

**TESTIMONY OF MR. DARRYL MILLER  
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CENTRAL BASIN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER AND POWER  
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My name is Darryl Miller, and I am the General Manager of both the Central Basin Municipal Water District and the West Basin Municipal Water District. On behalf of the Central Basin District and the West Basin District, I thank Chairman Calvert and the Members of the Subcommittee on Water and Power for this opportunity to testify about the water supply challenges facing Southern California and the opportunities available to meet those challenges. I would also like to acknowledge and thank Congresswoman Grace Napolitano, a Member of the Subcommittee on Water and Power who represents several cities in the Central Basin Municipal Water District service area, including Montebello, Pico Rivera, Whittier, Norwalk and Santa Fe Springs.

The Central Basin Municipal Water District and the West Basin Municipal Water District are both public agencies that wholesale imported water to cities, mutual water companies, investor-owned utilities and private companies in southern Los Angeles County. Both Districts also supply their service areas with recycled water for municipal, commercial and industrial use and both are aggressively involved in water conservation efforts. The Central Basin District also supplies water used for groundwater replenishment. Each of the two agencies has a five-member publicly elected Board of Directors that sets policy and governs operations. However, the two Districts share a common staff and headquarters in Carson, California.

The Central and West Basin Districts serve a combined area of over 400 square miles in southern Los Angeles County. The population in this combined service area is over 2.3 million people living in 41 cities and unincorporated areas of the County. Each year, these two Districts deliver about 475,000 acre-feet of water in the combined service area.

The Central Basin and West Basin Districts are each unique in the make-up of their service areas and the water supply challenges they face. While each is charged with ensuring a safe, adequate and reliable supply of water to its customers, each has its own specific obstacles to overcome in meeting that mission. Also, each District has initiated its own measures to improve its ability to meet the water supply needs of its service area.

The West Basin Municipal Water District was formed in the mid-1940's to preserve the limited underground water supplies in West Coast Groundwater Basin and to secure supplemental water supplies. Today, about 80% of the 210,00 acre feet of water used in the West Basin service area is imported water purchased by the District from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Additional supplies come from local groundwater sources and from the District's aggressive water recycling program. Through water recycling and water conservation, the West Basin District is striving to significantly reduce the demand for imported water within its service area.

The West Basin District is currently constructing additional components to the largest water recycling

system of its kind in the nation. Recycled water in the West Basin District is domestic wastewater originating from the County of Los Angeles' Hyperion Treatment Plant that is further purified through primary, secondary and tertiary treatment. Recycled water in the West Basin is not used for drinking water purposes. Instead, it is used for non-potable commercial, industrial and municipal applications. When all of the component projects of the West Basin Water Recycling Program are eventually completed, the program will have the capacity to recycle up to 70,000 acre-feet of water per year. The two main components of the West Basin Water Recycling Program are the West Basin Water Recycling Project, now complete and developing 22,000 acre feet of water per year, and the Harbor/South Bay Water Recycling Project, which will add the capacity to develop another 48,000 acre feet of new water supplies.

The West Basin is proud to report that all of the new water supplies developed through its water recycling program are put to beneficial use. More than 140 facilities in our service area are currently using recycled water for non-potable applications. The West Basin also tailors its recycled water to meet the unique needs of end users. Local oil refineries, which are a major user of our recycled water, have specific water quality requirements that require additional treatment processes. The West Basin also supplies recycled water for injection into seawater intrusion barriers along the coast. In order to meet the strict standards required for barrier water more than 12 different treatment processes are utilized. While extra treatment means extra treatment costs, the end result is a dramatic reduction in the use of imported water and a more reliable supply of both drinking water and non-potable water.

The Central Basin Municipal Water District was established in 1952 to help mitigate the overpumping of underground water resources in southeast Los Angeles County. Local groundwater provided an inexpensive, but diminishing, source of water for the area. The Central Basin District was formed to supplement groundwater supplies with imported water, which is purchased from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Today, in addition to groundwater and imported water, the Central Basin District provides recycled water for irrigation, commercial applications and industrial processes.

The Central Basin Municipal Water District obtains recycled water from the San Jose Creek Water Reclamation Plant in Whittier and the Los Coyotes Water Reclamation Plant in Cerritos. The Central Basin Water Recycling Program is comprised of two distribution systems, as well as three pumping stations and a reservoir. The two systems are interconnected by a 50 mile distribution system that annually delivers about 4500 acre-feet of recycled water to more than 150 industrial, commercial, landscape and irrigation sites throughout southeast Los Angeles County. The Metropolitan State Hospital in Norwalk and U.S. Gypsum's paper mill in South Gate are among the Central Basin's largest recycled water partners.

We all know that water is a finite resource. The water we are drinking today and using to water our lawns is the same water that dinosaurs drank thousands of years ago. Nature regularly uses, cleans and reuses water, and has done so for millions of years. Through water recycling programs such as the West and Central Basin Districts', we are merely speeding up the natural process. However, for water recycling to play a role in the water supply problems facing California, the newly created water supply must be put to beneficial use in order to reduce the demand for imported supplies, which originate from the environmentally sensitive Bay/Delta or the federally controlled Colorado River.

Water recycling by the Central Basin and West Basin Municipal Water Districts has strong and clear economic benefits for southern Los Angeles County. The reliability of recycled water helps to drought-proof the region by ensuring a supply of water for non-potable purposes regardless of drought. This factor of reliability is both an attraction for new businesses to locate in our area and an incentive for existing

businesses, and jobs, to stay.

