



## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT:** Gina Ayala, [gayala@ocwd.com](mailto:gayala@ocwd.com), (714) 378-3323

## DWR APPROVAL OF OC GROUNDWATER BASIN SUSTAINABILITY PLAN DEMONSTRATES SUPERIOR GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT BY OCWD

**FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif.** (July 19, 2019) — The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) approved an alternative to a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the Orange County Groundwater Basin (Basin). The Basin, managed and protected by the Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District), provides 77% of the drinking water supply to 2.5 million people in north and central Orange County. The alternative plan was submitted to DWR to meet requirements of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) of 2014. Alternative plans can be submitted in lieu of GSPs and must demonstrate how water managers have already achieved or will achieve sustainable groundwater management. DWR received 15 alternative plans and nine were approved. The plan's approval is a testament to OCWD's tremendous stewardship of the Basin since 1933.

SGMA was enacted to reform the way groundwater is managed in California and to halt over pumping. As a longstanding expert in groundwater management, OCWD was called upon for input during the legislative process. SGMA empowers local agencies to form Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to manage basins sustainably and requires those GSAs to adopt GSPs for crucial groundwater basins in California.

"I would like to thank DWR for its work and leadership related to SGMA," said OCWD Board President Vicente Sarmiento. "I am proud to say that OCWD has sustainably managed the basin for decades and has been able to sustain pumping at more than two times its natural yield. This is due to the District's long-term planning and investments to expand its groundwater management operations. Board members and staff work hard and are committed to executing the District's mission to provide reliable, high-quality water to the region. It's our hope that other agencies and basins can benefit from our experience as they move toward sustainable groundwater management for California."

The District works proactively to manage and protect groundwater and its operations are extensive. Its groundwater management operations include more than two dozen recharge ponds in Anaheim and Orange that cover over 1,000 acres, a seawater intrusion barrier to prevent saltwater from contaminating the Basin, the use of Prado Dam to temporarily retain storm flows for recharge, and the operation of the world's largest water recycling plant, the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS). The GWRS purifies 100 million gallons of water a day (MGD), which will expand to 130 MGD in 2023. GWRS water accounts for one-third of the water that is put into the Basin.

## DWR APPROVAL OF OC GROUNDWATER BASIN SUSTAINABILITY PLAN DEMONSTRATES SUPERIOR GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT BY OCWD

ADD 1-1-1

The alternative report that was approved by DWR, entitled Basin 8-1 Alternative, can be found at <https://www.ocwd.com/media/4918/basin-8-1-alternative-final-report-1.pdf>, and was prepared in collaboration with the city of La Habra and Irvine Ranch Water District. OCWD previously published a Groundwater Management Plan in 1989 but elected to create a new report in a format that mirrors a GSP, which is required under SGMA. This was done to make it easier for DWR to evaluate the alternative plan and to provide an example plan for a basin that is already sustainably managed.

To read the news release regarding DWR's approval of the nine alternatives to GSPs, please visit <https://water.ca.gov/News/News-Releases/2019/July-19/DWR-Approves-Nine-Alternatives-to-Groundwater-Sustainability-Plans>. For more information regarding SGMA, please view <https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/SGMA-Groundwater-Management>.

### **About OCWD**

The Orange County Water District, formed in 1933, manages and protects the Orange County Groundwater Basin and operates the world's largest advanced potable reuse project of its kind. The District provides quality and reliable groundwater to the following 19 cities and water agencies in north and central Orange County and their 2.5 million customers: 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](http://www.ocwd.com), like @OCWaterDistrict on Facebook, follow @OCWDWaterNews on Twitter, follow @OCWD on Instagram, and follow Orange County Water District on LinkedIn.

###