



**Irvine Ranch  
Water District**

January 27, 2025

Mr. Shawn Nevill  
Principal Planner  
Orange County Water District  
18700 Ward Street  
Fountain Valley, CA 92708

Transmitted Via Email to: snevill@ocwd.com

Re: Comments on Draft Program Environmental Impact Report for South Basin Groundwater Protection Project

Mr. Nevill:

Orange County Water District (OCWD) is proposing to approve the Interim Remedial Action Plan (IRAP) and secure other relevant permits and approvals for the South Basin Groundwater Protection Project. The Proposed Project consists of containment and treatment of contaminated groundwater with relatively high concentrations and leading-edge areas using groundwater extraction and treatment with discharge to an Orange County Sanitation District wastewater treatment plant and the OCWD Groundwater Replenishment System Advanced Wastewater Purification Facility where it will be further treated before being put to beneficial use. On December 13, 2024, OCWD published a Notice of Availability requesting public comments on the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (Draft PEIR) for the Proposed Project. IRWD has reviewed the Draft PEIR and offers the following general comments.

General Comments:

1. In 2004, IRWD requested that OCWD develop a plan to investigate and remediate groundwater contamination in the area of IRWD's groundwater well known as IRWD-3. This request was submitted to OCWD in response to the detection of volatile organic compounds and perchlorate in IRWD-3. The IRAP and Draft PEIR are the culmination of OCWD's subsequent efforts and IRWD greatly appreciates OCWD's professionalism, hard work, and dedication.
2. IRWD operates several production wells within the Principal Aquifer located in the project area covered by the Draft PEIR, which is the south-central portion of the Orange County Groundwater Basin (OC Basin). IRWD supports OCWD taking actions to safeguard the OC Basin in keeping with its mission and statutory authority.

3. IRWD agrees that the Proposed Project will reduce risk and safeguard the OC Basin more effectively and at a lower cost than the other alternatives evaluated in the studies leading up to and inclusive of the Draft PEIR.
4. IRWD agrees with the findings of the EIR that the Proposed Project is environmentally superior to any of the alternatives, would meet all of the objectives, and would not result in significant and unavoidable impacts.

IRWD appreciates the opportunity to review the Draft PEIR. If you have any questions regarding the comments provided above, please contact me at [weghorst@irwd.com](mailto:weghorst@irwd.com) or at (949)-453-5632.

Sincerely,



Paul Weghorst  
Executive Director of Water Policy



## VICENTE SARMIENTO

ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
SUPERVISOR, SECOND DISTRICT

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April 17, 2025

Orange County Water District  
18700 Ward Street  
Fountain Valley, CA 92708

**Subject: Letter of Support for the South Basin Groundwater Protection Project**

Dear Orange County Water District,

On behalf of the Office of Supervisor Vicente Sarmiento – Orange County Board of Supervisors, Second District, I am pleased to express our strong support for the **South Basin Groundwater Protection Project (SBGPP)**, including the approval of the **SBGPP Interim Remedial Action Plan (IRAP)** and certification of the **Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR)**. This project represents a crucial step in addressing the South Basin groundwater contamination and ensuring the protection of Orange County's water resources.

My office is committed to promoting water quality, public health, environmental protection, and we recognize the importance of safeguarding our region's groundwater supply. The South Basin spans portions of Irvine, Santa Ana, Tustin, and has been impacted by legacy industrial contaminants.

OCWD's leadership in collaboration with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control and the Regional Water Quality Control Board has resulted in a well-researched interim remedy. The project will use advanced treatment technologies to extract and clean contaminated groundwater, ultimately reintroducing it as a safe, high-quality water source through the OC Sanitation District's wastewater treatment plant and OCWD's Groundwater Replenishment System.

By supporting this project, we are protecting our communities and ensuring that future generations continue to have access to clean and sustainable groundwater. We commend OCWD's proactive efforts and urge all stakeholders to support the approval and implementation of the SBGPP.

Thank you for your commitment to water quality and environmental stewardship. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can provide further assistance in advocating for this critical initiative.

Sincerely,

Vicente Sarmiento  
Supervisor, Second District  
Orange County Board of Supervisors

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MAYOR PRO TEM  
Benjamin Vazquez  
COUNCILMEMBERS  
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May 22, 2025  
Orange County Water District  
18700 Ward Street  
Fountain Valley, CA 92708

**Subject: Letter of Support for the South Basin Groundwater Protection Project**

Dear Orange County Water District,

The City of Santa Ana Neighborhood Initiatives and Environmental Services section strongly supports the South Basin Groundwater Protection Project (SBGPP), including the approval of the SBGPP Interim Remedial Action Plan (IRAP) and certification of the Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR). We see this project as a vital step in addressing groundwater contamination in the South Basin, ensuring the long-term protection of Orange County's precious water resources.

As a City of Santa Ana department section, we are dedicated to empowering communities by promoting civic engagement, advancing environmental justice, and fostering sustainable solutions. Safeguarding our region's groundwater supply is incredibly important to us. The South Basin, which touches portions of Irvine, Santa Ana, and Tustin, has been affected by historic industrial contaminants, impacting water quality and leading the closure of a water supply well from service (not from the City of Santa Ana). Since 2016, we have had the privilege of working with the OC Water District to keep our community, especially those in our city's oldest neighborhoods like Delhi and nearby areas, informed and engaged. We've focused on helping them understand the extent of the groundwater contamination and address their questions about offsite cleanup options for the safety of their families, now and in the future.

In addition, the South Basin Groundwater Protection Project (SBGPP) supports the implementation of the City of Santa Ana's General Plan, which includes Environmental Justice (EJ) elements such as, EJ Policy 3.27, calling for the cleanup and remediation of contaminated sites to reduce environmental health risks in disadvantaged communities.

The SBGPP helps mitigate legacy concerns in neighborhoods like Delhi and surrounding neighborhoods, identified as environmentally impacted clusters. These clusters are

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OCWD Letter of Support  
May 22, 2025  
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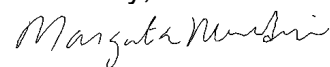
supported by the City of Santa Ana's Neighborhood Initiatives and Environmental Services team, which leads the Environmental Justice (EJ) Action Committee- a first-of-its-kind committee in Orange County focused on ensuring equitable environmental outcomes. Supporting this project not only advances regional water quality improvements, but also ensures that environmental cleanup efforts in these neighborhoods are documented and tracked as part of the EJ Action Committee's work in prioritizing the General Plan's EJ implementation actions. This alignment allows the City to demonstrate measurable progress toward environmental justice in the General Plan's Annual Progress Report.

OCWD's leadership in collaboration with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control and the Regional Water Quality Control Board has resulted in a well-researched and forward-thinking interim remedy. The proposed project will use groundwater extraction and advanced treatment technologies to extract and clean contaminated groundwater, ultimately reintroducing it as a safe, high-quality water source through the Orange County Sanitation District's wastewater treatment plant and OCWD's Groundwater Replenishment System.

By supporting this project, we are investing in the health of our water supply, protecting our communities, and ensuring that future generations continue to have access to clean and sustainable groundwater. We commend OCWD's proactive efforts and urge all stakeholders to support the approval and implementation of the SBGPP.

Thank you for your commitment to water quality and environmental stewardship. Please know we are here to offer any further assistance in advocating for this critical initiative.

Sincerely,



Margarita Macedonio  
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Neighborhood Initiatives and Environmental Services section  
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