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THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

**Remarks of Marsi A. Stelrer
City of San Diego Water Department
to the
Bay-Delta Advisory Council
October 29, 1998
Sacramento, CA**

Good Morning.

I am Marsi Stelrer, CIP Program Manager, with the City of San Diego Water Department. I am here today to address the CALFED processes as well as share with you information about the city's water resource management efforts.

But first some background information about the City of San Diego. San Diego is the home of 1.2 million residents, making it the 6th largest city in the United States. The Water Department provides water service to city residents. Water deliveries average 200 million gallons a day, and the majority of this water is treated at locally at one of our three water treatment plants.

I have been with the Water Department for 10 years. As a point of time reference, during my first week on the job ten years ago was at the time the State Board rendered its 1988 Bay-Delta decision that water exports to Southern California would be cut back to 1985 levels. The efforts undertaken by the City that I will describe to you this morning were in response to that decision. The Urban and Environmental coalition, that was formed shortly after the State Board's decision, resulted in the drafting of the MOU for California Urban Water Agencies and the formation of the California Urban Water Conservation Council.

The City of San Diego was an original signatory to the MOU. For the first 7.5 years I was with the Water Department, I served as the Water Conservation Program Manager presiding over the development and implementation of one of the largest and most comprehensive Water Conservation Programs in California. Our efforts have been referred to as one of California's "greatest untold stories."

Examples of our success in the field of water resource management include full implementation of all DMP's from 1991 to present, and also a large scale reclaimed water and retrofit program. The amount of water saved through these efforts is around 18 MGD or 20,000 AF year. The costs to our rate payers equals \$20.5 million, supplemented by and additional \$18 million from our water wholesalers.



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Just imagine - that this is enough water to cover the entire area of the City with 1 inch of water - or to fill the Shamu tank at Seaworld 1,000 times - or supply 39,000 families with water for one year! Per capita water usage for city residents has decreased by 15% in the last 7 years.

We have been successful. Our City Council and customers have been receptive and are supportive of our efforts as demonstrated by high program participation rates. However, we are moving into year 8 for some of the programs and the amount of water that can be saved from some of the on-going programs has diminished. That is, many of the conservation programs have achieved their one-time savings. We are also implementing several potential BMP's including H-axis clothes washers in order to garner additional savings.

Some of our City Council members have voiced concern about continuing to offer "incentives" to customers and are no longer voting for these programs. This shift is occurring after being supportive for 8 years.

It is important that you are aware of our efforts in Southern California, but are also cognizant of the fact that these efforts were undertaken in an attempt to resolve long-standing Bay-Delta issues that continue to remain unresolved.

As a soft path method, conservation is important but it is only a part of the equation. We need to work together to reach a solution for the Bay-Delta which includes water quality improvements, reliability, storage, supply and ecosystem restoration.

I offer my perspective as a representative of a retail water utility which has aggressively pursued water conservation and reclamation as part of their overall water management strategy. Our elected officials and customers have actively supported and participated in the water management efforts I have described to you today, but for how much longer I do not know. It is critical that CALFED move forward and address key issues in order for the City to continue to support CALFED.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Council.

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