

## Water Package Holds High Importance to meet Needs of a Vital California

In California there has always been a link between land use and water supply. But, within the last decade, there has been an increased emphasis on demonstrating a secure water supply when it comes to new development.

That's why the comprehensive water package recently signed into law by Gov. Schwarzenegger is a major achievement by the California Legislature. This \$11.1 billion comprehensive water package provides a much-needed solution AND the related funding to secure this core infrastructure. While the bond is not the perfect solution, given it funds costly environmental mitigation measures that only indirectly secure new water delivery systems it is the best package for now.

"The Legislature and the Governor should be applauded for getting this one right, but will California voters when they go to the polls on Nov. 2, 2010," asked Borre Winckel, president and CEO of the Building Industry Association of San Diego County.

"I hope so because, without this, there is no construction and consequently no return to a healthier economy," added Winckel. "We worry deeply about the state of the economy and how voters are currently most concerned about their personal pocketbooks and think short-term personal fixes, not long-term, big-picture fixes that hold the key to economic prosperity," he added.

Earlier this decade, two bills designed to draw a tighter connection between water supply and land use planning were enacted. Senate Bill 610 requires retail water agencies to prepare a water supply assessment as part of the CEQA review of larger-scale (500 units or more) projects. Senate Bill 221 requires retail water agencies to provide written verification of the availability of a sufficient supply of water as a condition of tentative map approval for those same-scale projects. The Legislature enacted both planning bills partially as a response to the infrastructure-investment vacuum it itself created.

As California moved away from financing and relying on storage options such as dams and reservoirs and as imported supplies from major sources such as the State Water Project and the Colorado River became less and less predictable, local water agencies began developing a more diversified and sophisticated portfolio of supplemental supplies to ensure water reliability. From water transfers to local groundwater supplies to off-stream storage to reclamation, conservation and conjunctive use, local water agencies by default have become the frontline planner and developer of new water supplies.



Importantly, the comprehensive water package provides billions for public benefits associated with water storage, for integrated regional water management projects up and down the state, for local and regional conveyance projects, for groundwater clean-up projects and for near-term drought relief projects.

All of these portfolios of supplemental water supply sources are absolutely essential in order to meet the requirements of Senate Bills 610 and 221 and to ensure that the water needs of a growing and prospering California are met in the years ahead.

As the state's local water agencies go about the business of updating their Urban Water Management Plans, San Diego business and civic leaders need to pay close attention to how this is done.

Those plans serve as the basis for identifying all local water supply projects, are relied upon in preparing water supply assessments and verifications, and, importantly, put local agencies in line to receive a portion of funds from the \$11.1 billion water bond.

The voting public needs to fully understand the importance of the water bond to our state's long-term economic prosperity. BIA San Diego will remain vigilant when it comes to ensuring our regional water supply. It matters to quality of life in the region, and to the tens of thousands of men and women who earn their living in the building industry and are desperate to get back to work.

