more information on West Basin, please visit www.westbasin.org. (END)