



January 25, 2021

MEMBER AGENCIES

- Carlsbad
Municipal Water District
- City of Del Mar
- City of Escondido
- City of National City
- City of Oceanside
- City of Poway
- City of San Diego
- Fallbrook
Public Utility District
- Helix Water District
- Lakeside Water District
- Olivenhain
Municipal Water District
- Otay Water District
- Padre Dam
Municipal Water District
- Camp Pendleton
Marine Corps Base
- Rainbow
Municipal Water District
- Ramona
Municipal Water District
- Rincon del Diablo
Municipal Water District
- San Dieguito Water District
- Santa Fe Irrigation District
- South Bay Irrigation District
- Vallecitos Water District
- Valley Center
Municipal Water District
- Vista Irrigation District
- Yuima
Municipal Water District

OTHER REPRESENTATIVE

- County of San Diego

Keene Simonds, Executive Director
San Diego County Local Agency Formation Commission
9335 Hazard Way, Suite 200
San Diego, CA 92123

RE: Draft Municipal Service Review, San Diego County Resource Conservation Districts

Dear Mr. Simonds:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Draft Municipal Service Review (MSR) for the San Diego County Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs). After reviewing the MSR we recognize the complexity of the RCD organizations and support the recommendation to complete a long-term study before initiating structural changes to the three RCDs. Concurrently with undertaking the long-term study, we respectfully request that Mission RCD not be prevented from continuing to conduct its water conservation programs that currently benefit water users within the boundaries of the San Diego County Water Authority (Water Authority).

As the regional wholesale water supplier, the Water Authority has contracted with the Mission RCD since 1990 to operate its Agricultural Water Management Program. The goal of the program is to provide technical assistance to growers to enable them to irrigate crops as efficiently as possible to obtain the maximum economic benefit from limited water resources. During this time, there have been almost 2,300 audits on more than 35,000 acres of avocados, citrus, field flowers, and other fruits and ornamental crops.

Mission RCD is also partnering with the Water Authority on two projects funded by State of California Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) grants: the Electrical Conductivity (EC) Mapping and Soil Moisture Sensor Systems Program, and the Agricultural Irrigation Efficiency Program. These programs use grant funding to increase on-farm water use efficiency through EC maps, soil moisture sensor systems, and irrigation system equipment retrofits. Mission RCD's technical expertise and experience in performing agricultural audits, its partnerships with the U.C. Cooperative Extension Farm Advisors Office, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service and the San Diego County Farm Bureau, along with its outstanding reputation among local farmers for providing quality water efficiency services, makes Mission RCD uniquely qualified to continue to implement agricultural water use efficiency programs.

Since 2009, Mission RCD has also been the Water Authority's contractor to administer the regional WaterSmart Checkup Program. Through this program, on-site water-use-efficiency audits are conducted for residential and commercial customers who receive verbal and written instruction on water-saving activities such as checking for leaks, reprogramming their irrigation controller, how to read their water meter and available incentives for indoor and outdoor improvements. More than 16,000 checkup services have been provided by Mission RCD for our

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retail agency customers, including landscape surveys covering more than 2,000 acres. This popular program has led to significant water savings in our region and is especially active during drought years.

Allowing the Mission RCD to continue these services within the Water Authority's boundaries is consistent with LAFCO's purposes, specifically preserving prime agricultural lands and efficiently providing governmental services. To abruptly stop Mission RCD's provision of these services would undermine the important objective of the commission to "advantageously provide for the present and future needs" of these agricultural communities. Therefore, we respectfully request that San Diego LAFCO facilitate the continuation of Mission RCD's services pending the further study of the RCDs as a whole.

Thank you for considering our comments. We again ask that these beneficial programs be allowed to continue during the study period recommended by the MSR, and look forward to the development of a long-term solution that will allow the good work done by the RCDs to continue. If you have any questions or need additional information please contact me at elovsted@sdewa.org or 858-522-6749.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Lovsted
Water Resources Manager

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