The water recycling programs of the Central and West Basin Districts also have clear environmental benefits. Recycling water directly reduces the volume of effluent discharged into receiving waters. This is particularly important in the West Basin, where effluent from the Hyperion Treatment Plant would normally be discharged into the Santa Monica Bay. Eventually, the West Basin Water Recycling Program could reduce by 110 million gallons per day the amount of effluent discharged into the Bay, which is a federally designated National Marine Estuary.

In addition to the local economic and environmental benefits of water recycling, several established federal goals are also advanced. The federal government has already spent many millions of taxpayer dollars in the San Francisco/San Joaquin Bay/Delta. This Subcommittee is currently considering legislation that will authorize billions more to be spent on addressing the water supply and water quality issues that plague the Delta. Clearly, the issues in the Delta are of great federal concern, and the Central and West Basin programs directly contribute to advancing CALFED's goals.

The federal government is also deeply interested in the State of California reducing its demand for water from the Colorado River. California annually exceeds its allocation of Colorado River water by approximately 800,000 acre-feet. As Arizona, Nevada and other States with which California shares Colorado River water continue to grow into their existing allocations, water recycling will continue to play a significant role in California's efforts to live within its own allocation. Also, a reduction in California's demand for Colorado River water will directly aid the efforts of the United States to meet its international treaty obligations with Mexico.

The advancement of federal goals accomplished through aggressive water recycling and conservation efforts has been a strong rationale for federal involvement in the development of these types of projects. Many of these projects are capital-intensive, with large amounts of funding needed up-front in order to ensure completion and begin the delivery of new water supplies. Also, in today's market, in order to encourage end-users to switch to recycled water and commit to the development of infrastructure needed to facilitate the delivery of this water, it is often imperative to offer some financial incentive. A finite, short-term federal investment in the construction of well-planned water recycling projects can allow water districts to offer recycled water at reduced prices and achieve the myriad of long-term benefits I have mentioned.

The long-term local, regional and federal benefits of the water recycling and conservation efforts of the Central Basin and West Basin Municipal Water Districts are well-known to our congressional representatives. In the Central Basin, Congresswoman Napolitano, Congressman Horn, Congressman Royce, and Congresswoman Roybal-Allard have supported the Central Basin's requests for federal funds to develop projects. In the West Basin, Congresswoman Harman, Congressman Waxman and Congressman Sherman have all supported federal cost-sharing for water recycling and water conservation programs. Congresswoman Millender-McDonald represents portions of both Districts, and continues to be a leader in the Districts' efforts to seek federal assistance to develop such projects.

Historically, the main obstacle to federal investments in water recycling projects has been the lack of budgeting priority placed on such programs, and the lack of a coherent federal policy addressing water infrastructure needs. The Bureau of Reclamation's Title XVI program, which provides a federal cost-share of 25% for the planning, design and construction of specifically authorized water recycling projects remains grossly underfunded. While the West Basin and Central Basin Municipal Water Districts have benefitted

from this program, the vast majority of projects authorized to receive federal cost-sharing under this program are still waiting to participate.

Other federal funding for the development of water recycling programs is available through the Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency. However, water recycling funds through these agencies is limited and not readily available for new projects. Despite the regional and federal benefits I have mentioned, many in Congress refer to water recycling programs as so-called "local projects" that should remain solely the responsibility of local agencies.

A competitive grant program such as the one proposed by Chairman Calvert in the "Western Water Enhancement Security Act" would play a critical role in the ability of local agencies to continue to develop projects creating new, alternative water supplies through recycling, desalination and groundwater recovery. The Central Basin Municipal Water District and West Basin Municipal Water District strongly believe that the creation of such a program is absolutely necessary as part of any real solution to the statewide water supply problem. In the absence of such a project grant program, the multi-billion dollar CALFED initiative will severely limit the availability of funds for projects, especially in Southern California, that can quickly provide very quantifiable improvements in water supply.

The Central Basin and West Basin Municipal Water Districts are already planning new projects that will further enhance the region's water supply. In addition to its ongoing efforts to market recycled water to new users, the West Basin District is embarking on the development of a comprehensive desalination program. One component of this program will include cutting edge facilities to desalinate recycled wastewater to extremely high purity levels for sensitive industrial applications. This desalination project will also allow the West Basin District to further reduce the volume of potable water currently used for seawater intrusion barriers, which is currently a mix of 50% potable water and 50% recycled water. Another component of the West Basin program will use state-of-the-art technology to demonstrate the economic feasibility of desalinating seawater to create new potable water supplies.

The Central Basin District is also moving forward with plans to increase the use of recycled water within its service area. To accomplish this, the District will continue its efforts to market the benefits of recycled water to potential users. As new users commit to recycled water, the Central Basin District will need to construct additional links to its existing distribution system. As an example, the Montebello Loop project, currently under development, will connect users in the City of Montebello to the Central Basin's water recycling distribution system. The Central Basin is also developing a project that will connect the distinct water recycling systems of the Central Basin and West Basin Districts to create a truly regional water recycling treatment and distribution system throughout Los Angeles County.

Projects like these, and the benefits they offer, may not be feasible without some measure of federal investment. I encourage the Subcommittee, and the Congress, to consider the value of these projects when allocating existing resources and authorizing new programs, like CALFED, that may further limit the availability of federal infrastructure investment funds in other areas. The Central Basin and West Basin Municipal Water Districts applaud Chairman Calvert's recognition of the importance of projects throughout the state that directly contribute to the goals of the CALFED program. On behalf of the Boards of Directors of the Central Basin and West Basin Districts, I thank you for this opportunity to address these issues before the Subcommittee.