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**Testimony of
JOHN V. ROSSI**

General Manager, Western Municipal Water District

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- 10 1. I am John Rossi, General Manager for Western Municipal Water District of
11 Riverside County (“Western”), a position I have held for the past three years
12 (Resume of John Rossi, Muni/Western Exhibit 2-2).

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Integrated Resources Plan Strategy

- 25 2. The application for water rights before you today is a critical component of
26 Western’s regionally integrated water resources plan, a water resource
27 management strategy essential to the long term ecological and economic
28 sustainability of this watershed.
- 29 3. Citizens in Western’s service area have shared an overriding concern with reliable
water acquisition planning for more than half a century. A majority of local voters
in 1954, aware that existing regional water supplies were inadequate to sustain the
growing communities of Riverside and Corona, established Western in order to
import water from Metropolitan Water District’s Colorado River Aqueduct under
the Municipal Water District Act of 1911, Cal. Water Code §§ 71000 et seq. This
enabling statute includes a broad range of powers and allows Western to provide
water as well as sewer, storm water disposal, recreation and fire protection
services. For the past several decades, Western has been heavily engaged in
planning long-range water supply and managing regional water resources
available to the western portion of Riverside County.
4. Originally, all of Western’s imported water was used to irrigate a burgeoning
citrus industry that expanded to 9,000 acres at its peak. Today less than 1,000
acres of irrigated crop remain. Western’s 527 square mile service area, shown in
the Muni/Western Exhibit 2-3, serves a population of approximately 600,000
people in western Riverside County. Western’s historic water needs, per capita

1 use, and water sources are adapting to meet changing demands as land use has
2 converted from citrus and avocado crops to urban and suburban land uses.

3 5. In addition to wholesale water, Western provides retail water and wastewater
4 services, and regional water resource management. Western includes the cities of
5 Canyon Lake, Corona, Lake Elsinore, Temecula, Murrieta, Moreno Valley
6 (portion), Norco, Riverside, and the communities of Alberhill, Belltown,
7 Coronita, Eastvale, El Cerrito, Glen Avon, Glen Ivy Hot Springs, Good Hope,
8 Highgrove, Home Gardens, Jurupa, Lakeland Village, March Air Reserve Base,
9 Mira Loma, Orange Crest, Pedley, Rubidoux, Sedco Hills, Sunnyslope, Wildomar
10 and Woodcrest.

11 6. As a peaceful and orderly allocation of water within the Santa Ana Watershed is
12 imperative to long term regional stability, Western is responsible, jointly with the
13 San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District (“Muni”), for administration of
14 the 1969 judgment entered in *Western Municipal Water District of Riverside*
15 *County v. East San Bernardino County Water District et al.*, Riverside County
16 Superior Court, Case No. 78426 (the “*Western Judgment*”). Additionally I am a
17 member of the Watermaster Committee for the 1969 stipulated judgment for the
18 Santa Ana River ordered in *Orange County Water District v. City of Chino et al.*,
19 County of Orange Superior Court, Case No. 117628.

20 7. In accordance with the longstanding tradition of progressive water allocations in
21 accord with the 1969 Western Judgment, an historic agreement, The Seven Oaks
22 Accord, relating to the allocation of new waters conserved by the Seven Oaks
23 Dam, was signed by the principal water agencies in the upper Santa Ana
24 watershed who would otherwise lay individual claim to these newly conserved
25 waters. As a result, this model for progressive, cooperative and productive water
26 negotiations among regional partners augurs great hope for making best use of
27 finite water supplies in this region and elsewhere in California.

