

EPA and Phoenix Complete Drinking Water Project

From EPA Region 9



On July 11, 2003, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the city of Phoenix lauded the successful

completion of a three-year drinking water project aimed at addressing taste and odor issues in the city's water.

In 2000, as part of a joint EPA and state settlement, Phoenix agreed to spend \$1.2 million on environmental projects that would improve the taste and odor of the drinking water.

Phoenix's Water Services Department, along with Arizona State University, the Salt River Project (SRP), and the Central Arizona Project (CAP), subsequently conducted algal studies, established a highly advanced water monitoring and sampling network, and tested various treatment techniques.

Treatment techniques included canal brushing to remove naturally occurring compounds that impact taste and odor, direct application of copper sulfate onto algae growth, and the use of powdered activated carbon during water treatment to improve taste and odor. The city also blended CAP and SRP water to take advantage of lower concentrations of taste- and odor-producing compounds, and shared a management guidance manual with other cities in the metropolitan area to assist with controlling taste and odor.

Neighboring cities of Tempe, Scottsdale, Gilbert, Glendale, Mesa, Peoria, and Chandler were also involved and benefited from the project.

The settlement was reached after the EPA cited the city of Phoenix for failing to consistently comply with state and federal regulations on drinking water monitoring and reporting between 1993 and 1996.

In addition to funding the environmental projects, Phoenix agreed to pay \$350,000 in penalties, the largest drinking water fine in Arizona history.

Visit www.epa.gov/region9/.

Controversial California Water Softening Bill Signed

Article originally appeared in *WaterTechONLINE*, Aug. 7, 2003

California Assembly Bill 334, which could affect restrictions on residential water softening and has been the subject of much controversy in California during the last several months, was signed into law by Gov. Gray Davis in early August.

A news release issued by the governor's office simply stated: "AB 334 by Assembly member Jackie Goldberg (D-Los Angeles) authorizes a local agency to regulate the use and availability of self-regenerative water softening appliances that discharge to the community sewer system."

The law lays a foundation for California communities to ban or restrict water softeners because of salinity issues. A study commissioned by the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts (LACSD) found that residential water softeners were significant sources of salinity in the area's wastewater. The provisions of AB 334, which affect the previous industry effort, SB 1006, will go into effect next year.

Visit www.pwqa.org/news.htm for more information on the new law and www.wqa.org for more information on the LACSD study. For the complete article, visit www.watertechonline.com.

Wastewater Testing Equipment Transferred to Baja California

From the California Governor's Office, Aug. 29, 2003

California Gov. Gray Davis has announced the ownership transfer of wastewater testing equipment to Baja California, Mexico. Baja environmental officials will use the donated equipment to ensure that industrial wastewater meets Mexican

environmental standards.

Mexican authorities have used previously donated equipment and technical assistance provided by California to aid in Baja California's regulatory efforts. Baja California has been fined and forced to temporarily close six industrial operations until its wastewater could be pretreated to meet local standards. The process removes industrial pollutants that conventional municipal wastewater plants cannot treat.

Agencies that have partnered in this effort include the Baja California Dirección General de Ecología and the Comisión Estatal del Agua and the State Commissions for Public Services of Tijuana, Tecate, Mexicali, and Ensenada.

The California Environmental Protection Agency, State Water Resources Control Board, San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the city of San Diego have contributed technical services and training related to sampling strategies, laboratory analyses, and equipment. The city of San Diego has assisted Baja California cities with their industrial wastewater programs. California State University at Sacramento has worked with binational technical teams in Tijuana to adapt its nationally recognized industrial wastewater worker training manuals and videos for use in Baja California and throughout Mexico.

Visit www.governor.ca.gov/state/govsite/gov_homepage.jsp.

Equitable Funding for California Desalination Projects

From the California Governor's office

California Gov. Gray Davis signed legislation on Aug. 13, 2003 that will ensure desalination projects receive the same amount of state funding that other water supply and reliability projects are appropriated.

