

## **Summary**

**Testimony of Bud Pocklington  
Chairman of the Governing Board  
Sweetwater Authority  
Before the House Committee on Natural Resources  
Subcommittee on Water and Power  
H.R. 4579  
To amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study  
and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior  
to participate in phase one of the  
South San Diego County Water Reclamation Project, and for other purposes**

**March 18, 2010**

### **(Cue Slide 1)**

Chair Napolitano, members of the Subcommittee, and staff, good morning and thank you for the opportunity to testify today on this very important issue.

### **(Cue Slide 2)**

My name is Bud Pocklington, and I am the Chairman of the Governing Board of the Sweetwater Authority, a public water agency, which provides drinking water to the cities of National City and Chula Vista, and the unincorporated community of Bonita in San Diego County, California.

As you requested, I will be summarizing my written statement, which has been submitted for the record.

I want to thank you for holding this hearing on H.R. 4579, which would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in Phase One of the South San Diego County Water Reclamation Project.

I also want to thank Congressman Bob Filner for sponsoring this important bill that will provide much needed additional local water supplies to our region, and improve the quality of our natural resources.

***Southern California and the San Diego Region must reduce dependence on imported water;*** and the South San Diego County Water Reclamation Project is a comprehensive and coordinated approach by public water agencies to sustainably use the vast groundwater resources of the San Diego Formation.

The map before you shows the area of the San Diego Formation, and the locations of the proposed and existing project Facilities.

Current estimates prepared by USGS indicate that the Formation holds upward of 1 million acre-feet of water, but currently produces only about 4 million gallons per day of desalinated brackish water and 2 million gallons per day of potable well water within Sweetwater Authority's service area.

By utilizing these local water sources, the Project will:

- Reduce dependence on imported water by about 12,600 acre-feet per year. In combination with other water management actions Sweetwater Authority will produce almost 90 percent of our average annual water needs, 13,700 acre-feet, from local sources once this project is implemented;
- Mitigate the potential impacts of planned or emergency water supply interruption;
- Minimize supply and environmental impacts to imported water sources: the Colorado River, and the Bay-Delta;
- Be cost-competitive with imported water. The average cost per acre-foot of water produced by the Project will be about \$1,500. Imported water currently averages about \$814 per acre-foot but is independently forecast to reach \$1,600 in the San Diego Region over the next 8-10 years;
- Help provide stability to a disadvantaged community where unemployment is currently 14%. About 50 new jobs would be created over a period of 2-3 years by construction of these Facilities.

### **(Cue Slide 3)**

***The projects will use proven and cost-effective technology.***

- A Regional Concentrate Conveyance Facility would serve existing and future desalting and water reclamation facilities. The conveyance facility pipeline, running north to south, would discharge to the existing South Bay Ocean Outfall.
- A groundwater desalination facility in the Otay River Valley would provide access to the San Diego Formation through development of a desalination plant of similar design and production capacity to the existing and proven Sweetwater Authority's Reynolds Desalination Facility.

Together, these facilities would assure a total of 12,600 acre-feet (or 4 billion gallons) per year of local water supply. 3,800 acre-feet will be produced by the proposed Otay River Groundwater Desalination Facility. The brine line component of this project will allow production at the existing Reynolds Facility to be increased to 8,800 acre-feet, with the associated brine to be discharged through the Concentrate Conveyance Facility component of this project.

In addition, the Conveyance Facility will allow future water to be produced at the planned City of Chula Vista wastewater reclamation

facility which is a part of Phase Two; and potentially other water reclamation or recycling facilities that may be developed in our region.

***Feasibility studies have been conducted for these facilities*** using a combination of local and California Proposition 50 funds. These are now under review by the Bureau of Reclamation, and their evaluation is expected within 90 days.

***Cost estimates from these studies*** place the cost of the Concentrate Conveyance Facility at \$55 million, and the Otay River Desalination Facility at \$67 million.

Sweetwater Authority is unique in San Diego County in that it is able to provide a sizable portion of its water demand through the use of local water sources. Two large reservoirs, Sweetwater and Loveland, and a water treatment plant are operated to maximize local and imported water supplies as well as provide for emergency storage. Groundwater sources are also utilized through a series of wells and a desalination plant.

The local brackish groundwater and recycled municipal wastewater facilities that will be supported by H.R. 4579 will help us achieve an additional, reliable water supply to further reduce our dependence on imported water.

Thank you again, Madame Chair, for your time and consideration, and I am ready to answer any questions you may have.