

Responses to the Draft Report
Chino Basin Water Conservation District

Attachment 7a



Chino Basin Water Conservation District

March 25, 2015

Ltr. No. 2015-731

(Sent via email and hardcopy via U.S. Postal Service)

Kathleen Rollings-McDonald
Executive Officer
San Bernardino LAFCo
215 North D Street, Suite 204
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0490

Service Review for Water Conservation in the Valley Region – Chino Basin WCD Response to the Draft Report

Dear Ms. Rollings-McDonald:

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the Draft Service Review for Water Conservation in the Valley Region. It is apparent the thought and care you and your staff put into the review and recommendations. To supplement your thorough work, we have included an addendum with this letter that clarifies or corrects a few minor items in the report.

Regarding the overall determinations and recommendations of the report, the Chino Basin WCD staff and Board agree that “the Chino Basin WCD has long provided water conservation sustainability through demonstration and education and it provides this service well.” We feel that the Chino Basin WCD is uniquely and advantageously positioned to provide excellent Water Conservation services to this area and as such, would vigorously oppose any outcome that would reduce or zero the Chino Basin WCD’s sphere of influence, resulting in a reduction of the quality or availability of those services to our current community. We also agree that “the service of the Chino Basin WCD is limited within its boundary which encompasses only a portion of the Chino Basin.” With this consideration, we agree with your recommendation that a Sphere of Influence review be initiated. We fully support and endorse increasing the Chino Basin WCD Sphere of Influence to encompass more of the Valley Region.

As the report notes, the Valley Region continues to be a fast growing and densely populated part of the county and state. Increased urbanization will create more impervious surfaces and a greater intensity and volume of runoff during storm events. Managing and percolating this runoff is crucial to flood control and groundwater recharge; fortunately, some key conjunctive use agreements—such as the Agreement for Operation and Maintenance of Facilities to Implement the Chino Basin Recharge Master Plan (commonly referred to as the ‘Four-Party Agreement’)—are already in place to do this effectively.

While managing and percolating storm water is a crucial part of maintaining our water availability, we need to turn to other strategies to increase our baseline water supply. These strategies entail such initiatives as water conservation and water use efficiency practices. As the

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report states, "Conservation and the efficient use of water is the most cost-effective source of water supply reliability and are essential to meeting the Valley region's current and future demand."

The California's water supply reliability and the need for water conservation is currently in the headlines due to the drought; however, we have seen this focus wax and wane depending on the fluctuating water levels in our state's reservoirs. To truly achieve sustainability, the focus on conservation must not just be when it is mandated by the state or in the headlines, but it must be consistent and committed. Many conservation outcomes—such as landscape changes or forming and cementing habits and skills in children, homeowners, and professionals—take time to implement and to become established. An independent agency that is focused on conservation protects this mission and guarantees it will receive appropriate attention and resources. This effort should not be diluted.

At the Chino Basin WCD our only core mission is and always has been water conservation through education, demonstration and percolation. This is not something we began championing due to the current drought, nor is it at cross purposes to our funding or other mandated responsibilities. We strongly believe the continuity, focus, and independent nature of the Chino Basin WCD is crucial to credibility and long term water sustainability in the Valley Region.

Therefore, we respectfully disagree that consolidation with IEUA would provide better service to the Valley Region. The Chino Basin WCD is highly successful in its core mission and there are no other programs of our scale or scope serving the Valley Region. The District is in an excellent financial position to continue providing these services with the added benefit of low overhead and no debt. While we disagree with the possibility of consolidation, we do strongly agree that expanding the sphere of influence for our services would be of great benefit to the Valley Region. To that end, we have initiated discussions with IEUA to explore possibilities by which we could provide our services to a larger area and achieve greater economies of scale.

The Chino Basin WCD staff and board are passionate about conserving water and bringing their expertise to as many people as possible through education, demonstration, and direct engagement. Towards that end we look forward to continued discussions with you and the LAFCO Board to increase the Chino Basin WCD Sphere of Influence and offer our expertise and services to a wider area.

Sincerely,



Eunice M. Ulloa
General Manager

ADDENDUM

Requested Clarifications and Corrections to Draft Service Review for Water Conservation in the Valley Region

Page 4, first paragraph regarding the Gann appropriations limit and back up calculations, please revise the paragraph to acknowledge that the Chino Basin WCD did provide the information to LAFCO in January 2015.

Note: We understand that this information is clarified in the “Continued Monitoring” section, but it is under the heading ‘Inland Empire Utilities Agency and San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District’ not ‘Chino Basin Water Conservation District’ and similar clarification is not offered on page 94 (see comment below).

Page 28, “Valley Region Service Review” map, the Chino Basin WCD four Montclair Basins are located north and south of the 10 Freeway. The map coloration for those basins should all be uniform.

Page 30, the chart representing the Watermaster board should be revised to reflect the current membership. The Chair is Steve Elie, Paul Hofer is the Vice-Chair, Robert Craig is no longer on the board, and the new member is Jim Bowman from the city of Ontario representing the Appropriative pool.

Page 38, last paragraph, first sentence; IEUA is also a member of the GRCC.

Page 38, last paragraph, last sentence that ends on Page 39; Neither IEUA, Chino Basin WCD, SBC Flood Control District nor Watermaster are aware of any process currently underway to develop new or modify the existing individualized operating plans for each of the recharge basins but this may be something considered in the future.

Page 62, Modify first paragraph and add additional paragraph to align comments with similar comments regarding other agencies:

“A primary function of Chino Basin WCD, as identified by its mission statement, is educating the community to conserve water as well as assisting the community in retrofitting efforts. The district opened its renovated Water Conservation Center campus in 2014. The Center includes a landscape design room where one can draft a water wise landscape, a classroom that holds 50 people, an educational lobby exhibit and a dedicated classroom building and edible garden area for Children’s Education. The newly renovated water-wise demonstration garden features nine demonstration zones with over 300 water wise plant species arranged by type and water needs. The 1.5 acre garden is open to the public for self guided or staff guided tours and includes educational signage and demonstration exhibits that teach about water-wise landscaping, efficient irrigation and good maintenance practices. The district site also includes a demonstration parking lot that showcases various permeable pavements and Low Impact Development techniques; and a wilderness park that contains examples of 40 tree species that require low water – both are open to the public from dawn to dusk for casual recreation or informal gatherings.

At the Center, the district conducts workshops, hosts public events, accepts and actively pursues field trip visits from schools, and showcases various construction and landscape designs that reduce water

consumption. One of the districts longest running programs, an annual Earth Day field trip event, has reached over 25,000 5th graders with water conservation education since 1992. The district also offers daily teaching field trips, focused on water conservation and with curriculum that is compliant with state education standards. This past school year the program reached over 4,300 local school children, their teachers and many parents. In addition to these on-site programs, the district runs a water conservation poster contest which received 2,600 entries from 133 classes last year and a grant program that, since 1999, has provided up to \$5,000 for college bound students who are studying towards a career in a water related field.”

Page 85, chart section “Assigned: Compensated absences,” and first paragraph following the chart;

The information on page 36 of the audit under section (9) “Fund Balance” did erroneously leave the value blank however, page 33 of the audit under section (6) “Compensated Absences” clearly reflects the 2013 balance as \$30,090. To ensure clear understanding of the Chino Basin WCD’s fund balance amounts, please insert \$30,090 on the Assigned: Compensated absences line under 2012-2013, and note within the paragraph directly under the chart 2013 compensated absences of \$30,090 was reflected in the audit.

Page 94, last paragraph; this paragraph is identical to the first paragraph on Page 4. Please make the same revisions requested above.