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MWA One Step Closer to Prop 50 Funds
Agency's Application Receives Highest Overall Score in State

APPLE VALLEY—After an eight month wait, Mojave Water Agency (MWA) has learned that it is one of 16 finalists in the state that will compete for a potential \$25 million in funding from a water bond approved by voters in 2002. Out of 50 proposals received by the state's Department of Water Resources, MWA's proposal received the highest overall score in a highly competitive process.

"DWR determined that our application was the most consistent in meeting statewide priorities and we are cautiously optimistic that for the next round we will submit an application as equally compelling," said Kirby Brill, MWA General Manager. Among the statewide priorities MWA's application met were:

- Integrated projects providing multiple benefits
- Improve water supply reliability
- Long-term attainment and maintenance of water quality standards
- Groundwater projects in Southern California

DWR is managing disbursement of \$160 million of the water bond earmarked for Integrated Regional Planning, \$12 million set aside for planning grants and \$148 million for implementation grants. "While being selected to move forward in what has been a very competitive process represents a significant milestone, the next hurdle is to emerge as one of the six or seven that will actually be funded," said Brill. Applications are due to DWR in June for a maximum award of \$25 million per applicant, which represented another challenge for MWA—deciding which projects to submit.

The Agency's first round application sought \$50 million in funding for 10 different projects, but all final requests had to be pared back, according to Brill. The 10 projects in MWA's original application were derived from a suite of projects included in the RWMP and are designed to address water supply reliability, regional conservation programs, groundwater recharge management projects, and habitat protection.

To narrow the list from 10 to four projects MWA relied on input from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC, made up of stakeholders from throughout the region, was created in 2001 to advise MWA's board of directors on development of the 2004 Regional Water Management Plan (RWMP). The TAC held a special meeting on April 19 to discuss which projects to recommend to the MWA Board for consideration for the final Prop 50 application. But in an interesting twist, the TAC instead voted chose to allow MWA to make the final selections.

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“Although MWA made the final selection of projects to submit, both our RWMP and our Prop 50 application are examples of the spirit of cooperation between MWA and the TAC. The result of TAC’s involvement is a Plan that has been endorsed by dozens of groups or entities from throughout the region.

Four projects survived the cut MWA had to make, including:

- construction of recharge ponds at Oro Grande Wash
- eradication of non-native species along the Mojave River
- regional water conservation program
- Upper Mojave River Well Field and Water Supply Pipeline Project (otherwise known as the Regional Recharge and Recovery project, or R-cubed).

R-cubed, the most ambitious of the four, involves the construction of a well field and delivery pipelines on both sides of the Mojave River south of Bear Valley Road within close to a mile of the river bank. The project would deliver raw water to existing pipelines and water treatment facilities in Hesperia, Victorville, Apple Valley and Adelanto with main collector pipelines running north & south on either side of the river to connect the various wells.

Brill indicates that MWA and its stakeholders believe the Agency is now uniquely positioned to receive possible funding because its Plan mirrors components of the Governor’s Strategic Growth Plan, and also meshes with two other state planning documents that call for integrated regional planning:

- The 444-member Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), released its publication: ***No Time to Waste—A Blueprint for California Water***, which includes 12 recommendations, one of which calls for “*Support integrated regional water management plans*”, including the “establishment of funding priorities for development of financial assistance for regional plans and projects (visit www.acwa.com);”
- The State of California released its ***California Water Plan Update 2005***, which lists as one of its *Initiatives for Reliability* “promotion and implementation of Integrated Regional Water Management (visit www.waterplan.water.ca.gov)”

MWA has another plus in its favor that could result in state funding. Senate Bill 1672 authorizes local public agencies to form regional water management groups and adopt regional plans to address “*qualified programs or projects*.” The bill also requires the state’s DWR and other departments to give preference to “*qualified programs or projects*” when establishing criteria for funding under various programs.

Brill cautions everyone that although the Agency has much going in its favor, not to become overconfident and believe our selection is a slam dunk. “We’ll just have to wait and see,” he said. MWA is concurrently seeking Federal funds to supplement what the Agency plans to spend towards the projects.

Founded in July of 1960, Mojave Water Agency the only water wholesaler in the region and is responsible for managing the High Desert region's groundwater resources to ensure a sustainable supply to meet present and future water demands. The Agency serves approximately 4,900 square miles including the communities of Adelanto, Apple Valley, Barstow, Hesperia, Joshua Tree, Landers, Lenwood, Lucerne Valley, Newberry Springs, Victorville, Yermo and Yucca Valley.

To view the Agency's Regional Water Management Plan visit the website at: www.mojavewater.org or for more information, contact Kirby Brill at (760) 946-7008 or by email, kbrill@mojavewater.org

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