



ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE WORLD'S LARGEST WATER REUSE PROJECT BRINGS MORE THAN AWARDS TO THE REGION—IT BRINGS WATER RELIABILITY

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif. (March 17, 2016) — Recently receiving five awards, the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS) continues to gain recognition as the leading global model for local water supply reliability. This award-winning project has received dozens of accolades and has been featured in prominent media outlets like National Geographic and 60 Minutes. Yet, its biggest success is bringing more than 182 billion gallons of high-quality water to Orange County, a region plagued by severe drought. The successful operation of this project, its completed expansion, a planned future expansion and the ongoing recognition it receives truly demonstrate the value of this significant investment.

A joint project of the Orange County Water District (OCWD) and the Orange County Sanitation District (OCSD), last summer, the GWRS was expanded to produce an additional 30 million gallons of water a day (MGD). This made the world's largest water reuse project of its kind even bigger, providing enough water for 850,000 people annually. Just as the original 70-MGD GWRS project started up and was recognized with a flurry of awards, the same has held true for its 30-MGD expansion. Since February, it has received the following notable awards: WaterReuse California's Large Recycled Water Agency of the Year, American Membrane Technology Association (AMTA) Membrane Plant of the Year, American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Water/Wastewater Treatment Project of the Year, UV Engineering Project of the Year by the International Ultraviolet Association (IUVA), and Orange County Engineering Council (OCEC) Engineering Project Achievement Award. For a complete list of awards honoring the project since it first began operating in 2008, please visit <http://www.ocwd.com/news-events/awards/>.

"We are truly honored and grateful that the GWRS received these distinguished awards," said OCWD President Cathy Green. "The GWRS is a tremendous asset to the region, which has helped increase local water supplies and sustain years of drought conditions. It is our responsibility to invest in and implement water reliability projects that will meet the water needs of current and future generations," she added.

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“Our districts had the foresight to start discussing the need for this project in the 1990s,” said OCSD Chair John Nielsen. “Through this collaboration, the GWRS emerged as one of the most celebrated civil engineering and water reuse projects in the world,” he added.

In 2008, and again in 2015, OCWD and OCSD made history with the opening and expansion of the GWRS. The project takes treated wastewater and purifies it through a three-step process consisting of microfiltration, reverse osmosis and ultraviolet light with hydrogen peroxide. The end result is 100 million gallons a day of ultra-pure water that meets or exceeds state and federal drinking water standards. A portion of this water is injected into a seawater barrier with the remainder being pumped to OCWD's recharge basins where it percolates into the Orange County Groundwater Basin and becomes a primary source of drinking water.

OCWD manages the Orange County Groundwater Basin, which provides 76 percent of the water supply for 2.4 million people in north and central Orange County. Over the years, OCWD has managed it in a sustainable manner and has more than doubled its annual output. OCWD protects the basin's water quality, manages pumping and replenishes what is taken out. Primary sources of water used to fill the basin include GWRS water, imported water, Santa Ana River water and stormwater. About one-third of the water used to replenish the basin comes from the GWRS.

Plans for a final expansion of the GWRS are underway. Ultimate capacity for the project is projected at 130 MGD after infrastructure is built to increase wastewater flows from OCSD to the GWRS.

Prior to the project's startup, groundwater pumping was restricted to 62 percent of total water demands. Today, while other California communities are grappling with significant shortages due to the four-year drought, the GWRS has helped increase groundwater pumping in the Orange County Groundwater Basin to 76 percent. The awards this project has received help highlight the project as a viable solution to combat drought in areas throughout the world. The GWRS is Orange County's shining example of innovation, sound planning and tremendous leadership. To learn more about this water reliability project, please visit <http://www.ocwd.com/gwrs/>.

About OCWD

The District is committed to enhancing Orange County's groundwater quality and reliability in an environmentally friendly and economical manner. The following cities utilize the groundwater basin managed by OCWD and receive approximately 76 percent of their water supply from it: 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 the Orange County Water District and its Board of Directors, call (714) 378-3200 or visit www.ocwd.com.

About OCSD

OCSD is a public agency that provides wastewater collection, treatment, and recycling for approximately 2.5 million people in central and northwest Orange County. OCSD is a special district that is governed by a 25 member Board of Directors comprised of 20 cities, four special districts, and one representative from the Orange County Board of Supervisors. OCSD has two operating facilities that treat wastewater from residential, commercial and industrial sources.

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