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To: rsoehren@water.ca.gov; 2020Comments@waterboards.ca.gov
Date: Fri, May 22, 2009 11:48 AM
Subject: D052009Red 20x2020 comments to DWR

Please find attached San Juan Water District's comments on the Final Draft Implementation Plan for the 20% reduction in water usage by 2020.

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By Electronic Transmittal to: 2020comments@waterboards.ca.gov

20x2020 Agency Team
c/o California Department of Water Resources
1416 Ninth Street, P.O. Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

Re: Comments on 20x2020 Water Conservation Plan (Draft)

The Governor of California requested a 20% reduction in urban water use by 2020. The California Department of Water Resources developed a statewide implementation plan to meet this goal and is requesting comments on the final draft implementation plan. This letter is to voice San Juan Water District's significant issues with this draft plan.

The District's opposition to this plan centers on two key problems. First, the plan uses a set statewide per capita per day (gpcd) water use target, which fails to account for regional differences like land-use and climate patterns in any significant way. The gpcd approach computed on a statewide average does not consider the situation of water suppliers like the District, which must supply large residential lots approved by local land use agencies and yet would be required under the plan to impose very stringent reductions on its customers' outdoor water use. If one house is on a one acre lot, the gpcd simply is significantly higher than five houses on the same one acre lot. Second, while the Governor's initial 20x2020 proposal was one part of his proposed Delta solutions, the plan fails to consider the fact that different water uses have very different effects on the Delta. Forty to fifty percent of water used in the Sacramento region returns to Delta tributaries, making it available for the Delta ecosystem and use by regions that rely on Delta exports. Any conservation targets based on the Governor's 20x2020 proposal therefore must be based on a water use's net effect on Delta water supplies.

The District's retail service area is one of the few in the state of California that is meeting the majority of the California Urban Water Conservation Council's best management practices. The District has a history of dedicated water efficiency over the last 20 years, and has one of the highest, if not highest, number of conservation staff per customer of any agency in California. The District supports using water efficiently, but does not support requiring conservation measures as a means of taking water away from the District for the benefit of others.

The District has serious objections to the following details included in the final draft implementation plan:

- The Plan does not identify the objectives that were being sought from the goal of 20% conservation by 2020. Two facts strikingly demonstrate this point. First, the Plan fails to consider the fact that about 40% of water diverted for use in the Sacramento region returns to the Delta watershed for, among other uses, the drinking-water supplies of Regions 3, 4, 7 and 9. Second, while Table 6 states that *none* of the identified measures would be cost-effective in Region 5 in comparison with alternative water supplies, the Plan nonetheless proposes that Region 5 be required to achieve at least

30% conservation by 2020. The target water use gpcd in Region 5 equates to a **40% to 60% reduction in water usage in the Sacramento region.**

- As discussed in the plan, the proposals are based on limited data, a limited budget for analysis, and a limited timeframe. The cost to implement the plan will be billions of dollars statewide. Better information is necessary to make decisions of this magnitude.
- The primary beneficiaries of reducing water use 40-60% in the Sacramento Region would not be local residents, but rather residents of other regions that rely on exports from the Delta. The plan therefore would require enormous investments in the Sacramento region mainly for others' benefit, which would cause disproportionate financial impacts on the District's customers.
- The Plan is based on the flawed reasoning that all regions of the state should tend toward the statewide average per capita water use, rather than considering regional differences in climate, land-use patterns, locally available water supplies and water-related energy consumption. The combined effect of the plan and other agencies' past land use decisions would require the District to enforce a 60% reduction in water use to meet the plan's gpcd targets for Region 5. The District essentially would be required to ban its customers' outdoor irrigation in order to benefit water users in other regions. This effect would constitute a mandated and uncompensated reallocation of water supplies that would conflict with California's existing water-rights and area-of-origin laws.
- The plan proposes a high percentage in the Sacramento Region, where compliance with the CUWCC BMPs is already higher than the state average. The idea that customers in some parts of the state can not conserve anymore, as they have already implemented all the BMPs, is factually incorrect. The plan's Table 6, on page 19, demonstrates this point. The table shows that, while *none* of the indicated conservation measures would be cost-effective in Region 5, *all* of those measures still would be cost-effective in Regions 2 and 4.
- By taking a top-down approach that would prioritize water conservation over other management options like conjunctive use, the Plan overlooks the state's foundational water policy of integrated regional water management to improve regional reliability and self-sufficiency.
- The original focus of the Governor's call for 20% conservation, as an element of a comprehensive Delta solution, was lost along the way. No analysis of the benefits to the Delta of the proposed conservation targets was conducted. This is most clearly demonstrated by the Plan's failure to consider the fact that much water used in Regions 5 and 6 returns to the Delta's tributaries and is diverted to supply much of the water supply for Regions 3 and 4, at least. In light of this fact, the Plan's baseline for determining what conservation actions would be necessary in any region should be that region's net usage of water tributary to the Delta.

- The Plan fails to recognize that, under existing Water Code section 1011, the supplier that conserves water is entitled to retain the benefit of that water. The Plan seems to assume that water conserved within Regions 5 and 6 should be made available for other regions' use without any financial contributions by those other regions.
- Many of the recommendations are premature as they are based on the limitations of the Plan described above. The recommendations should focus on achieving the goals defined in the plan, such as reduced energy usage and regional self sufficiency.

The District is entirely locally self-sufficient; all water supplies are from the local area. This self-sufficiency is preserved in part through the Water Forum Agreement, which was begun in 1993 and signed in 2000. The Agreement was designed to meet the co-equal objectives of providing reliable water supplies for the region to the year 2030 and preserving the environment of the lower American River. Our region's coequal goals predated the Delta-related coequal goals that the Delta Vision Task Force adopted and that are driving much of the current discussion of water issues in the state. Water conservation is one of seven key elements of the Water Forum Agreement and, under that Agreement, water suppliers in the region are committed to actions that will achieve an approximately 20% reduction in per capita water use.

The District recommends a complete overhaul in the implementation plan for the Governor's requested 20% reduction in water use by 2020. Most fundamentally, the plan must account for water uses' net impacts on Delta water supplies and the local climate and land-use patterns that drive actual water use. The Plan should not require agencies like the District that have reliable local water supplies to reduce water usage to benefit others.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Shauna Lorance
General Manager

Cc: Rick Soehren, Department of Water Resources
Bob Churchill, Citrus Heights Water District
Sharon Wilcox, Orange Vale Water Company
Tom Gray, Fair Oaks Water District
Senator Dave Cox
Senator Darrell Steinberg
Assembly Member Ted Gaines
Assembly Member Roger Niello