Linda S. Adams
*Secretary for*
*Environmental Protection*

# California Regional Water Quality Control Board
## Colorado River Basin Region

73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100, Palm Desert, California 92260
(760) 346-7491 • Fax (760) 341-6820
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/coloradoriver

Arnold Schwarzenegger
*Governor*

September 28, 2007

Hi-Desert Water District
Attn: Ed Muzik, General Manager
55439 Twentynine Palms Highway
Yucca Valley, CA 92284-2503

**SUBJECT: TRANSMITTAL OF REGIONAL BOARD RESOLUTION NO. R7-2007-0074, REGARDING A PROPOSED MUNICIPAL SEWAGE COLLECTION SYSTEM AND RECLAMATION WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY (RWWTF) FOR THE TOWN OF YUCCA VALLEY, SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY**

The enclosed Board Resolution No. R7-2007-0074, adopted on September 19, 2007, is a declaration of the Regional Board's support of Hi-Desert Water District (District) and Town of Yucca Valley in their efforts to phase out discharges of wastes from septic systems that are degrading groundwater and adversely affecting its beneficial uses. The Regional Board considers the construction of the RWWTF, proposed by the District and Town of Yucca Valley, to be a strategic regional water quality priority that will set the example for responsible growth within the Colorado River Basin Region. The resolution also directs the Executive Officer to develop a memorandum of agreement with the Town of Yucca Valley to mitigate water quality impacts from septic systems.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Cliff Raley at (760) 776-8962.

ROBERT PERDUE
Executive Officer

CR/tab

Enclosure: Resolution No. R7-2007-0074

File: WDID No. 7A 36 0101 001, Hi-Desert Water District, Yucca Valley

**CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD**
**COLORADO RIVER BASIN REGION**

RESOLUTION NO. R7-2007-0074

SUPPORTING THE HI-DESERT WATER DISTRICT
FOR PRIORITY FUNDING TO
CONSTRUCT A MUNICIPAL SEWAGE COLLECTION SYSTEM AND
RECLAMATION WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY
FOR THE TOWN OF YUCCA VALLEY
AND DIRECTING THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO
DEVELOP A MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
TO MITIGATE WATER QUALITY IMPACTS IN THE TOWN OF YUCCA VALLEY
SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

**WHEREAS,** The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin Region (hereinafter Regional Board), finds that:

1. The Town of Yucca Valley (hereinafter Yucca Valley) primarily relies on the underlying Warren Valley aquifer for its water supply. The aquifer is recharged naturally by infiltration from direct precipitation and intermittent streams. Additionally, recharge basins constructed between 1995 and 2006 receive approximately 4,000 acre-feet per year of water from the State Water Project.

2. Yucca Valley has become a popular retirement community and is growing rapidly. U.S. Census Bureau data indicates that between the years 2000 and 2006, the town's population increased by 21 percent, which is more than 2.5 times the State's average growth rate.

3. The Hi-Desert Water District (hereinafter District) provides domestic water services to Yucca Valley. The District currently uses approximately 17 groundwater wells within the Warren Valley Groundwater Basin, which is in the Joshua Tree hydrologic unit.

4. The District estimates that over 10,000 homes and essentially all commercial businesses in Yucca Valley use septic tank and subsurface disposal systems to process and dispose of municipal, domestic, and industrial wastes.

5. A U.S. Geological Survey study conducted in 2003 (Water Resources Investigations Report 03-4009) indicates that District wells have been adversely impacted by nitrates from septic systems in Yucca Valley.

6. Regional Board staff is preparing a Basin Plan amendment to deal with the water quality threat and actual impacts that discharges of wastes from the septic systems have on areal groundwater supplies in Yucca Valley.

7. Yucca Valley and the District recognize that because high-density septic systems pose a threat to water quality, they are coordinating efforts to provide a municipal sewage collection system and reclamation wastewater treatment facility (RWWTF) to cost-effectively address that threat. The RWWTF will help replenish the underlying Warren Valley aquifer.

8. At a joint meeting held on June 13, 2007, Yucca Valley Town Council and District Board of Directors voted affirmatively to make building the municipal sewage collection system and RWWTF their number one priority and to have the District be lead agency for the project.

9. The District and Yucca Valley need financial assistance to defray the capital cost of a RWWTF that will ultimately be passed on to customers, including the elderly and other fixed-income groups.

10. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the District is conducting an Initial Study and, based on the results of the Initial Study, will be preparing the appropriate CEQA document for the project. The project calls for three phases of construction. Phase I of the RWWTF would serve the main corridor along Highway 62, have a capacity of about one million gallons per day, and an initial cost of about $50 million.

11. The District reports that it can build Phase I within 18 months following certification of the CEQA document and availability of funding.

12. Potential sources of funding administered by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and Department of Water Resources (DWR) include: (a) Proposition 50, the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002; (b) Proposition 84, which funds projects including, but not limited to, safe drinking water, water quality, and water supply; and (c) the State Revolving Fund Loan Program.

13. The District and Yucca Valley are working with Mojave Water Agency (MWA) and other key stakeholders near Yucca Valley, including Joshua Tree Water District and the City of Twentynine Palms, to integrate the proposed RWWTF project as a key element of MWA's Integrated Regional Water Management Plan to successfully compete for financial assistance from the State Board and DWR.

14. Interim water quality control policy is needed, while the RWWTF is being built and the Regional Board staff completes the draft Basin Plan amendment for consideration of adoption by the Regional Board, to address proposed new discharges of waste from residential and commercial construction projects, including proposed discharges of wastes from septic tank-subsurface disposal systems and package wastewater treatment plants.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Regional Board supports Yucca Valley and the District in their efforts to phase out discharges of wastes from septic systems that are degrading groundwater and adversely affecting its beneficial uses;

2. The Regional Board considers construction of the RWWTF proposed by the District and Yucca Valley and elimination of the groundwater quality threat and impacts from septic systems in Yucca Valley to be strategic regional water quality priorities that will set the example for responsible growth within the Colorado River Basin Region;

3. The Regional Board recommends that: (a) MWA integrate the proposed RWWTF as a key element in its Integrated Regional Water Management Plan; and (b) the State Board and DWR make funding for the RWWTF proposed by the District and Yucca Valley also a state priority;

4. The Regional Board directs the Executive Officer to work with Yucca Valley and the District to develop a draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to address the impacts from existing and new systems while the RWWTF is being built;

5. The Executive Officer shall bring the proposed MOA back to the Regional Board for consideration of approval at the earliest practicable time; and

6. The Executive Officer forward a copy of this Resolution to the State Board, DWR, and MWA for their consideration.

I, Robert Perdue, Executive Officer, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin Region, on September 19, 2007.

Robert E Perdue

ROBERT PERDUE
Executive Officer