



---

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Phillip Peters, Chair  
Scott Hayman, Vice-Chair  
Stan Rajtora  
Matt Kingsley  
Paul Cook  
Thomas Bickauskas  
CDR Benjamin Turner, DoD Liaison

Carol Thomas-Keefer  
*General Manager*  
Keith Lemieux  
*Legal Counsel*

**July 15, 2022**

**Press Release – For Immediate Release**

**Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority**

**Point of Contact for Press Inquiries:**

Carol Thomas-Keefer  
General Manager, Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority  
[cthomaskeefer@rgs.ca.gov](mailto:cthomaskeefer@rgs.ca.gov)  
650-587-7300 x17

**Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority Reaches Agreement on  
Terms to Secure Imported Water Supplies;  
Receives Funding for Wastewater and Interconnection Projects**

**Ridgecrest, California** – The Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority (IWVGA) is pleased to announce a series of funding sources and the initial agreement to terms on a deal to secure imported water supplies. The IWVGA is a joint powers authority that is specifically tasked with bringing the critically-overdrafted Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Basin back into sustainability in accordance with California’s Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). SGMA required each critically overdrafted groundwater basin to approve a groundwater sustainability plan (GSP) by January 2020 and implement the action plan by 2040. The actions detailed below support the implementation of the GSP and will help the Authority to ultimately achieve its goal of long-term water sustainability.

“The Indian Wells Basin needs a safe and reliable long-term water supply for its residents and businesses to thrive,” said Phillip Peters, Chair of the IWVGA. “The actions that the Authority has taken to address not only long-term imported water needs but also the infrastructure necessary to support recycled and imported water in the basin will assist us immensely in achieving the goals of the GSP. We are appreciative of the partnerships that our state and federal officials, particularly House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, State Senator Shannon Grove and Assembly Member Vince Fong have provided us towards achieving these projects.”

Details of the IWVGA’s achievements are below:

**Water Supplies Terms**

The Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority has agreed in principle to purchase 753 acre-feet of permanent State Water Project Table A entitlement. The water will be part of a planned portfolio of water resources that the IWVGA will have at its disposal to deliver approximately 3,000 acre-feet of water annually to the Basin. The transaction is still subject to final approvals from the current State Water Contractor’s Board of Directors,

an environmental review and transfer approval from the State Department of Water Resources. IWVGA staff is working diligently to complete this transfer by year end (anticipated timeline subject to change and approvals from various agencies).

### **Infrastructure Funding Sources**

The Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority was successful in securing three pieces of legislative language that will give the Authority both construction and planning dollars for its wastewater treatment plant and imported water supplies projects:

- 1) **State Budget Request:** The City of Ridgecrest will receive a \$2.5 million grant from the State Water Resources Control Board to assist the City in constructing its new wastewater treatment plant. The new treatment plant will replace the aging existing plant and provide approximately 2,000 acre-feet of effluent annually for a variety of uses in the basin.
- 2) **Federal Water Resources Development Act Planning Grant (US Army Corps of Engineers):** The House Water Resources Development Act contains directive language to the Army Corps of Engineers to work with the Groundwater Authority on determining the planning and feasibility of the imported water project to bring water supplies to the Basin. The basin currently has no access to imported water supplies, and the study will provide details on potential routes, costs and planning requirements. The Water Resources Development Act has not yet passed, but we anticipate its passage by September 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Language in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA):** The Department of Defense has a program called the Defense Community Infrastructure Program, a competitive funding process that awards defense communities funding for infrastructure to support a military installation. The City of Ridgecrest's proposed wastewater treatment plant benefits both the citizens and businesses of Ridgecrest as well as the China Lake Naval Weapons Air Station. The City of Ridgecrest will own and operate the plant, but it will be on a leased easement from the Navy. As currently written, the DCIP would not allow the City of Ridgecrest to make an application as a result of the leased land. The Authority has secured language in the NDAA that allows projects with easement or lease agreements with the Department of Defense to be eligible to make an application to the DCIP. We anticipate that this bill will be passed before the Congress adjourns at the end of the year.