"This bill is critical to the preservation of California's natural resources because it provides a greater emphasis on

desalination projects and it brings these projects up to par with other state funded water plans,” Governor Davis said.

AB 314, authored by Assembly member Christine Kehoe, declares that it is the policy of the state that desalination projects, developed by or for public water entities, be given the same opportunities for state assistance and funding as other water supply and reliability projects.

Visit www.governor.ca.gov/state/govsite/gov_homepage.jsp.

Animas-La Plata Project Will Cost \$162 Million More

Article originally appeared in *WaterTechONLINE*, Aug. 1, 2003

The cost of the Animas-La Plata Project, designed to deliver water to Colorado and New Mexico, is now projected to be \$500 million, a \$162 million increase over the original estimate, *The Associated Press (AP)* said in an article published by SFGate.com.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation said faulty estimates, higher contract costs, and protection of cultural resources helped raise the price tag from the original \$338 million estimate. Preliminary excavation work is scheduled to begin in November.

The new projection alarmed Sen. Pete Domenici of New Mexico, chairman of the subcommittee that oversees the bureau’s budget.

“I expect a thorough review, both with the Bureau of Reclamation and the Interior Department, to determine the cause for the escalation and what our options are now,” he said in the article.

Domenici said he is also concerned about how the cost escalation will affect the project’s schedule.

Animas-La Plata, in the works since 1968, was designed to provide water to more than 3,000 members of the Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute Indian tribes, as well as businesses and farms in

southwestern Colorado and northwestern New Mexico. The project is also intended to settle centuries-old water rights disputes, the *AP* reported.

Visit www.watertechonline.com.

New Water Projects Funded in New Mexico

From the New Mexico Governor’s Office

In late July 2003, New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson announced allocations to support new water projects throughout the state.

\$10.5 million has been targeted for drought-stricken southern and southeastern New Mexico, including: \$500,000 to improve the storm drainage system in Clovis; \$1 million to Portales for conversion of wells from agricultural use to city use; \$600,000 for Artesia to support the next phase of a wastewater treatment plant effluent project; \$1 million to improve the regional wastewater treatment facility shared by Ruidoso and Ruidoso Downs; \$3 million to Alamogordo for a pilot desalinization project to provide an alternate source of potable water for the area; \$442,500 to Tularosa for a water system improvements project; \$1.4 million to drill and connect a new well for the water system in Las Cruces; and \$2.3 million for emergency improvements to Sunland Park’s water system.

Other allocations include \$750,000 for pilot projects in Rio Rancho that are being undertaken with the assistance of Intel Corporation and Sandia National

Laboratories. The projects focus on filtration systems for reclaimed wastewater that can be used for irrigation, commercial, or industrial use. \$465,000 is additionally targeted for improvements to the wastewater system that serves Bosque Farms, \$750,000 for continuation of the South Valley wastewater project for Albuquerque and Bernalillo County, and \$612,000 for a new city well and other improvements in Socorro.

Gov. Richardson also awarded \$1 million to jumpstart the \$442 million Navajo/Gallup Water Supply Project, which will bring water service for the first time to outlying areas of Gallup and rural areas of the Navajo and Jicarilla Apache nations.

In northern New Mexico, an area that is in stage-three drought alert, a \$4 million grant to Espanola and a \$2 million grant to the village of Chimayo will be used to develop water system infrastructure that will allow those municipalities to begin using 1,000 acre-feet per year of Rio Grande water to supplement and eventually replace the use of depleted and contaminated groundwater resources.

Additionally, \$479,000 was allocated to assist state courts and the Office of the State Engineer in resolving disputes and settling water rights issues throughout New Mexico. According to the governor’s office, there is currently a “600-year backlog” of water rights cases in the state. These funds will be used to streamline and simplify the process, and create a statewide water rights public education and instruction campaign.

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ERM’s southwest regional offices are located in Irvine, Scottsdale, El Paso, Albuquerque and Denver. For more information, contact Doug Hodson at 480-998-2401 or Gary Henderson at 505-243-3330.