

**JUSTIFICATION FOR PROPOSAL AND
PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION FORM**

1. **Name of Proposal:** Sphere of Influence Amendment to the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District

2. **Name of Applicant:** San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District
1630 W. Redlands Blvd., Suite A
P.O. Box 1839
Redlands, CA 92373
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3. **General location of proposal:**
The San Bernardino Valley Water District (SBVWCD) is located within the eastern portion of the San Bernardino Valley which is located in the western portion of San Bernardino County. SBVWCD is approximately 78 square miles in size.

4. **Does the application possess 100% written consent of each landowner in the subject territory?**
No

5. **Indicate the reasons that the proposed action is requested:**

In March 2006, the San Bernardino Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), per determinations and findings in Resolution 2893, approved a “zero” sphere of influence for SBVWCD. LAFCO’s position at that time was that a single water conservation entity should address the water conservation services in the Bunker Hill Groundwater Basin, and SBVWCD should be consolidated with the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District (SBVMWD) in the future. The “zero” sphere was determined by LAFCO to be “...subject to review and change in the event a future significant change of circumstances so warrants.”

In July 2008, a proposed consolidation the SBVWCD and the SBVMWD was denied by LAFCO. Since that time, SBVWCD has undertaken a strategic planning process to redefine its future goals and direction and to plan proactively for its future service to the community. Central to SBVWCD’s proposed strategy is a purposeful shift towards external affairs – outreach, collaboration, partnership and joint cooperation with others.

To implement that strategy, in December 2011, the SBVWCD agreed to enter into a joint agreement with SBVMWD and the Western Municipal Water District (WMWD) to establish a cooperative partnership among all three agencies, to jointly manage groundwater resources in the Bunker Hill Basin area of western San Bernardino County. In December 2012 all three districts executed the agreement to memorialize the individual district operational and management responsibilities.

In summary, the joint agreement results in additional public benefits and an overall reduction in costs through an efficient division of labor among the three participating public agencies. The joint agreement requires that:

SBVWCD will:

- Lease its recharge basins and other land to WMWD for joint recharge use and development of new water recharge facilities
- Operate and maintain new and existing facilities
- Manage funding and reserves according to the District Reserve Policy, with review and input from WMWD and SBVMWD
- Credit groundwater charge for water pumped by WMWD and SBVWCD against lease payments
- Coordinate with SBVMWD and mining entities for water spreading

WMWD and SBVMWD will:

- Help fund the groundwater enterprise by paying SBVWCD \$400,000 annually (adjusted by the CPI)
- Obtain all permits for new facilities
- Fund repair and replacement of new facilities
- Coordinate operations to minimize interference with mining
- Cooperate with SBVWCD on planning for the Santa Ana River Wash

All agree to:

- Establish and participate in a Joint Operations Committee
- Cooperate on surface water diversions
- Coordinate recharge via BTAC and Regional Conjunctive Use Plan
- Pledge existing water rights to the basin and refrain from contesting rights
- Abstain from exporting native water from the basin except via BTAC and Watermaster
- Consolidate prior agreements and give priority to increasing water supplies and recharge of the groundwater basin

The proposed sphere of influence amendment proposes to delete the “zero” sphere designation for SBVWCD and establish a sphere of influence that includes the current SBVWCD boundaries and an additional 2045 acres as depicted on attached Exhibit A - “Potential Sphere of Influence Change.” The proposed sphere expansion area (beyond the District’s boundaries) includes territory along the Santa Ana River (depicted in green - 2045 acres).

The SBVMWD, WMWD, and many other local districts and communities support the proposed sphere of influence amendment for the SBVWCD.

6. **Would your proposal create a totally or substantially surrounded island of unincorporated territory?**
No, eliminating one.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

1. Total land area (defined in acres):

The SBVWCD comprises approximately 50,000 acres (approximately 78 square miles) within San Bernardino County. The proposed sphere of influence amendment includes the District's current territory and an additional 2045 acres located outside the District's current boundaries.

2. Current dwelling units in area:

The District's water conservation activities primarily support the communities of San Bernardino, Loma Linda, Redlands and Highland, the unincorporated County area of Mentone, and various County islands within incorporated cities. According to the 2010 Census, these communities currently contain approximately 121,500 dwelling units.