28 8. Western is a co-applicant with Muni to appropriate water from the Santa Ana
29 River. Two applications for appropriation have been submitted to the SWRCB as

1 Muni/Western Application Nos. 31165 and 31370. A principal objective in
2 pursuing the applications to appropriate is to further develop local water resources
3 for use within the Santa Ana River watershed, an essential – but by no means
4 exclusive --component of Western’s Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) designed to
5 shield this region from catastrophic drought or collapse of imported water
6 systems. Integrating regional plans and priorities is, for Western, a matter of
7 political, financial, ecological and hydrological practicality with a successful
8 development based on nearly four decades of strong support from Western’s
9 directors as evidenced by peace agreements, interagency accords, MOU’s, and
10 joint policy statements to cooperatively plan, design, finance, build and operate
11 facilities that integrate the needs and resources of the watershed. Building on this
12 record of progress, Western has recently completed a thorough Integrated
13 Regional Plan within its service area, complementing the watershed-wide plan for
14 the Santa Ana watershed initially begun in the late 1960’s as part of the Santa Ana
15 Watershed Planning Authority, a fore-runner of today’s Santa Ana Watershed
16 Project Authority that was carefully nurtured by Western in its earliest stages.
17 Expansion of Seven Oaks Dam with San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water
18 District in cooperation with the Army Corps of Engineers, county flood control
19 and the signers of the Seven Oaks Accord is a prime example of this visionary
20 integrated regional water planning.

21 9. Coming to terms with climate change and the difficulties in predicting the
22 resulting hydrologic changes certainly requires forward looking agencies to plan
23 ahead by implementing a wide variety of mechanisms to drought proof their
24 service areas as best they can. Taking excess surface storage water when
25 available to store underground is a key component for sound planning given the
26 changing realities of California hydrology. Western is moving beyond reaction to
27 climate change to adopt a more progressive response, capturing and recharging
28 locally available water for conjunctive use. Western recognizes the uncertainty of
29 future water supplies amid changing climate, and the District is developing
30 diversified sources of supply as the best way to address this issue.

1 **Water Conservation**

2 10. Indeed, conserving local water behind Seven Oaks Dam represents only one
3 important contribution to Western’s leadership in regional water resource
4 management. Western’s service area is part of a region with the fastest population
5 growth in the state. In the past two decades, Western has diligently pursued a
6 multi-faceted strategy to accommodate changing water needs in a locally
7 sustainable way without increasing demands for additional imported water from
8 the sensitive Bay-Delta or Colorado River. High volume irrigation use is
9 increasingly converted to carefully managed urban uses.

10 11. Pioneering support for a cutting edge conservation effort, Western is helping large
11 water users cut water use and save money by developing water budgets with
12 assistance from the Riverside Corona Regional Conservation District (RCRCD),
13 an independent special district. Since 1987 Western has provided financial
14 support for this important conservation effort such as the RCRCD Mobile Lab to
15 conduct voluntary audits of outdoor water use, particularly on agricultural sites,
16 schools, parks, and large residential sites. The scientific analysis of soils, plant
17 materials, and irrigation systems, yield recommendations for conserving water
18 that typically result in water and cost savings around 30 percent.

19 12. In addition to implementing the full range of water management BMP’s
20 recommended by the California Urban Water Council, Western budgets over
21 \$100,000 annually for Water Use Efficiency programs to coordinate rebates and
22 incentives through Metropolitan Water District (MWD). As a result, hundreds of
23 thousands of additional dollars from MWD are invested annually in water saving
24 retrofits for commercial, industrial and residential appliances, fixtures and
25 cutting-edge technology for landscape irrigation. Western has asserted a
26 leadership role in regional conservation efforts. Western pioneered water efficient
27 landscaping in 1989 with the introduction of “Landscapes Southern California
28 Style” a Water Conservation Garden praised as the “garden of the future” by
29 SUNSET magazine, and a model since emulated by other water agencies
30 statewide. As a member of the Riverside County Water Task Force, Western

1 helped promulgate a landmark Landscape Water Conservation Ordinance for
2 Riverside County, adopted in January 2007. Western also helped develop
3 principles for water conservation and clean water for the city of Riverside
4 Mayor’s “Clean and Green Task Force” for environmental sustainability. Western
5 supports extensive water conservation and clean energy programs in K-12
6 classrooms, plus a teacher’s scholarship program for conservation and teacher
7 training. Western pioneered a unique water auditing system for large industrial
8 water users in its service area in addition to supporting a landscape water auditing
9 program conducted by the local Resource Conservation District. Western has
10 invested in development of an upgraded Water Conservation Master Plan, which
11 will be ready for implementation in 2007.

