



San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments

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Date: March 18, 2010
To: Governing Board Delegates and Alternates
From: Nicholas T. Conway, Executive Director
Re: SB 918 (Pavley): Uniform Statewide Water Recycling Criteria

Recommended Action

Adopt the EENR Committee's recommended position of support for SB 918.

Background

Existing law requires the State Department of Public Health to establish uniform statewide recycling criteria for each varying type of use for recycled water where the use involves the protection of public health. This bill would require the Department of Public Health to develop and adopt uniform water recycling criteria for indirect potable water reuse, and investigate the feasibility of developing uniform water recycling criteria for direct potable reuse, consistent with a specified timeline. The bill, from July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2015, inclusive, would require funds generated by the imposition of specified liabilities for violations of water quality requirements to be made available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to the State Department of Public Health for the purposes of developing and adopting the water recycling criteria.

Every year, California discharges nearly 4 million acre feet of used water into the ocean - more than the State Water Project delivers to the Bay Area, the Central Valley, and Southern California. Much of that water could be recycled, but because uniform safety standards have not been adopted, the permitting and design processes for creating recycling facilities are unpredictable, discouraging local communities from tapping into this major water source. By adopting uniform health criteria for using recycled water to augment local drinking water supplies, the Department of Public Health can provide project designers with the guidance they need to cost-effectively create new water recycling facilities that are fully protective of public health. This legislation would also help the regional water quality control boards achieve its water recycling policy goal of increasing the use of recycled water in the state over 2002 levels by at least 1,000,000 acre-feet per year by 2020 and by at least 2,000,000 acre-feet per year by 2030.

This legislation furthers principles of the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments adopted Water Policy that supports programs and legislation that "promot[e] the development of infrastructure for water recycling, groundwater management, and imported water and efforts such as clean-up, production, storage, and protection of ground and surface water quality." The COG EENR Committee has recommended that the Governing Board support the bill.