

News release,

MWD

Friday - 6/9/00

MWD General Manager Gastelum Lauds Momentum Created By State-Federal Bay/Delta Framework for Action

SACRAMENTO - Ronald R. Gastelum, general manager of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, releases the following statement commending Gov. Gray Davis and U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt for developing a sweeping plan to meet California's critical water challenges in the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta:

``After the first 16 months of Gov. Davis' term in office, strong frameworks have been forged to equitably resolve long-standing water supply disputes in California. His administration's collaborative efforts with Secretary Babbitt and Deputy Interior Secretary David Hayes have created the momentum CALFED needs to balance California's water quality and reliability demands and interests.

``For Southern Californians, the great distance that Bay/Delta water travels to get here is no longer than the journey into our conscience. We are concerned about how Bay/Delta water quality affects wildlife habitat and human health. The plan by the Governor and Secretary begins addressing Metropolitan's water quality concerns for its 17 million customers, and we are committed to see it succeed.

``Metropolitan's board of directors has taken a position that it does not consider an isolated conveyance facility the definitive tool for addressing the state's water quality problems in the Bay/Delta and that any solution must be rooted in good science. We believe that the through-delta solution carefully laid out in the framework has the potential to fix the Bay/Delta and finally arrest the old regional and stakeholder disputes, which have stymied California water policy for decades.

``Metropolitan hopes that the promise of this new Bay/Delta plan will be fulfilled, in part through the devotion of our agency's talents and energies. We will work to realize the objectives of the plan particularly

in the following areas:

- * Commitment to build storage to assure environmental and economic balance, and improve water quality

- * Implementation of the South Delta Program

- * Establishment of an Environmental Water Account to provide protection for fisheries within a defined budget so that water users receive reliable water supplies and Endangered Species Act assurances.

``We congratulate the Governor and the Secretary on their leadership. We stand ready, in fulfillment of our responsibility to secure water quality, reliability and fairness for our 17 million residents, to work cooperatively with the Governor, the Secretary, other water suppliers, environmental groups, water users and anyone else who is committed to a fair, effective Bay/Delta solution." #