



For Immediate Release:
Contact:

November 8, 2010
Noelle Collins
Media and Public Information
310-660-6217 noellec@westbasin.org

West Basin's Innovative Ocean Water Desalination Demonstration Facility to Begin Environmental and Energy Recovery Evaluation

REDONDO BEACH, Calif.— Investing in innovative marine protection technology and renewable energy sources, West Basin Municipal Water District (West Basin) is near completion on its new demonstration facility, formally dedicating the plant on Friday, November 12, 2010. The plant will be open to the public in a community "open house" on December 4th.

The demonstration facility will pull in about 580,000 gallons of ocean water a day. It hosts ultrafiltration, reverse osmosis and energy recovery technologies. Similar membrane water purification processes are used at West Basin's 30 million gallons a day wastewater recycling facility in El Segundo.

The facility is a demonstration facility designed to evaluate and monitor full scale equipment. It will intake the ocean water, purify it through the desalting process, recombine the brine concentrate with the purified water, and then send it back out into the ocean at the same concentrated level as it came in from the ocean. The facility is expected to operate for up to two years to provide data on how to proceed with a full-scale desalination plant.

Two ocean water intake technologies have been installed at the demonstration facility. Wedgewire screens that create small eddies and move fish and other marine life away from intake pipes and a sand filtration system that simulates sub ocean floor withdrawal of intake water are both in operation. Both technologies are protective of surrounding sea life. This is the first time the wedgewire screens will be operated and evaluated in an open ocean environment, protecting the ocean at the source.

An energy recapture system will take energy used in the purification process and recirculate it to be used again.

Adjacent to the demonstration facility is West Basin's new Water Education Center exploring the reliability of imported water coming into Southern California, the importance of using water efficiently and an explanation and model of the technology used in the desalination process.

The Education Center makes available video footage from an underwater camera monitoring the marine life living around the wedgewire intake screens. There are also live fish tanks with identical species, one with ocean water and the other with the concentrated brine discharge, to demonstrate the safe levels of salts in the brine concentrate that the marine life flourish in.

The multipurpose facility is co-located at the Los Angeles Conservation Corps' SEA Lab education center in Redondo Beach and is part of West Basin's Water Reliability 2020 initiative to reduce the area's dependence on less reliable imported water. By 2020, West Basin will control 66 percent of its water supply locally by doubling its recycling and conservation programs and adding 10 percent of its future water supply from ocean water desalination.

"After more than 15 years of aggressive conservation and water recycling programs, West Basin is proud to continue its history of water reliability innovation by pioneering environmentally responsible ocean-water desalination to help meet future water needs and supplement emergency supplies," said West Basin Board President Gloria D. Gray. "West Basin is leading local efforts here in the Los Angeles area to produce safe, reliable, local supplies of drinking water for residents and businesses."

Public tours of the facility will be offered beginning in January 2011. For updates, to subscribe to West Basin's quarterly e-newsletter, or to learn more about our Water Reliability 2020 program, visit www.westbasin.org.

###

Since the District's formation in 1947, West Basin has remained steadfast in its commitment to ensuring water reliability. Faced with current and future water supply challenges, West Basin has launched a far-reaching initiative that increases supply dependability by producing new local resources. The Water Reliability 2020 program will reduce our dependence on imported water by extending recycled water pipelines, doubling conservation, expanding water education programs and developing ocean-water desalination. The combination of these efforts will increase regional control of local supplies of water from 33 percent today to 66 percent in 2020 and serve to protect our region's precious drinking water supply. To learn more about Water Reliability 2020 and for information on free tours and conservation classes, visit www.westbasin.org.