



SOUTH BAY ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES CENTER

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

July 2015 E-Newsletter

Board of Directors Vote to Begin Ocean-Water Desalination Environmental Impact Report

As water shortages continue, EIR will evaluate opportunities to increase local water supplies

As California faces its most severe drought in recorded history, the [West Basin Municipal Water District](#) (West Basin) Board of Directors recently took action and voted to begin an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) as part of its research to build a full-scale ocean-water desalination facility in the South Bay. By initiating the EIR, West Basin will evaluate all environmental impacts associated with building and operating a 20 million gallon per day (MGD) and a 60 MGD ocean-water desalination facility.

Engineering projects identified to have potentially significant impacts to the environment are required to quantify these impacts as stated in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The EIR will quantify impacts attributed to the intake, discharge, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions and more. This document will not only identify and quantify impacts, but determine how much mitigation would be required for the facility to have a net zero environmental impact.

“As a coastal water agency, it is important that West Basin evaluate a responsible ocean-water desalination program, should it be needed in the future,” said West Basin Board President Gloria D. Gray. “As the drought worsens, and with the uncertainty of climate change, it is prudent to explore ocean-water desalination. We need to continue working towards our water reliability goals and increasing local, drought-proof water supplies such as ocean-water desalination and recycling.”

Since 2002, West Basin has conscientiously tested the feasibility of ocean-water desalination with a focus on protecting marine life and minimizing costs through reduced energy and chemical consumption. West Basin has participated in the regulatory efforts that have helped shape California’s ocean-water desalination policies. The recently finalized desalination permitting process adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board on intakes, discharges and mitigation are the first of its kind in the world.

As Southern California faces rising demands and a shrinking water supply, augmenting imported water is becoming increasingly important. In addition to increasing water recycling, groundwater desalting and water conservation, investigating ocean-water desalination to diversify local water supplies is a key part of West Basin’s water reliability program.

For more information about West Basin’s ocean-water desalination studies and water reliability program, please visit www.westbasin.org.