

July 19, 2004- Sanchez Orange County Water Bill Passes

Sanchez Orange County Water Bill Passes;
Water Recycling Project Gets \$80 Mil Authorization

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 1156, a bill sponsored by Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez to increase funding authorization for the Orange County Groundwater Replenishment System from \$20 million to \$80 million.

The bill would allow Orange County to complete its innovative Groundwater Replenishment System. The \$450 million system, once completed, will serve 2.3 million residents of north and central Orange County through the creation of a new water supply of 72,000 acre-feet per year by 2007.

"This project is not only important to Orange County, but to the entire Western United States," said Sanchez. "Recycling our water reduces Orange County's reliance on imported water from the Colorado River Aqueduct and the San Francisco Bay Delta."

To date, the project has received \$11.3 million of the original authorization from the Bureau of Reclamation. Sanchez made the following statement on the floor of the House:

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, July 19, 2004

Statement by Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez on H.R. 1156

To amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to increase the ceiling on the Federal share of the costs of phase I of the Orange County, California, Regional Water Reclamation Project."Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of H.R. 1156, a bill co-sponsored by Congressman Gary Miller and myself. I am pleased to see the bill on the suspension calendar today, and I thank the leadership for its support. H.R. 1156 would increase the authorized federal share for the Orange County, California, Groundwater Replenishment System from \$20 million to \$80 million. This will allow Orange County to complete its innovative Groundwater Replenishment System.

"The Groundwater Replenishment System will serve 2.3 million residents of north and central Orange County, California by creating a new water supply of 72,000 acre-feet per year. Increasing the federal share of this project would bring federal participation in the Groundwater Replenishment System closer to 25 percent, the level at which almost every other water reclamation project was funded in the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act of 1992 and the Reclamation Recycling and Water Conservation Act.

"This project is not only important to Orange County, but to the entire Western United States. Recycling our water would reduce Orange County's reliance on imported water from the Colorado River Aqueduct and the San Francisco Bay Delta. Members from both sides of the aisle recognize the need for this project. I would like to particularly recognize my colleague from California, Mr. Miller, for his co-sponsorship and continued support of H.R. 1156. Congressman Miller is offering H.R. 142 today, which would authorize the Interior Secretary to participate in Inland Empire water projects. I am pleased to be a co-sponsor of his bill and I would urge my colleagues to vote in support of it as well.

"I would like to thank Resources Committee Chairman Pombo, Ranking Member Rahall, as well as Water and Power Subcommittee Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member Napolitano for their overwhelming support of H.R. 1156. My other distinguished colleagues in the Orange County delegation -Chairman Cox, Congressman Rohrabacher, and Congressman Royce - have been strong supporters of H.R. 1156, as well, and I thank them.

"Last, but not least, I would especially like to thank Denis Bilodeau, Virginia Grebbien, Craig Miller and everyone affiliated with the Orange County Water District and the Orange County Sanitation District, for their hard work and leadership in groundwater recycling. Their innovation has pushed Orange County to the forefront of the water recycling and groundwater replenishment technology.

"Again, I thank you all for your continued support. I yield back the balance of my time."