12 **Recycled Water**

13 13. Complementing Western’s role as a regional leader in water conservation, the
14 District is completing a Recycled Water Master Plan. Western has already
15 invested millions of dollars in water recycling projects to efficiently re-use
16 existing water supplies in lieu of expanding demand for imported supplies.
17 Western requires all new commercial building in its retail service area to install a
18 separate meter and dual (purple) pipe for landscaping and to use recycled or
19 nonpotable water for irrigation wherever it is available. Western has invested
20 millions of dollars to upgrade its wastewater treatment plant to tertiary standards
21 in order to use this water for recycling purposes in lieu of imported supplies.

22 14. Western is working cooperatively with numerous groundwater agencies to clean
23 up local groundwater supplies and to redirect otherwise unusable high nitrate
24 water for irrigation purposes in lieu of imported drinking water. Western was an
25 early champion of the Santa Ana Regional Interceptor (SARI), a brine line
26 removing high concentrate industrial brine from our region, thereby preventing
27 reintroduction of these minerals into the surface and groundwater of the
28 watershed. This visionary project is the backbone for brackish water recovery
29 systems in the watershed, providing safe disposal for desalters gradually restoring
30 groundwater basins while providing clean, reliable supplies of local water.

1 Western was the first agency in the Metropolitan Water District service area to
2 bring a desalter online (Arlington Desalter, established 1990), a plant that was
3 upgraded again in 2004 and is in design for yet another expansion next year.
4 While providing up to 60 percent of the water supplies for the city of Norco, as
5 well as emergency supply for neighboring agencies, the Arlington desalter will
6 eventually restore the Arlington Basin as a candidate for storage of local
7 groundwater. Similarly, Western is investing cooperatively with a consortium of
8 member agencies of the Chino Basin Watermaster to clean up brackish
9 groundwater in the Chino Basin through expansion of Chino Desalter II and III.

10 15. Working cooperatively for seven years with the Regional Water Quality Control
11 Board and a team of groundwater agencies representing basins throughout the
12 upper Santa Ana River Watershed, Western provided leadership in developing a
13 multi-million dollar Salt Management Plan essential to the long term
14 sustainability of regional groundwater supplies. Western has also provided
15 leadership and guidance benefiting the Regional Board, and US Geological
16 Survey in the Groundwater Ambient Monitoring and Assessments (GAMA)
17 program in the upper watershed.

18 16. Western invested \$10 million dollars to build a nonpotable conveyance system to
19 capture thousands of acre feet of nonpotable water for irrigation, thereby
20 stretching domestic potable supplies and reducing demand for imported water.
21 Similarly, Western invested a million dollars in the Site-31 Conveyance Pipeline
22 to deliver groundwater pumped and treated at March Air Reserve Base to irrigate
23 the nation's second largest veteran's cemetery, in lieu of imported Colorado River
24 water.

25 **Future Projects**

26 17. Moving forward, Western's most important project in its highly rated Integrated
27 Regional Watershed Management plan is the Riverside-Corona Feeder, a project
28 that will rely in part on the availability of locally conserved water stored in
29 groundwater basins as a shield against drought or imported system failures. In the

1 event of a loss of supply from the Bay Delta or the Colorado River, this locally
2 available supply system would be available to buffer the region – for multiple
3 years under stringent conservation -- from catastrophic effects of natural or man-
4 made disaster or drought.

5 18. Development of reliable local supplies is preferable, from an economic and water
6 resource management standpoint, to increased reliance on imported water. The
7 development of additional local supplies will reduce demand for export of water
8 from the Bay-Delta, with attendant environmental and water supply benefits,
9 including reduction of energy consumption and concomitant greenhouse gasses
10 related to the transport of imported water. Further, in the event of failure of
11 imported water systems in the Bay-Delta due to earthquake, flood, or rising sea
12 levels from climate change, reliable supplies of local water will be critical to the
13 economic and ecological survival of this region.

14 19. The testimony of Jack Safely (Muni/Western Ex. 7-1) demonstrates that, during a
15 repeat of WY 1969, Muni/Western could put almost 200,000 af to reasonable and
16 beneficial use within our service areas. Mr. Safely’s testimony identifies several
17 additional projects/efforts that Muni/Western may wish to consider in order
18 provide additional flexibility in the use of water diverted from the Santa Ana
19 River. If, as requested in our applications, the State Water Resources Control
20 Board grants Muni/Western one or more permits for the diversion of 200,000 afy
21 of water from the Santa Ana River, I will recommend to the Western Board of
22 Directors that they implement Mr. Safely’s proposals.

