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**ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT**  
ORANGE COUNTY'S GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY

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October 24, 2016

Felicia Marcus, Chair  
State Water Resources Control Board  
c/o Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board  
P.O. Box 100  
Sacramento, CA 95812-1011  
Sent via email: [commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov)

**Subject: Comment Letter – Report to the Legislature on Direct Potable Reuse (DPR)**

Dear Chair Marcus:

On behalf of the Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District), we thank you for the opportunity to comment on the State Water Resources Control Board (Board) draft report to the California Legislature, "Investigation on the Feasibility of Developing Uniform Water Recycling Criteria for Direct Potable Reuse" (report). We are very pleased with the Board's significant step forward and encourage the timely development of DPR regulations.

At OCWD, we have a vast groundwater basin, but not all areas of the state have the benefit of such resources. That is why DPR regulations will substantially increase the number of advanced purification potable reuse facilities that can be developed in California to provide a sustainable and drought-proof water supply. The comment letter submitted by WateReuse California includes these points and many other recommendations that OCWD fully supports.

We support the general comments that were made by WateReuse California and the Association of California Water Agencies and the specific research-related recommendations made by Trussell Technologies Inc. The District would also like to offer a few recommended modifications to the report before submittal to the Legislature.

**Conduct Research Studies Recommended by the Expert Panel**

In accordance with SB 918, an expert panel was established for the purpose of advising the State Water Board on the feasibility of developing uniform water recycling criteria for DPR. The expert panel found that developing such criteria is feasible and recommended six areas of research to further aid the development of DPR criteria. OCWD would like to offer our expertise and facilities to participate in suitable research projects.

**Establish clear target-dates for Draft and Adoption of Final Regulations**

The final report should demonstrate that the State Board's Division of Drinking Water (DDW) has target dates for the development of DPR criteria and that the regulations will be developed in a reasonable timeframe. We encourage you to include dates for the completion of the implementation plan in the report and provide a timeframe for DDW staff to implement the report recommendations.

**Develop Criteria Sequentially with Least Direct Approaches Addressed First**

There are different types of DPR projects that can be developed with varying levels of complexity. We encourage DDW to develop criteria sequentially with the least direct DPR approaches to be addressed first to allow these types of projects to move forward to construction while criteria for more direct forms are still being developed.

**Include Stakeholders in the Development of DPR Regulations**

The District was integrally involved in the process of developing the groundwater recharge criteria for the State Water Board. We encourage DDW to employ a similar collaborative process, including input from stakeholders on development of the DPR regulations, as was done for many years with the development of the groundwater recharge criteria.

**Approve DPR Projects on a Case-by-case Basis as Regulations are being Developed**

DDW has authority to permit DPR projects before the DPR regulations are finalized. Early groundwater Indirect Potable Reuse (IPR) projects that were permitted before the groundwater recharge regulations were adopted helped to inform the development of regulations. The District encourages DDW to use the draft criteria for DPR while they are under development as guidance for approval of DPR projects on a case-by-case basis.

We thank the State Board for its finding that the development of DPR regulations is feasible, and we look forward to a timely adoption of DPR regulations. We believe DPR can be a safe and sustainable water supply that protects the environment, sustains economic growth, and provides a drought-proof water supply for California. We look forward to working with you and offer our assistance on further research that is needed for the ultimate development of DPR regulations in the near future.

Sincerely,



Mike Wehner  
Assistant General Manager