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SRCSD Withdraws Treatment Plant Capacity Increase Request

Dramatic changes in region's growth, water conservation and plans for water recycling reduce need at this time

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SACRAMENTO – The Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (SRCSD) announced Thursday that it has dropped its formal request to increase its permitted wastewater discharge capacity at the Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, citing dramatic changes in the region's growth and water conservation efforts.

In 2005 SRCSD submitted a request to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQB) to increase its permitted capacity from a maximum average dry weather flow of 181 million gallons per day (mgd) to a maximum of 218 mgd. The District's current average flow is about 150 mgd.

SRCSD provides wastewater treatment services to more than 1.3 million residents in the Sacramento region. The District's treatment plant is located near Elk Grove, CA, and it discharges treated wastewater to the Sacramento River.

"We updated our treatment plant Master Plan in 2000, and we submitted a request for the capacity increase in 2005 during our normal permit renewal process," stated Mary Snyder, SRCSD District Engineer. "During the early 2000s growth in the region was still very high and wastewater flows were expected to rise significantly. However, this permit renewal process has taken much longer than expected, and during the past five years changes occurred which affected our original projections," added Snyder.

"We feel confident that we can drop our requested increase of permitted flow at this time and still comfortably have sufficient permitted flow during the life of our next permit. If water usage in the region unexpectedly increases or population growth significantly rises in the near future, SRCSD will re-evaluate those factors and revisit its capacity needs. We'll request added capacity closer to the time it is truly needed," Snyder explained.

The District cites several reasons for dropping the increase request at this time.

- Water conservation in the Sacramento region over the last decade has been effective and the amount of wastewater generated per capita has decreased.
- State legislation passed in 2009 mandates further water conservation which could significantly reduce the amount of wastewater the region generates in the future.

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- SRCSD has prioritized its goals to increase water recycling in the region as an element to support the comprehensive effort to promote water supply reliability and Delta sustainability. Water recycling could offset a portion of SRCSD's treated wastewater discharge. SRCSD has already identified several potential water recycling projects and is currently seeking partners and funding for those projects.

“We believe withdrawing the capacity increase request is the right thing to do at this time, but of course we will closely monitor any possible conditions that could alter our needs,” stated Snyder.

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