



**WEST BASIN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT**  
17140 S. Avalon Blvd., Suite 210  
Carson, CA 90746

**AGENDA NO. 24**

**JUNE 12, 2009 – Communications**

Gray (Chair), Kwan

**JUNE 22, 2009 – Board Meeting**

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Submitted by: Ron Wildermuth

Approved by: Rich Nagel

## INFORMATION CALENDAR

### WATER RELIABILITY 2020 UPDATE

#### SUMMARY:

Water Reliability (WR) 2020 outreach continues. Outreach appears to be effective based on the number of support cards received, anecdotal information from cards and talks, media coverage, and web site feedback. Plans are to continue face-to-face talks/briefings, media coverage and other outreach with a focus on leaders in business, unions, religious organizations and environmental groups. One problem area is that there is some reluctance on the part of some legislators to support WR 2020 because of the ocean-water desalination component. Their staff perceives opposition by coastal environmental groups to desalination and are advising their principals to hold back support. On the other hand, Exhibit "A" shows some support for WR 2020 by environmentalist as individuals, but it does not reflect the support of the environmental organizations they are involved with.

#### **Update**

##### Support Letters/Cards

The current outreach focus is on continuing to obtain written support of legislators, labor organizations, businesses/organizations, and environmental groups. We have 800 individual support cards that have been received and put into a database in the past year. Approximately 100 additional cards await data entry. Of those supporters, we have 75 who have indicated a willingness to testify at regulatory meetings. We have received support letters from the several groups listed in Exhibit "B". The local consultant program and our consultants are actively working to arrange briefings with these types of leaders and organizations. Exhibit "C" indicates the talks are well received. Support cards and WR 2020 individual briefings have been incorporated into events and event booth participation. Exhibit "D" is the current overall supporters list.

##### Media

Overall media coverage has increased in the past year. While news reporters are reluctant to mention WR 2020 by name in articles or video coverage, several stories have mentioned that West Basin's focus is on improving water reliability.

##### Community Talks

We continue to do our community leader/group talks. They generate positive awareness for West Basin Municipal Water District (West Basin) in the community. Obtaining support letters after talks is slow due to staffing limitations. We are currently researching additional groups to reach and sending

out letters requesting to speak to their groups. Exhibit "C" is used along with the letters for talks to encourage a more positive response to requests.

### Web Site

The West Basin web site visits are beginning to show an impact from WR 2020 outreach. The latest analysis of our web site traffic notes that the WR 2020 section saw a boost in traffic (double the hits over the past report) during the first quarter of 2009. WR 2020 section was the 5<sup>th</sup> most frequent part of the web site visited after employment opportunities. As an aside, the public tours have also generated an increase in hits on the Edward C. Little Water Recycling Facility section of the web site. People are reading about the facility either before or after their visits. The public tour program is now a key part of the WR 2020 outreach program in that it is a great source of individual WR 2020 support cards and supporters.

### Other Items

As part of the research effort, Katz and Associates conducted interviews with 18 community VIPs from October 2008 to February 2009. Exhibit "E" is the report of these interviews. A word of caution, while the report reflects the opinions of several community leaders, the number is small and not reflective of the population at large. Key findings include:

- Conservation is supported because it is perceived as easiest and less costly option;
- Need to do more education on the need for a possible property tax assessment and some would prefer raising rates;
- On rates, several respondents would pay increased rates for reliable water;
- Community leaders support conservation and a diverse supply of water sources; and
- There was general support for ocean-water desalination, however many thought it should be the last resort when other sources are exhausted.

Many community leaders have seen the WR 2020 presentation three or more times due to their membership or leadership in multiple organizations.

Many civic groups, Rotaries, Kiwanis, etc. are poor at responding to requests for support letters.

Staff has developed two new "leave behinds" for community talks: One is a WR 2020 bookmark with conservation tips and another is a WR 2020 sprinkler key to adjust down the water flow on home sprinklers. Additionally, we have a new WR 2020 banner for community event booth participation.

The Public and Governmental Affairs Manager has been asked to speak about the WR 2020 outreach program at two Southern California Branding Network meetings and a recent West Coast Public Relations Society of America Conference.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

Funds will be included in the Fiscal Year 2009-10 Public and Governmental Affairs Budget.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE:

Not applicable.

COMMITTEE STATUS:

This item was reviewed by the Communications Committee on June 12, 2009 and agendized to the June 22, 2009 Board meeting as information for discussion.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

This item is for information only.

LIST OF EXHIBITS:

- Exhibit "A" – List of Individual Environmentalists Who Support WR 2020
- Exhibit "B" – Supporter Letters Received
- Exhibit "C" – Presentation Feedback Promotion Paper
- Exhibit "D" - Overall WR 2020 Supporters list
- Exhibit "E" – Stakeholder Interview Report