

WEST BASIN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

DECEMBER 18, 2000

Prepared by: Paul Shoenberger

Submitted by: Paul Shoenberger

Approved by: Darryl G. Miller

INFORMATION CALENDAR

NATIONAL WATER RESEARCH INSTITUTE (NWRI)SUMMARY:

West Basin and NWRI staff has discussed the possibility of becoming a member of NWRI. The benefits of becoming a member of NWRI include:

- A seat on the Research Advisory Board that assigns research projects and funding;
- 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; and
- Inclusion in the National Research Centers for Water Treatment Technology.

As a member of NWRI, West Basin is represented on the administrative governing committee as well as the research advisory board. Typically, the General Manager is assigned to the administrative governing committee and the Water Quality Manager to the research advisory board. The research advisory board determines what research is conducted and whom the research funding is distributed to. In NWRI's nine-year existence, the two most active members have received \$3.7 million and \$6.7 million in research and education funding. The cost of membership is \$50,000 per year.

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. A seven-member board of directors independently governs NWRI, one each from each member agency. 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 Water Treatment Technology Program was initiated in 1994 by NWRI and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to improve the utilization of membrane research facilities. 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.

Staff will be comparing NWRI and AWWARF research programs before making a recommendation to the Board, since the District is already a member of AWWARF.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

Membership in the National Water Research Institute is \$50,000 per year. There is \$40,000 of unspent funds budgeted for the CUWA membership that is available. The other \$10,000 of unbudgeted funds would come from the existing research budget.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE:

None.

COMMITTEE STATUS:

This item was reviewed at the Water Resources Committee meeting on December 7, 2000, and agendized to the West Basin December 18, 2000 Board meeting as information.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

This item is for information only.