

NEWS

Congressman George Miller, California's 7th District

For Immediate Release: February 13, 2009
Press Office: 202-225-2095

House Approves Major Investment in Water Recycling

Drought-hit California can receive funding for innovative water projects

A historic investment in alternative water supplies for California and across the West was approved by the House today as part of President Obama's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The water recycling provision includes an unprecedented \$126 million for the federal water recycling and reuse program administered by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. By contrast, President Bush budgeted only \$7 million for this crucial infrastructure investment.

That water reuse program, also known as Title XVI, helps local water managers to treat wastewater and use the clean water that results for commercial irrigation and industrial processes. Water recycling allows drought-prone cities and regions to use innovative techniques to build more-reliable and cost-effective water supplies.

"Approval of President Obama's economic recovery package is critical to turning around America's economy," said Rep. George Miller (D-Martinez), a long-time advocate of environmentally sustainable water policy. "With this historic investment in water recycling, we will not only be creating good jobs in California, we will be drought-proofing our communities at a time when they most need the assistance.

"As we all know, drought and climate change will continue to reduce the amount of water available from the Bay-Delta, but supporting this legislation means supporting cost-effective and sustainable alternative water supplies for California. Recycled water provides a reliable supply for local planners and residents, and that means jobs, security, and prosperity."

The \$126 million contained in the legislation is the highest single amount ever provided to the Title XVI program, and will allow municipalities and water agencies around the San Francisco Bay Area and across California – and in many more locations throughout the arid West including Las Vegas, Albuquerque, Phoenix, and El Paso – to invest in these new water supply projects.

The Bay Area Recycled Water Coalition, which undertaken a regional planning effort to invest in water reuse and recycling planning to mitigate against drought, has estimated that investing in the ready-to-go recycled water projects in the Bay-Delta region alone can support nearly 20,000 jobs in fields like engineering, construction, and manufacturing.

In Pittsburg, California the Delta Diablo Sanitation District could use this influx of federal funding to expand its existing recycled water project so that the region can serve city parks with clean recycled water, rather than using drinking water for irrigation purposes. The Coalition has identified cost-effective and environmentally friendly water recycling projects around the Bay that could supply over 87,000 acre-feet of water. An acre-foot of water is about 326,000 gallons.

###