



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 23, 2020

Media Contacts:

Kristeen Farlow
External Affairs Manager
909-387-9229 / kristeenf@sbnmwd.com

Bob Tincher, Chief Water Resources Officer/
Deputy General Manager
909-387-9200 / bobt@sbnmwd.com

SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT TO PAY FOR 2.8 PERCENT OF THE DELTA CONVEYANCE PROJECT

The project in Northern California is needed to restore lost water supply and ensure long-term reliability of Inland Empire water supplies from the State Water Project.

The San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District took major action last week to restore lost water supplies and ensure the long-term reliability of the Inland Empire's imported water supplies. Valley District's board of directors voted unanimously to commit to pay 2.8 percent of the costs of building the Delta Conveyance Project, a tunnel that will reliably carry drinking water beneath the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The 2.8 percent commitment translates into about \$9 million in planning and permitting costs for Valley District over the next four years and about \$445 million over the life of the project.

"We are taking decisive action to restore some of our lost imported water supplies and to modernize the delivery system," stated Valley District President T. Milford Harrison, adding, "Investing in the Delta Conveyance Project will help us overcome threats to long-term reliability such as sea level rise and earthquakes."

Valley District has been diligently setting aside reserve funds in preparation for this \$445 million infrastructure project so that there will be no additional cost to ratepayers once completed

Valley District is legally entitled to import up to 102,000 acre-feet of State Water Project water each year. Imported water from Northern California accounts for about one-fourth of Valley District's water supplies, which it stores in local groundwater basins or delivers to its 14 retail water agency customers.

But court-ordered water set asides and regulations to protect endangered species and other natural resources in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta over the past 13 years have reduced the amount of State Water Project delivered to Southern California water agencies by up to 1 million acre-feet per year. These court orders and regulations have reduced Valley District's ability to import water by about 18 percent, or roughly 18,000 acre-feet. That's enough water to satisfy the annual water needs of about 72,000 people.

About San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District

Valley District is a State Water contractor that provides supplemental water to 14 retail water agencies from Fontana to Yucaipa, meeting the water needs of 700,000 business and residential customers. In addition to providing supplemental water from Northern California, Valley District is responsible for long-range water planning throughout its 325 square mile service area, including importing supplemental water, groundwater management, and wastewater and storm water disposal. For more information about Valley District and water use efficiency, visit www.sbnmwd.com.

“The Delta Conveyance Project essentially eliminates our impacts on endangered fish, which eliminates the losses associated with delivering our water through the Delta,” said Bob Tincher, Valley District’s chief water resources officer and deputy general manager.

The Delta Conveyance Project will also ensure the long-term reliability of Valley District’s imported State Water Project supplies, which currently flow through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

The Delta is the most vulnerable area of the entire State Water Project because it is comprised of century-old levees that could collapse in the event of an earthquake and allow salt water to contaminate State Water Project water.

Originally an estuary where Northern California’s waters flowed into the San Francisco Bay, farmers took over the Delta in the 1870s and built 1,100 miles of levees to hold back the water in many areas so that they could convert much of the Delta area into farmland. The Delta is also the transit point where fresh water from Northern California’s rivers flows into aqueducts that transport the water to Central and Southern California.

In recent years, various plans have been proposed to protect State Water Project water from salt water contamination that could result from crumbling levees as well as rising sea levels resulting from climate change. State officials see the Delta Conveyance Project as the best option to protect State Water Project water from salt water contamination as it is transported through the Delta.

“Because we depend on imported State Water Project water for a fourth of our water supply we can’t afford not to protect the significant investments we’ve made in developing this supplemental water supply from Northern California,” added Tincher.

The Delta Conveyance Project is expected to cost about \$16 billion with construction expected to begin in 2024 and extend to about 2034.

For more information, please call 909-387-9200 or email kristeenf@sbgmwd.com.

###

About San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District

Valley District is a State Water contractor that provides supplemental water to 14 retail water agencies from Fontana to Yucaipa, meeting the water needs of 700,000 business and residential customers. In addition to providing supplemental water from Northern California, Valley District is responsible for long-range water planning throughout its 325 square mile service area, including importing supplemental water, groundwater management, and wastewater and storm water disposal. For more information about Valley District and water use efficiency, visit www.sbgmwd.com.