23 **Access to Seven Oaks Dam**

24 20. The Orange County Flood Control District, Riverside County Flood Control and
25 Water Conservation District and San Bernardino County Flood Control District
26 (collectively “Local Sponsors”) are parties to a Local Cooperation Agreement
27 (“LCA”) with the Department of the Army dated December 13, 1989, which
28 establishes the rights and responsibilities of the Local Sponsors and the
29 Department of the Army regarding the Santa Ana River Mainstem, Including

1 Santiago Creek, California Flood Control Project (“Project”). A true and correct
2 copy of the LCA is attached as Muni/Western Exhibit 2-4. Seven Oaks Dam and
3 Reservoir are elements of the Project, as described in the LCA. In general, the
4 Local Sponsors are the owners and operators of Seven Oaks Dam, and are
5 responsible for ensuring that any water conservation at Seven Oaks Dam does not
6 unreasonably interfere with the Dam’s primary use as a flood control facility.
7 Seven Oaks Dam is presently operated as a flood control facility and operation of
8 Seven Oaks Dam is governed by the Water Control Manual prepared by the
9 United States Army Corps of Engineers (“USACE”).

10 21. The Board of Directors of the District will, at its meeting on April 18, 2007,
11 consider approval of the “Agreement Among Santa Ana River Mainstem Project
12 Local Sponsors and San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District and Western
13 Municipal Water District of Riverside County Funding a Seven Oaks Dam Water
14 Conservation Feasibility Report” (hereinafter “Funding Agreement”) a true and
15 correct copy of which is attached as Muni/Western Exhibit 2-5. Under the
16 Funding Agreement if approved by the District’s Board of Directors, Western will
17 provide a 27.95 percent share of the “Study Costs,” as defined in the Funding
18 Agreement, relating to the updating of the 1997 Feasibility Report prepared by
19 USACE and associated analyses, studies, reports and documents prepared by
20 USACE with the support and assistance of the Local Sponsors, regarding the
21 feasibility of water conservation at Seven Oaks Dam.

22 22. The Board of Directors of the District will also consider, at its meeting on April
23 18, 2007, Resolution No. 2478, a true and correct copy of which is attached hereto
24 as Muni/Western Exhibit 2-6. This resolution would, if approved, direct Western
25 staff and legal counsel to seek, in the first instance, to secure rights of access, for
26 purposes of the activities contemplated in Applications 31165 and 31370, by
27 negotiation and agreement. Based on the past history of a strong and cooperative
28 working relationship between Muni/Western and the Local Sponsors, I am
29 confident that Muni/Western will be able to negotiate a mutually acceptable
30 access agreement with the Local Sponsors. In the unlikely event that

1 Muni/Western cannot reach agreement with the Local Sponsors regarding access
2 rights, Resolution No. 2478 would, if approved, direct Muni to proceed with
3 acquisition of access rights pursuant to its statutory power of eminent domain.

4 23. As part of those discussions, Western would agree to accept the following permit
5 term to be included in all water right permits granted by the SWRCB pursuant to
6 the Applications 31165 and 31370:

7 This permit shall not be construed as conferring upon permittees
8 any right of access over lands not owned by the permittees. To the
9 extent that rights of access over lands not owned by the permittees
10 are required in connection with the exercise of rights granted under
11 this permit, permittees shall obtain such rights of access through
12 agreement or otherwise.

List of Exhibits

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- Muni/Western Ex. 2-1 Testimony of John V. Rossi
- Muni/Western Ex. 2-2 Resume of John V. Rossi
- Muni/Western Ex. 2-3 Map of Western Municipal Water District
- Muni/Western Ex. 2-4 Local Cooperation Agreement
- Muni/Western Ex. 2-5 Proposed Funding Agreement with Local Sponsors
- Muni/Western Ex. 2-6 Proposed Resolution No. 2478