

DIRECTORS

DENIS R. BILODEAU, P.E.  
JORDAN BRANDMAN  
CATHY GREEN  
DINA L. NGUYEN, ESQ.  
KELLY E. ROWE, C.E.G., C.H.  
VICENTE SARMIENTO, ESQ.  
STEPHEN R. SHELDON  
TRI TA  
ROGER C. YOH, P.E.  
AHMAD ZAHRA



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

OFFICERS

**President**  
VICENTE SARMIENTO, ESQ.

**First Vice President**  
CATHY GREEN

**Second Vice President**  
STEPHEN R. SHELDON

**General Manager**  
MICHAEL R. MARKUS, P.E., D.WRE

April 29, 2020

Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senate  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

**RE: Upcoming Federal Infrastructure/Stimulus Package – PFAS Cleanup and Stormwater Capture**

Dear Senator Feinstein:

As Congress develops the upcoming federal infrastructure/stimulus package, the Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District) writes to respectfully request that you work with your colleagues to include specific funding for the cleanup of groundwater and maximizing the storage of stormwater to provide clean and reliable drinking water. Specifically, the District requests support for \$288 million in capital costs for the treatment of the chemicals per and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and \$3 million for the removal of sediment that reduces stormwater capture behind Prado Dam, located in Corona, California.

**PFAS Treatment- \$288 Million**

The presence of PFAS chemicals is a continuing public health and water supply reliability matter that OCWD has worked with your office on in the past two years. The District appreciates and supports your ongoing effort to secure federal support to clean up groundwater contamination that includes PFAS. Today, the District is conducting a series of studies to determine the nature and extent of the PFAS pollution within the Orange County Groundwater Basin and has started treatment system design efforts for several of the impacted retail water agencies that we serve.

As of today, approximately forty drinking water wells in the communities of Anaheim, East Orange County Water District, Yorba Linda Water District, Irvine Ranch Water District, Fullerton, Garden Grove, Orange, Santa Ana, Tustin, and Serrano Water District have been taken out of service due to PFAS. The cost of well head treatment for just these communities is estimated at \$288,000,000 in capital costs. Estimates of

the total impact to the District's service area over the next 30 years solely from the remediation cost of PFAS is approximately \$850,000,000.

As the first public laboratory to receive state certification to test for PFAS, the District has led the way in developing the data to make informed decisions on the nature and extent of the chemicals' threats. This includes having taken tests of water from more than 1,500 locations in the Basin and conducting more than 400,000 samples annually. OCWD is complementing this capability by conducting the nation's largest PFAS pilot program to test methods to remove these chemicals from the water supply. The District is also conducting a study to support adoption of effective treatment approaches by the affected communities and is collaborating with the University of California, Irvine on a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention funded multi-site PFAS epidemiology study.

All of these efforts, we expect, will support the overall goal to treat PFAS. However, in the interim period, OCWD and the cities and water districts it serves have taken costly steps to protect the region's health. These steps include: 1) removing more than 40 drinking water wells from service, 2) increasing the purchase of more costly imported water supplies to replace lost local water supply, 3) blending multiple water supplies to comply with state standards to protect public health, and 4) testing approaches to treat PFAS. Again, the District urges that as Congress begins consideration of an infrastructure package that you work with your colleagues to include specific funding assistance for the cleanup of PFAS in groundwater basins.

### **Increased Stormwater Capture Behind Prado Dam- \$3 Million**

OCWD is embarking on the Prado Basin Sediment Management Demonstration Project with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer to increase retained water volume in the Prado Reservoir by removing up to 120,000 cubic yards of sediment. Sediment will be removed from OCWD property within the reservoir area, near Corona, California. The project will also test dredging methods to explore the feasibility of large-scale sediment removal.

By removing sediment, increased capacity is provided to temporarily capture stormwater in the Prado Reservoir. Stormwater captured at the Prado Reservoir is subsequently used to replenish the Orange County Groundwater Basin, downstream of Prado Dam. Currently, stormwater capture provides approximately 30% of the groundwater replenishment in the District's service area. Without sediment removal, this capacity behind the dam is expected to be lost over the next 50 years. Now is a critical time to preserve this drinking water source, as droughts in Southern California have become the new normal.

Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
April 29, 2020  
Page 3 of 3

Again, we deeply appreciate the leadership you have provided to address PFAS and look forward to working with you and your staff as Congress considers how to develop a national infrastructure plan. OCWD looks forward to providing any assistance you might require in securing directed federal assistance and protecting the health and water reliability of Orange County citizens. Please do not hesitate to contact Alicia Dunkin, Legislative Affairs Liaison, at [adunkin@ocwd.com](mailto:adunkin@ocwd.com) or (714) 378-8232, or me, if we may be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Vicente Sarmiento".

Vicente Sarmiento, Esq.  
President