

testimony of

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My name is Dan Parks. I am assistant general manager of the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), Coachella, California. I am a registered civil engineer in the state of California and have an engineering degree from California State Polytechnic Institute in Pomona, California.

The CVWD is a public agency serving 1,000 square miles in Riverside, Imperial and San Diego counties.

CVWD's service area is somewhat unique. It lies within Southern California's desert with an average rainfall of a little over 3 inches. Many years have no measurable rain, yet in other years more than the annual average falls in one storm. Locally, every day is a drought in the desert.

The State of California is experiencing a two-pronged drought. In regard to climate, we are feeling the effects of what many are predicting will be the most severe drought in recorded history. On the other hand, we are also affected by a regulatory drought that is severely limiting the amount of water available from the State Water Project.

The Coachella Valley relies on imported water supplies from the Colorado River and State Water Project to recharge its groundwater basin. When water is available, it is stored in the ground water basin. When supplies are short, water is pumped from the groundwater basin to meet the needs of the area. Thus, the groundwater basin acts as a large storage reservoir. Groundwater in the Coachella Valley is cooperatively managed by the two agencies with State Water contracts, Desert Water Agency (DWA) and CVWD.

Since the 1980's, CVWD, DWA and The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) have participated in a conjunctive use program. In wet years, MWD stores its surplus water in Coachella Valley's groundwater basin. In dry years, MWD takes delivery of CVWD's and DWA's State Water supplies, and in exchange, CVWD and DWA pump MWD water stored in the groundwater basin. This program benefits all agencies by utilizing wet year supplies to meet dry year water demands.

Over the years, we've increased our entitlement of imported water with the goal of recharging the same amount or more water than what is taken out of the aquifer each year. Legal entanglements surrounding the Sacramento Bay Delta have resulted in contractors only receiving 40 percent of their allocation last year. Without sufficient groundwater replenishment, the Coachella Valley faces potential negative effects of overdraft, including subsidence, diminished water quality and permanently reduced storage space.

We are fortunate to have multiple sources of water, including Colorado River. But the Colorado River Basin is also suffering from several years of drought. So far, we have been able to receive what water we need from that source, but Lake Powell, Lake Mead and other reservoirs on the river are very low.

Last year, two significant water management projects were completed, a facility to recharge 40,000 acre-feet of groundwater per year and the other to supply 50,000 acre-feet of non-potable water to golf courses in-lieu of pumping groundwater. The combined cost of these projects is \$115,000,000.

In some areas of the state, various forms of rationing or use restrictions are in place. Groundwater storage has allowed CVWD to implement a softer program of conservation measures than other areas. Because the average Coachella Valley home uses 80 percent of its water outside, CVWD's conservation and outreach programs are targeted toward reducing outdoor water use. Our success is attributed to a combination of imposing a water-budget based rate structure, desert appropriate landscape regulations, and incentive programs to increase irrigation efficiency and eliminate water waste. The programs have resulted in reducing water use by more than 10 percent on a permanent basis. Long-term reductions are expected to exceed 20 percent as customers make further changes in their landscape and irrigation systems.

The ability to capture, transport and store water is of key importance to managing California's water supply. In the short run, a solution is needed to reduce the pumping restrictions in California's Sacramento – San Joaquin Delta. In the long run, additional water storage is needed. If climate change results in less snowpack as some predict, additional transport capacity and storage will be needed to capture rain fall rather than let it run to the ocean.

In regard to Colorado River supplies, CVWD is a party to the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA). Signed in 2003, the QSA is a series of agreements between federal, state and local agencies which resolves disputes between California agencies created by the priority system of allocating water and resolves concerns of other western states and the United States Bureau of Reclamation over California using more than its amount of Colorado River water. A recent California court determined one sentence in one agreement violated a California Constitution provision and invalidated the QSA.

Since 2003 much work has been done among western states to address managing the Colorado River during both surplus years and drought years. I believe we are in better position to minimize reductions in the Colorado River supply through those management programs. Relations between California agencies and the other western states are not the same as they were in 2003. I believe it is more likely that the parties to the QSA will rise to the challenge created by the courts decision and find a solution whereby the QSA is implemented as negotiated.

One dilemma we face in addressing demands for increased water supplies is the inherent conflict between endangered species and the use of water to supply the public and its economy. It would be helpful if environmental laws balanced human needs with those of at risk species and the ecosystem.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these matters.