

CA Governor Davis Announces Release of Landmark Watershed Report

—Office of the Governor Gray Davis

On April 12, 2002, Governor Gray Davis announced the release of a landmark report that will help California protect and restore its watersheds, lakes, rivers, and waterways. The report titled "Addressing the Need to Protect California's Watersheds: Working in Partnerships" is the first of its kind and is a legislative requirement under the Watershed Protection Bill (AB 2117). The California Resources Agency and Cal/EPA assembled a Joint Task Force to examine 10 exemplary local and grassroots watershed organizations. The report was compiled over 18 months under the leadership of the Secretary of the Cal/EPA Winston H. Hickox, Secretary for Resources Mary D. Nichols, and State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Chairman Art Baggett. The Joint Task Force evaluated the relationships of state and federal agencies to local watershed group efforts and studied watershed projects geographically from Humboldt Bay in Northern California to Los Penasquitos Lagoon in San Diego. Its conclusions include suggestions on how to improve and develop partnerships between local groups and government, and approaches to providing support and improved guidance for grassroots groups.

For a copy of the report visit www.resources.ca.gov/watershedtaskforce/AB2117LegReport_041102.pdf

2002 New Mexico Drought Plan Released

—Office of the Governor, NM

On May 31, New Mexico Governor Gary E. Johnson released the New Mexico Drought Task Force Plan for 2002. The purpose of the plan is to provide New Mexico with a framework for an integrated approach to minimize the impacts of the most severe drought of the past 50 years.

The plan focuses primarily on short-term measures to respond to drought conditions

and it defines the responsibilities of the various levels of government. It also includes planned mitigation actions for four critical drought impact areas. They include: Agriculture, Drinking Water, Health and Energy, and Wildlife and Wildfire.

Drinking water supply is a major focus of the plan. The actions in this area of the plan are to ensure public drinking water supplies during the drought. Specifically, the plan recommends a system that will provide financial relief and technical assistance to communities statewide experiencing drought-related water shortages. Assistance from the state can be used for drilling wells, transporting water in water tankers, piping water and conservation efforts.

The plan is available at www.governor.state.nm.us

NM Water Data Now Available Online

The New Mexico Office of the State Engineer's Water Administration Technical Engineering Resource System (WATERS) program is underway. A state-of-the-art computer database is designed to eventually store all water rights information held by the Office of the State Engineer. Available data include water rights, water use, owner, well information, diversions, location, and depth to water. Searches can be made by Township/Range/Section, XY coordinates, county, water basin, database file name, and owner name.

To access the site, go to www.seo.state.nm.us, and select "Water Information".

Farm Bill Will Help Extend the Life of the Ogallala Aquifer

—Office of U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman

On May 13, President Bush signed into law farm legislation that gives top spending priority to an initiative to prevent further mining of the Ogallala Aquifer. The aquifer is the water source for more than 125,000 eastern New Mexico residents, farmers and ranchers.

Last October, U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman introduced legislation aimed at extending the life of the aquifer through a voluntary water conservation program. In just the last two decades, large portions of the aquifer show drops of between 10 to 40 feet in the water table.

The farm bill contains provisions that provide funding to help farmers and ranchers conserve water by helping them switch from irrigated to dryland agriculture. The federal government also would help farmers who use the aquifer pay for improved conservation measures, including more efficient irrigation systems, and to purchase more efficient equipment.

In New Mexico, the aquifer serves Curry, Roosevelt, Lea, Quay, Union and Harding counties. The Ogallala also serves portions of Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, and South Dakota.

Visit www.senate.gov/~bingaman/

Senate Proposes Grants to Help Meet Arsenic Standard

—from an article originally appearing on *WaterTechONLINE*, May 17, 2002

On May 16, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee passed a measure that would provide grants to communities to help them meet the new, lower standard for the amount of arsenic that will be allowed in drinking water.

U.S. Sen. Pete Domenici, D-NM, coauthored the legislation that would create a five-year, \$5 billion program giving grants to communities that will have to meet the standard by 2006.

