

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Agricultural Suppliers Efficient Water Management Practices Act

The Agricultural Water Suppliers Efficient Water Management Practices Act of 1990 required the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to establish an advisory committee consisting of state, federal, and local agencies; agricultural communities; the California university system; environmental and public interest groups; and other interested parties to develop a list of efficient water management practices (EWMPs) for agricultural water suppliers. In addition, Governor Pete Wilson directed the AB 3616 Advisory Committee to develop a Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Efficient Water Management Practices by Agricultural Water Suppliers in California (MOU) between the agricultural and environmental communities and other interested parties to further address efficient use of agricultural water in California. The MOU may be found in **Appendix A**.

The MOU established the Agricultural Water Management Council (Council) and provides guidance for a reporting process and for a mechanism by which signatories evaluate and endorse plans. Agricultural water suppliers will advance efficient water management through voluntarily planning, implementing, and evaluating certain irrigation practices. Signatories provide information about implementation of EWMPs by submitting an Agricultural Water Management Plan (Plan) to the Council for evaluation and endorsement. The purposes of the MOU are:

- To create a constructive working relationship between agricultural water suppliers, environmental interest groups, and other interested parties;
- To establish a list of EWMPs;
- To establish criteria to evaluate the appropriateness of EWMPs and;
- To implement appropriate EWMPs;
- To avoid unnecessary or unreasonable planning, paperwork, or expense for water suppliers; and
- To voluntarily achieve more efficient water management than currently exists or may be required by existing law.

1.2 Regional Signatories

An entity may join the Council as one of three groups. Group 1 consists of Water Suppliers, defined as “any entity, public or private, which delivers, supplies, or manages water primarily for agricultural purposes, either at the wholesale or retail levels.” Group 2 is defined as “a non-profit organization whose primary mission is the protection of the environment and whose primary function is not the representation of trade, industrial, or utility entities.” There are no Group 2 signatories in the San Diego region. Groups 1 and 2 are voting members.

Group 3 consists of Other Interested Parties, defined as “Any public agency that has a clear interest in promoting efficient agricultural water management” and are non-voting members. Valley Center Municipal Water District (Valley Center MWD), the only Group 1 signatory in the region, is a member agency of the San Diego County Water Authority (Authority), a Group 3 signatory. Mission Resource Conservation District

(Mission RCD), another Group 3 signatory in the region, operates the Agricultural Water Management Program under contract to the Authority. A listing of regional signatories is shown below and copies of their respective resolutions may be found in **Appendix B, Exhibits 1, 2 and 3.**

Group 1 – Valley Center Municipal Water District
Group 3 – Mission Resource Conservation District
San Diego County Water Authority

1.3 Agency Coordination and Public Participation

Agricultural water conservation is a long-standing and non-controversial practice in the San Diego region; therefore, no public meetings were held, nor was there a public notification of Plan preparation. However, numerous agencies and organizations were consulted during Plan preparation; among these were Valley Center MWD and Mission RCD, signatories and principal contributors. Other agencies providing input to the Plan were:

- Natural Resources Conservation Service;
- University of California Cooperative Extension;
- County of San Diego, Department of Agriculture, Weights & Measures; and
- San Diego County Farm Bureau.

A number of other agencies with a vested interest in water, agriculture and the environment were provided draft copies for review and comment. Those agencies were:

- California Avocado Commission;
- Regional Water Quality Control Board;
- United States Bureau of Reclamation;
- Interested environmental groups;
- Metropolitan Water District of Southern California; and
- Member Agencies of the San Diego County Water Authority with significant numbers of agricultural customers.

Draft copies of the Plan were posted on the Authority's web site with links to the web sites of other interested agencies. Also, a draft copy was placed in the Authority's library for members of the public without computer access. Interested agencies also placed notices in their newsletters and other publications about the availability of the draft Plan. Valley Center MWD's Board of Directors conducted a hearing on the draft Plan and placed a copy in their office and in the town library.

1.4 Plan Format

At the recommendation of the Department of Water Resources, the Authority prepared a regional Plan to provide a more meaningful report of agricultural water use in the Authority's service area. On all appropriate topics, the format of the report provides information on the regional level of the Authority's entire service area and district level information relating to Valley Center MWD.

Data was drawn primarily from research and water production numbers used to develop an agricultural water forecasting tool in FY 99. Where more recent information

is available and more appropriate, the most recent information is given. The year from which the data is drawn is noted. A review of San Diego County Crop reports indicates that acreage has changed only about 3 percent from 1998 to 2000. Changes in water use are due principally to weather with 1998 being a wet, El Nino year; 1999 and 2000 relatively dry and 2001 a slightly below normal rain year. Changes in water use may therefore, be considered as due to weather and not a reflection of any trend in cropping patterns.

