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Media Contact:

Gina Ayala

(714) 378-3323

gayala@ocwd.com

FOUR PFAS TREATMENT FACILITIES IN ORANGE BEGIN OPERATION, TREATING UP TO 7,500 GALLONS OF WATER PER MINUTE

ORANGE, Calif. (October 10, 2022) – The Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District) and the city of Orange began operating four treatment plants constructed in Orange to remove per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) from local well water.

PFAS are a group of thousands of manmade, heat-resistant chemicals that are prevalent in the environment and are commonly used in consumer products to repel water, grease and oil. Due to their prolonged use, PFAS are being detected in water sources throughout the United States, including the Orange County Groundwater Basin, which supplies 77% of the water supply to 2.5 million people in north and central Orange County. Despite playing no role in releasing PFAS into the environment, water providers must find ways to remove it from their local water supplies.

Construction of the Orange facilities took about a year to complete and are among 36 PFAS treatment facilities being designed and constructed in Orange County over the next two years. OCWD is funding 100% of design and construction costs and 50% of operation and maintenance costs for all facilities.

“OCWD’s committed staff works tirelessly to address PFAS in the Orange County Groundwater Basin,” said OCWD Director Denis Bilodeau. “Thanks to the strong partnerships with our retail providers, Orange County’s water supply remains among the highest quality in the nation. I commend our staff for working closely with the city of Orange to quickly and successfully complete these facilities.”

Orange, one of 19 water providers that pump water from the groundwater basin, had eight of its groundwater wells impacted by PFAS, prompting it to temporarily shut down those wells and transition to purchasing imported water from the Colorado River and Northern California. These wells are among dozens of wells throughout Orange County that were removed from service in 2020 after the state of California lowered the Response Level advisories of PFOA and PFOS; two legacy PFAS compounds no longer produced in the United States.

Using an Ion Exchange (IX) treatment system made of highly porous resin that acts like powerful magnets that adsorb and hold onto contaminants, the facilities can treat up to

7,500 gallons of water per minute combined. During treatment, contaminants such as PFAS are removed from the water before it goes into the distribution system.

OCWD and 10 Orange County public water agencies filed a lawsuit against the manufacturers of PFAS, seeking to protect ratepayers and ensure that the associated costs, including but not limited to treatment and replacement water, are borne by the companies that developed and manufactured PFAS.

To learn more about OCWD's comprehensive and robust PFAS response, please visit www.ocwd.com/what-we-do/water-quality/pfas.

About Orange County Water District

The Orange County Water District is committed to enhancing Orange County's groundwater quality and reliability in an environmentally friendly and economical manner. The following cities rely on the groundwater basin, managed by OCWD, to provide 77% of their water demands: Anaheim, Buena Park, Costa Mesa, Cypress, Fountain Valley, Fullerton, Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, Irvine, La Palma, Los Alamitos, Newport Beach, Orange, Placentia, Santa Ana, Seal Beach, Stanton, Tustin, Villa Park, Westminster, and Yorba Linda. For more information about OCWD, please visit www.ocwd.com, like @OCWaterDistrict on Facebook, follow @OCWDWaterNews on Twitter, follow @OCWD on Instagram, and follow Orange County Water District on LinkedIn.

About the City of Orange

With 140,000 residents, the City of Orange is the 7th largest city in Orange County by population. Incorporated in 1888, Orange boasts one of the largest historic districts in California, with Old Towne Orange recognized in 2018 by the American Planning Association as one of the "Great Places in America." A diverse community, residents enjoy a wide range of living options, including urban, upscale apartments, small historic neighborhoods, and rural equestrian estates. Orange is also a regional medical hub, and is home to UCI Health, the only teaching hospital in Orange County, CHOC Children's Hospital, and Providence St. Joseph Hospital. Originally a farming community, Orange now boasts large manufacturing, commercial, and retail sectors. The City's Water division provides clean, safe water to approximately 36,000 commercial and residential accounts. For more information on the City of Orange, visit www.cityoforange.org, follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/cityoforange, Twitter at @CityOfOrangeCA, or @city_of_orange_ca on Instagram.

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