Domenici joined with Sen. Harry Reid, D-NV, in adding the arsenic provisions to the Water Investment Act of 2002 (S 1961), a \$35 billion measure reauthorizing federal programs to help communities maintain water and wastewater infrastructures.

The Reid-Domenici plan creates a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

program to provide federal grants. Communities would apply directly to EPA and funds would be awarded based on human health concerns, necessity to ensure compliance with drinking water regulations and financial need.

The grants could be used to carry out compliance projects, needs assessment and other technical assistance, officials said. The awards would require 20 percent in non-federal matching funds, but a waiver could be issued for economically deprived communities. The program is authorized at \$1 billion annually from 2003-2007.

For complete article, visit www.watertechonline.com.

Bill Aims to Ensure Long-Term Adequate Water

—from an article originally appearing on WaterTechONLINE, May 28, 2002

An effort is under way in Congress to develop a national policy to ensure an adequate and dependable supply of fresh water for the next 50 years.

Rep. John Linder, R-GA, has introduced legislation to create a presidentially appointed commission to recommend how to better capture and store fresh water, fund public works projects, improve water storage technologies and ease the federal bureaucracy surrounding water management, the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* reported.

The bill calls for the president to appoint 17 commissioners: eight federal water managers and conservation agency officials, five nongovernment representatives, two local government and two state or tribal government officials, the newspaper reported.

In one year, they would hold public hearings on water issues and collect information from federal agencies, then offer Congress a blueprint for possible legislation establishing a comprehensive water policy, said the *Review-Journal*.

Henry Vaux, a professor of resource economics at the University of California, Riverside, endorsed the bill, noting

population growth, economic growth and environmental protection all play a part in managing water usage, particularly in the arid West, the article said.

But the newspaper said Thomas Donnelly, executive director of the National Water Resources Association, testified against the bill, noting 20 commissions since 1900 have been unsuccessful in developing a national water policy.

Donnelly said the government has stacks of reports outlining water supply problems, but what is lacking is a comprehensive national water resources needs assessment, the newspaper reported.

For complete article, visit www.watertechonline.com

Mexico Missed Deadline for Water Debt Repayment...Again

The *New York Times* reported on May 29 that Mexico President Vicente Fox would not meet his self-imposed May 30 deadline for announcing a strategy to pay off

Mexico's 456-billion gallon water debt to the United States under a 1944 treaty that governs the Rio Grande River.

According to the *Times*, aids to Mr. Fox estimate that it will take Mexico at least five years to repay the debt; it is not possible to meet Texas' demands of repayment by this summer.

Mexico has not allowed sufficient water to flow to the Rio Grande, and as a result, compounded by an eight-year drought, farmers on both sides of the river may lose their crops, said the *Times*. Mr. Fox has now twice

promised to pay the debt, and farmers in Texas are getting aggravated. His close relations with the U.S. could be impaired if a plan is not implemented soon.

For complete article, visit www.nytimes.com, May 30, 2002.

Nevada's Gov. Guinn Announces \$33 Million for Nevada Test Site Accelerated Cleanup Strategy

—Office of NV Governor Kenny Guinn

On May 30, Gov. Guinn announced that the Department of Energy (DOE) will commit an additional \$33 million for environmental cleanup at the Nevada Test Site (NTS). The \$33 million will increase the total environmental management budget to about \$94 million in fiscal year 2003 at the NTS. Included in the \$94 million program is continuation of the groundwater monitoring program.

Contact: Greg Bortolin at Bortolin@gov.state.nv.us

BROWN AND CALDWELL

Environmental Engineering and Consulting

Exploratory Boring Analysis

Water Resources

Well Rehabilitation/Replacement

Well Design, Installation, and Testing

Construction Management

For more information contact Mr. Mike Bostic at:
(602) 222-4444 in Phoenix, or 1-800-231-2469

3636 N. Central Ave., Suite 200, Phoenix, Arizona 85012-1931