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Testimony

Before the Committee on Resources  
United States House of Representatives

Hearing on H.R. 122  
The Eastern Municipal Water District Recycled Water System  
Pressurization and Expansion Project

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Good Afternoon Chairman Radanovich and other distinguished members of this Committee, my name is Anthony J. Pack and I am the General Manager of the Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD). On behalf of EMWD and its Board of Directors it is my privilege to present this testimony to you today on H.R. 122 and to discuss the water resource benefits the Bill will promote. I would like to thank Representatives Issa, Bono, and Calvert for introducing this Bill and for their leadership in efforts to resolve California's water supply issues.

EMWD provides water supply, wastewater collection and treatment, and water recycling services to over 560,000 people in one of the nation's most rapidly growing areas. EMWD's 555 square mile service area includes the Cities of Moreno Valley, Perris, San Jacinto, Hemet, Murrieta and Temecula, as well as unincorporated portions of Southwest Riverside County.

Like most water agencies in Southern California, EMWD depends upon imported water from the state and Federal water projects, namely the Sacramento Bay Delta and Colorado River, for much of its water supply. EMWD recognizes that increasing pressure on these resources and the need to balance urban, agricultural, and environmental water demands will further stress these state and Federal water projects limiting the availability of water for use in our service area. We are responding to this challenge by investing heavily in the development of local water resources. EMWD's on-going programs include management and protection of existing potable groundwater production, brackish groundwater desalination, and groundwater recharge and storage. However, our largest, oldest and most successful local resource development effort is our water-recycling program.

In Southern California, recycled water is routinely used for agricultural irrigation, municipal and residential landscape irrigation, industrial processes, environmental enhancement, and is even used in recreational impoundments permitted for full body contact. In the past 10 years, due to extensive research and elaborate public awareness programs, public acceptance of recycled water has been greatly enhanced. This coupled with the easing of the regulatory restrictions has enabled the local water agencies to tap into this most important resource to meet the ever-increasing need for water. Water recycling, until recently considered an innovative use of resources, is becoming commonplace as pressures on potable water supplies continue to grow.

EMWD's recycling program began in the early 1980's, and currently EMWD sells about 24,000 acre-feet per year (AFY) of recycled water to customers at 110 different sites, ranking EMWD as one of the top four water recycling agencies in California. We have constructed more than 130 miles of large diameter recycled water pipeline (18" – 54") which link five (5) regional waste water treatment facilities. In addition, more than 6,000 acre-feet (AF), or about two billion gallons of storage pond capacity have been constructed at 10 locations throughout our service area for seasonal storage of any surplus recycled water. This successful program, which meets the present needs of the EMWD, would not have become a reality without the financial assistance provided by the Federal government through the PL84-984 program that is administered by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

EMWD's water recycling transmission system was designed to provide irrigation water to large agricultural customers, and agriculture still accounts for 70 percent of EMWD's total recycled water sales. Other uses include municipal irrigation (parks, schools, golf courses) and environmental enhancement. EMWD also supplies recycled water to the California Department of Fish and Game's San Jacinto Wildlife Area, the only wildlife area in the state to use recycled water. While our recycled water system is adequate to meet the needs of our agricultural customers, EMWD is beginning to experience difficulties with a rapidly growing municipal market. Our system lacks the operational storage, flow control and

system pressure needed to provide the “on-demand” service required by municipal customers.

As development continues in our service area, the municipal irrigation and industrial demand will continue to grow. And unless remedied, our growing operational difficulties will ultimately limit our ability to serve these emerging demands with recycled water and will result in posing these demands on our potable water system. Recognizing the need and in order to maximize the continued use of recycled water, EMWD has developed plans to upgrade our recycled water transmission system by constructing the pumps and storage tanks needed to establish operational pressure zones. These plans also identify the large diameter pipelines needed to complete the transmission system and the smaller distribution pipelines needed to extend service to new municipal customers.

The EMWD Recycled Water System Pressurization and Expansion Project represents the next stage in the development of EMWD’s water recycling program. H.R. 122 will provide vital financial assistance in this effort to expand an already successful water recycling program. The project will provide local as well as regional and statewide benefits. EMWD’s customers will benefit from the development of an affordable, drought-proof local water supply. Expanded water recycling in EMWD will also help achieve the local resource development goals established in the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California’s Regional Integrated Resources Plan. At the statewide level, by reducing EMWD’s demand for imported water from the Sacramento Bay Delta and the Colorado River, the project will also support long-term water management efforts such as the CALFED Bay-Delta Program.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you and the Committee members again for the chance to testify before you today. Your support for H.R. 122 will help make EMWD’s System Pressurization and Expansion Project a success.

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Witnesses:

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