3. Approximate current population in area:

The District's water conservation activities primarily support the communities of San Bernardino, Loma Linda, Redlands and Highland, the unincorporated County area of Mentone, and various County islands within incorporated cities. The 2010 Census for these communities indicates a population of approximately 364,000 residents.

4. Indicate the General Plan designation(s) of the affected city (if any) and uses permitted by this designation(s):

The territory within the SBVWCD includes both incorporated and unincorporated areas. Because the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District boundaries encompass a majority of the eastern San Bernardino Valley, the area includes approximately 18 different County and city General Plan land use designations. The designations include a range of residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and open space designations.

5. Describe any special land use concerns expressed in the above plans.

The proposed sphere of influence amendment will not result in any land use changes or conflict with any applicable land use plans. To the contrary, it is compatible with the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, a multi-agency effort that provides for cooperative water resource management throughout the San Bernardino Valley.

6. Indicate the existing and proposed land use.

The present and planned land uses in the area comprising the SBVWCD represent varying levels and intensities of urban development within unincorporated County areas as well as portions of the Cities of San Bernardino, Highland, Loma Linda, Redlands and the unincorporated

community of Mentone. Existing land uses include residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural uses.

7. For a city annexation, State laws require pre-zoning of the territory proposed for annexation. Provide a response to the following:

- a. **Has pre-zoning been completed?** Not Applicable The District does not have zoning authority.
- b. **If the response to “a” is NO, is the area in the process of pre-zoning?** Not Applicable

8. On the following list, indicate if any portion of the territory contains the following:

- **Agricultural Land Uses** Yes
- **Williamson Act Contract** Yes
- **Agricultural Preserve Designation** Yes
- **Area where Special Permits are Required** Yes
- **Any other Unusual Features of the Area or Permits Required** No

9. If a Williamson Act Contract(s) exists within the area proposed for annexation to a City, please provide a copy of the original contract, the notice of non-renewal (if appropriate) and any protest to the contract filed with the County by the City. Please provide an outline of the City’s anticipated actions with regard to this contract.

Not applicable

10. Will the proposal require public services from any agency or district which is currently operating at or near capacity (including sewer, water, police, fire or schools)?

No

ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

1. Provide general description of topography:

The topography generally slopes from the foothills of the San Bernardino National Forest down to the San Bernardino Valley floor. The Santa Ana River is a major feature traversing the area, providing a major water supply source for groundwater recharge as well as drainage and flood control.

2. Describe any existing improvements on the sites as % of total area.

The District’s current boundaries include more than 1000 acres of existing groundwater recharge area including recharge basins. These basins are proposed to be managed in conjunction with WMWD and SBVMWD, who both require additional facilities to accommodate recent water right permits obtained from the State Water Resources Control board. Together, the three districts propose to manage existing facilities, and develop new ones on the Conservation District’s land, together, allocating funding and maintenance responsibilities under

an agreed management structure. Amendment of the Sphere of Influence will not only provide underlying stability to this agreed facility sharing and development agreement, but also bring additional water producing stakeholders into the District's boundaries, with a more direct voice in the District's operation and financing of recharge operations.

3. Describe the surrounding land uses:

NORTH	San Bernardino National Forest
EAST	San Bernardino National Forest
SOUTH	Urban and suburban development within the County of Riverside
WEST	Urban and suburban development within the Chino Basin

4. Describe site alterations that will be produced by improvement projects associated with this proposed action (installation of water facilities, sewer facilities, grading , flow characteristics, etc.)

None. SBVMWD has already undertaken environmental review on its Master Plan of Facilities, and a portion of the facilities it plans to implement will be on Conservation District property. The proposed sphere amendment will provide the needed continuity and stability to assist this capital investment to go forward.

5. Will service extensions accomplished by this proposal induce growth on this site? Adjacent sites?

No

6. Is this project a part of a larger project or series of projects?

No

NOTICES

Please provide the names and addresses of persons who are to be furnished mailed notice of the hearing(s) and receive copies of the agenda and staff report.

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ATTACHMENT: Exhibit A – “Potential Sphere of Influence Change”