

**WEST BASIN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT**

**JUNE 7, 2001 – Water Resources**

**JUNE 18, 2001 – Board Meeting**

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Submitted by: Richard Nagel

Approved by: Darryl G. Miller

ACTION CALENDAR

NATIONAL WATER RESEARCH INSTITUTE

SUMMARY:

At your May Board meeting, staff presented the District's overall Research and Development (R&D) program. One key aspect of the program is to leverage the program's funding to maximize the benefit to the District. Membership to the National Water Research Institute (NWRI) would greatly enhance this goal.

The National Water Research Institute (NWRI) was created to develop new sources of water through research and technology. Established in 1991, NWRI now has a total investment of \$24 million dollars devoted to supporting 120 research and public outreach projects. NWRI receives its core funding from the Joan Irvine Smith & Athalie R. Clarke Foundation. These funds are matched at more than a one-to-one ratio by funds from its federal, state and local government, private industry, public utilities, and university partners. Since its inception, a total of \$10 million contributed by the foundation has been matched with \$14 million from NWRI partners. With a total investment of \$24 million dollars devoted to water research, NWRI is the third largest research organization in the United States.

NWRI manages three major functional programs:

- The Research Program
- The National Centers Program
- The Outreach Program

Within the Research Program, NWRI encourages partnerships, which reflect multi-disciplinary, multi-geographic research under four major thrust areas. NWRI's research program is reviewed and evaluated semi-annually by its Research Advisory Board, which has assisted in funding the institute since inception. The main areas of research covered by the program are Water Purification Technologies, Treatment Monitoring, Knowledge Management, and Emerging Contaminants.

The National Centers for NWRI and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to improve the utilization of membrane research facilities initiated the Water Treatment

Technology Program in 1994. The benefits of the National Centers for Water Treatment Technologies Program include among others: reducing membrane costs for water utilities, improving membrane pretreatment and treatment technologies and improving public perception of the value of membrane technology.

The Outreach Program is an educational program designed to provide the general public, decision-makers, and professionals an opportunity to gain a broad understanding of current and projected issues in water science and technology. Products include videos, science fairs and publications.

#### Other NWRI Benefits and Attributes

NWRI offers many benefits including:

- The potential of receiving substantial research funding through NWRI's Research program;
- The ability to direct research by others that would directly benefit West Basin;
- Inclusion in the National Research Centers for Water Treatment Technology, along with many attributes;
- Access to their scientific advisory committee (48 members);
- Partnership capabilities;
- Locally based;
- Scientific advisory panel review;
- Ability to quickly address unanticipated issues (e.g. NDMA);
- Ability to fund projects throughout the year; and
- Funding is not solely dependent on outside grants.

#### Potential Research Projects

Staff has identified at least three collaborative research areas with NWRI and their potential contribution:

<b>Research</b>	<b>NWRI Contribution</b>
Phase 1 Oceanwater Desalination	\$70,000

Pulsed UV for NDMA Treatment	\$20,000
Fish Bioassay	\$25,000

Recommendation

With all of the combined benefits and attributes to the District, staff recommends membership to NWRI. The annual membership fee is \$50,000.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

Funds are available in the FY 01-02 Budget.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE:

None applicable.

COMMITTEE STATUS:

This item was reviewed by the Water Resources Committee meeting on June 7, 2001. The Committee did not make a recommendation Director McDonald abstained and Director Little approved. The Committee requested staff to ask NWRI if installment payments could be an option. This item was agendaized to the June 18, 2001 Board meeting for full Board consideration.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Authorize the General Manager to submit West Basin for membership in the National Water Research Institutes Joint Powers Authority for the purposes of research, and public education and to submit the first years membership fee of \$50,000.