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Approval of Water Bill an Important First Step *Long-term Delta Fix Still Needed*

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's signing this week of legislation to allocate \$842 million in previously approved state bond money will provide important short-term improvements to the troubled Delta.

Zone 7 Water Agency supported the bill, SB 1XX and, like the governor, sees it only as a first step toward a long-term solution addressing both the ecological health of the Delta the long-term reliability of water supplies currently conveyed through the Delta.

“The funding provided by this bill supports interim actions that all Delta stakeholders agree are essential and should be implemented immediately to improve the Delta’s ecological conditions, particularly given the current drought,” said Zone 7 Assistant General Manager Kurt Arends. “In essence, it is a band aid as we work toward a more comprehensive solution.”

The bill includes more than \$200 million to help stabilize the Delta, help prevent catastrophic failure of the Delta’s levees and help accommodate pumping operations that have been curtailed by the courts in efforts to protect endangered Delta smelt. It also recognizes the importance of conservation by allocating \$100 million to projects necessary for the state to meet a goal to reduce per-capita water use by 20 percent by the year 2020.

Meanwhile, Zone 7, the water wholesaler for Pleasanton, Livermore, Dublin and Dougherty Valley, continues to be heavily involved in helping to craft the Bay Delta Conservation Plan. This broad-based statewide effort involves water contractors, environmental groups and other Delta stakeholders working to provide a comprehensive, long-term solution addressing both environmental restoration of the Delta and a safe, reliable water supply for customers. Zone 7's contribution toward the BDCP effort, along with financial impacts of water conservation related both to drought and to court-ordered Delta pumping restrictions, are key components of a proposed 16 percent increase in wholesale water rates for 2009.

Zone 7 treats and delivers Delta-conveyed State Water Project water from the South Bay Aqueduct. In a typical year, about 80 percent of Zone 7 water originates in the Sierras and is conveyed through the Delta -- a supply that was significantly reduced this year due both to drought and to the court-ordered pumping restrictions.

Local and offsite groundwater storage, along with water stored in Lake Del Valle, provide the balance of the Valley's water. In addition to residential and business users, Zone 7 also provides untreated water to the Livermore Valley's flourishing vineyards.

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Zone 7 Water Agency is one of the 10 active zones of the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. The District was established by the State Legislature in October 1949 to solve problems of flooding, drainage, channel erosion and water supply and conservation in Alameda County. In 1957, by popular vote, Zone 7 became a special district governed by a seven-member board of directors. Along with flood protection, Zone 7 supplies water to all of eastern Alameda County and a population of more than 190,000. Treated water is sold wholesale to local retailers, including the cities of Livermore and Pleasanton, the Dublin San Ramon Services District, and the California Water Service Company. Zone 7 also distributes untreated water to local agriculture operations and golf courses.