



City of Manhattan Beach

CITY COUNCIL

Mark Burton
Mayor

February 16, 2016

Tony D'Errico
Mayor Pro Tem

West Basin Desalination Project
West Basin Municipal Water District
17140 South Avalon Boulevard, Suite 210
Carson, CA 90746

David J. Lesser
Councilmember

Amy Thomas Howorth
Councilmember

Re: West Basin Ocean Water Desalination Project

Wayne Powell
Councilmember

Dear To Whom it May Concern,

CITY TREASURER

Tim Lilligren, C.P.A.
Treasurer

On behalf of the Manhattan Beach City Council, this letter has been submitted in regards to the proposed West Basin Desalination project, which is proposed to be located in the City of El Segundo and includes appurtenant facilities within the City of Manhattan Beach.

The City recognizes and applauds West Basin for being a strong leader in the production of recycled water and specifically, we understand that West Basin's Water Reliability 2020 program is designed to shift future water supplies to more locally-controlled and reliable sources of water. A key focus and mission of West Basin is to invest in state-of-the-art water recycling programs to specifically meet the customers' needs. As promoted by West Basin, "nothing is more reliable and sustainable than recycled water."

According to West Basin, during the next 15 years, California must reduce its imported water supply by nearly 1 million acre-feet (one acre-foot equals 326,000 gallons). As the available water supply is decreasing, the demand for water is increasing. To ensure that there is enough water to meet present and future needs, West Basin specifically supports the need to conserve water and expand the use of recycled water. The City fully supports this mission and as further discussed below, encourages other options rather than the proposed West Basin Desalination Project.

The City strongly believes that West Basin can meet the current and future water demands by expanding its recycled water production from 17,000

acre-feet per year to 70,000 acre-feet per year as it plans to do. West Basin already produces large volumes of “designer” recycled water to meet the needs of their customers for irrigation, cooling towers, seawater barriers and groundwater replenishment, and low and high pressure boilers. West Basin can expand their facilities to produce additional water supplies or can work cooperatively with the Water Replenishment District (WRD) to utilize additional water supplies produced by WRD’s new Groundwater Reliability Improvement Program (GRIP) to further increase water supplies.

As you are aware, WRD's GRIP program takes treated wastewater from the Los Angeles County Sanitation District and further cleans it to drinking water standards. The purified water is then used to replenish the groundwater basin. The GRIP program intends to produce an additional 21,000 acre-feet of recycled water, which will instantly increase water supply portfolios, thus reducing the region’s reliance on imported water by a like amount.

In addition, West Basin has repeatedly indicated the environmental review process for the project is only in its initial stages and that there will be several additional opportunities to provide input throughout the process. West Basin has also continually committed to thoughtfully review all public input in order to ensure that the community’s concerns are fully addressed. In contrast to this, the City was recently informed at a meeting with West Basin that the project is on an aggressive schedule and that it is expected that the Draft EIR will be released to the public in the next three months (April 2016). The City does not feel this is ample time to thoroughly evaluate the project impacts or adequately address the public’s concerns.

In summary, the City strongly opposes the West Basin Desalination plant given the opportunities that are available for recycled water and the aggressive timeline which appears to undermine the public process. Furthermore, the City stands firmly behind our commitment to keep Santa Monica Bay clean and free from pollutants and adverse impacts. The potential health and safety impacts of a major industrial desalination plant directly adjacent to our residents is not acceptable particularly given that other alternatives have not yet been fully vetted.

The City sees a number of alternatives that would serve the community and the Santa Monica Bay in a more environmentally sensitive and sustainable manner and believes those alternatives must be evaluated before proceeding with the proposed project.

Sincerely,

Mark Burton
City of Manhattan Beach Mayor

cc: City Council
Mark Danaj, City Manager