



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AVEK Partners with Metropolitan Water District for Groundwater Storage

MWD Agrees to Fund \$131 Million for High Desert Water Bank

Palmdale, CA, December 9, 2019 – The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) signed an agreement today with Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency (AVEK), to fund the construction of the High Desert Water Bank (HDWB), a groundwater storage and recovery project located in the Antelope Valley.

The new partnership will benefit both agencies with a more diverse portfolio of water storage programs, increase water supply reliability and quality, safeguard against water supply shortages due to drought or disasters and help mitigate issues related to climate change. The HDWB is situated on 1500 acres adjacent to the California Aqueduct, northwest of Neenach. The project’s water quality testing has shown that the agencies will be able to comply with increasing requirements to lower contaminant levels in drinking water necessary to pump water back in to the Aqueduct.

Under the agreement, MWD will be allowed to store a maximum of 280,00 acre-feet of their imported water supply in the HDWB, with the ability to either store or withdrawal 70,000 acre-feet per year for 20 years. They have agreed to withdrawal a minimum of 20,000 acre-feet of water per year, to which they will pay AVEK \$100 per acre-foot or \$2 million dollars per year. AVEK will retain ownership of the HDWB, with the ability to store excess water supplies if MWD does not utilize their total capacity. MWD will be able to recover 90% of the water they store in the HDWB. MWD has an option to extend the agreement for an additional 20 years.

MWD will pay for capital costs associated with the design and construction of recovery wells; turnouts from the California Aqueduct; underground and above ground pipelines; recharge basins; and booster pump facilities. Construction costs are estimated to total \$131 million.

“This agreement cements years of collaborative planning to support a shared vision of improved water supply reliability, with the potential to impact the entire state” said AVEK’s General Manager, Dwayne Chisam.

Construction of the HDWB is estimated to start in 2020 and be completed in 2023.

ABOUT AVEK

3rd largest State Water Contractor in California - In 1959, AVEK received its charter as a regional water Agency from the State Legislature. In 1962 AVEK's Board of Directors signed a contract to secure water supplies meant to supplement the local groundwater. AVEK has an entitlement of 144,844 acre-feet. Through optimization of water resources and development of groundwater storage, the Agency maintains a reliable, sustainable and affordable water supply. Serving 20 municipal users along with Edwards Air Force Base, Plant 42 and U.S. Borax within a 2400 square mile territory that includes portions Los Angeles, Kern and Ventura counties. The Agency plays a vital role in supporting future regional economic development and national defense programs.

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