

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: DECEMBER 27, 2006

SEWAGE SPILLS RESULT IN \$2.5 MILLION FOR CLEAN WATER RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

**Los Angeles Regional Water Board, Santa Monica Baykeeper and
County Sanitation Districts Approve Sewage Spill Settlement Agreement**

Contact: **Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board:**
Stephen Cain. Phone: 213.576.6694; Cell: 213.305.2560
Santa Monica Baykeeper:
Tracy Egoscue. 310.305.9645 x1; Cell: 310-283-1380
County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County
Vicki Conway. 562.699.7411 x2502

LOS ANGELES-The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, Santa Monica Baykeeper and County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County have agreed upon a \$2.5 million settlement that will be used to fund environmental research and education programs benefiting Los Angeles County residents. The Sanitation Districts are responsible for providing all funding. The settlement is an alternative to seeking fines and judicial review of the 93 overflows from the Sanitation Districts' wastewater collection system, all of which occurred in the Los Angeles Region between January 2001 and September 2006.

"This is a highly beneficial settlement," said David Nahai, Chair of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. "It sends a potent message of zero tolerance for sewage spills and at the same time dedicates funds to worthwhile environmental projects. I want to thank the staffs of the Regional Board and Sanitation Districts for reaching this settlement without recourse to costly and protracted litigation."

"Baykeeper is pleased that it didn't have to go to court to resolve this issue," said Tracy Egoscue, Executive Director of Santa Monica Baykeeper. "This agreement puts over \$2 million into water quality research and education. Instead of hiring attorneys, we will be studying water pollution and teaching Angelinos on what we must do to make our rivers and beaches safe."

The settlement agreement requires the District to provide:

* \$2.2 million to the San Gabriel River Discovery Center at Whittier Narrows. The Center will offer interactive exhibits and classes designed to encourage exploration and increase understanding, appreciation and stewardship of the San Gabriel River watershed. The educational programs will benefit water quality within the region from the mountains to the oceans.

* \$50,000 to the Star Kids Lead LA Watershed and Marine Education Outreach Program. This program provides hands-on, student centered watershed education, real

Sewage Spill Results in Research Education Funding

Contact: Stephen Cain. Phone: 213.576.6694; Cell: 213.305.2560

Page 2 of 3

world stewardship ventures and information on environmental careers, through daily after-school programming. The program focuses on at-risk students in grades K-6.

* \$125,000 to the Model Program for Bacterial Source Identification and Abatement Plan/Redondo Beach Pier Pilot Project. This project seeks to identify the type and sources of the bacteria that are affecting water quality near the Redondo Beach Pier. Additionally, it may also identify potential abatement strategies.

The Districts have also voluntarily committed an additional \$200,000 of in-kind services to the Redondo Beach Pier Pilot Project.

* The remainder of the money will be deposited in the Cleanup and Abatement Account, managed by the State Water Resources Control Board. This account funds environmental cleanup activities throughout California.

"The Directors and staff care very much about the environment and the communities we serve," said Jim Stahl, Chief Engineer and General Manager of the County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County. "The settlement agreement makes additional and critically needed funding available for community-based research and education on water quality. We strive for zero overflows but short of achieving this perfection I cannot think of a better outcome to the 93 overflows."

Between Jan. 1, 2001 and Sept. 30, 2006, the Districts had 93 sewage spills from various collection system facilities within Los Angeles County. Approximately one-third of these overflows did not reach a receiving water body. Twenty overflows reached a receiving water body but were less than 1,000 gallons each. The remaining thirty-nine overflows reached a receiving water body and totaled 3,326,700 gallons. Approximately 30 percent (nearly one million gallons) of this amount was recovered and returned to the Districts' collection system for subsequent treatment. The largest overflow occurred on Jan. 15, 2006 and resulted in approximately 65,000 gallons of untreated wastewater being released to the Pacific Ocean and 780,000 gallons of untreated wastewater to groundwater beneath the sand in Manhattan Beach and Hermosa Beach.

The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board is one of nine regional boards in the state. Among its principal duties, the Board sets region-wide water quality standards and 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 additional information, go to: www.waterboards.ca.gov/losangeles/

The Sanitation Districts party to the settlement include 18 independent special districts serving approximately 5 million people within the Los Angeles Region. The Districts

Sewage Spill Results in Research Education Funding

Contact: Stephen Cain. Phone: 213.576.6694; Cell: 213.305.2560

Page 3 of 3

own and operate one wastewater treatment ocean disposal facility and eight water reclamation plants within the Los Angeles Regional Board's jurisdiction along with approximately 1,200 miles of sewers and ancillary facilities. The Districts also provide for the management of solid wastes including disposal, transfer operations, and materials recovery. The Districts' administrative offices are located near the City of Whittier. For more information, go to: www.lacsd.org/

Founded in 1993, the Santa Monica Baykeeper seeks to protect and restore the Santa Monica Bay, San Pedro Bay and adjacent waters through fieldwork, public outreach and education, community action and litigation. The Santa Monica Baykeeper is one of over 120 members of the international Waterkeeper Alliance, led by Robert F. Kennedy Jr., and dedicated to citizen enforcement of the federal Clean Water Act and the protection of waterways throughout the world. For more information, go to: www.smbaykeeper.org/

###