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March 1, 2011

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WDCWA SECURES PERMIT TO DIVERT SACRAMENTO RIVER WATER

Environmental review and preliminary facility design will proceed for surface water supply project

DAVIS, CA – Another hurdle was cleared today in the effort to bring Sacramento River water to the Cities of Woodland and Davis, and UC Davis, to largely replace degrading groundwater supplies and help the cities meet increasingly strict water quality and wastewater discharge regulations. During a public meeting today, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) adopted a decision approving applications for a water right permit for the Woodland-Davis Clean Water Agency (WDCWA) for the diversion of up to 45,000 acre-feet of surface water per year. The permit will be subject to restrictions on diversions during dry-year conditions and compliance with Department of Fish & Game requirements, among other things.

In its decision, the State Board determined that issuing the permit to WDCWA is in the public interest, because the water supply project will: 1) provide a reliable water supply to meet existing and future needs; 2) improve water quality for drinking water purposes, and 3) improve the quality of treated wastewater effluent discharged by the WDCWA members.

“We are extremely pleased with the Board’s decision and recognition that our project will not only vastly improve the quality of our drinking water but that it will also contribute to improving water quality in the Delta watershed,” said Woodland City Council Member Bill Marble, Chair of the WDCWA Board. “When 60-70 percent of the water we use is returned to local waterways following wastewater treatment, the quality of that wastewater is very important,” he said.

According to Marble, existing groundwater supplies – on which the cities now rely for all water – have high concentrations of boron, selenium, and salts. Using higher-quality surface water to largely replace groundwater supplies is expected to reduce salt load in the treated wastewater by about 50 percent, addressing increasingly more stringent Regional Water Quality Control Board mandates for such reductions.

“The permit approval allows us to move forward with preparing preliminary designs of the intake structure and water treatment plant,” said Eric Mische, WDCWA General Manager. “We anticipate starting construction in 2013, and being fully operational by 2016.”

In December 2010, the WDCWA Board approved a set of agreements that will pave the way for the construction of a new Sacramento River intake facility on Conaway Ranch, which will be shared with Reclamation District 2035, and provide WDCWA with permanent rights to 10,000 acre feet per year of Sacramento River water for use during times when diversions would be prohibited under the Agency’s own permit.

The WDCWA Board typically meets quarterly. Meeting notices and agendas are posted at Woodland and Davis City Halls, and to the project website at www.wdcwa.com. For more information, please contact WDCWA General Manager Eric Mische at (530) 757-5577, or Public Outreach Manager Kim Floyd at (916) 409-0426.

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This water supply project – a partnership between Woodland, Davis, and UC Davis – is on track to provide high-quality surface water from the Sacramento River to Woodland and Davis residents by 2016. The primary objectives of the project include: providing high-quality, reliable, and sustainable drinking water supplies, and bringing into environmental and regulatory compliance the quality of treated wastewater discharged by the Project Partners through 2040. These objectives were developed in response to challenges posed by aging water systems, more stringent drinking water regulations, and stricter wastewater discharge permitting standards, among other things.