

**Testimony of Gary W. Darling
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City of Antioch, California**

**Before the House Committee on Resources
Subcommittee on Water and Power**

H.R. 1526

**The Bay Area Regional Water Recycling Program Authorization Act of 2007
May 24, 2007**

Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Subcommittee, good morning. My name is Gary Darling and I am the General Manager of the Delta Diablo Sanitation District in Antioch, California.

I appreciate the invitation to appear this morning to offer testimony on behalf of the Bay Area Regional Water Recycling Program (BARWRP) Coalition, a partnership of Bay Area Regional Water Recycling agencies, in strong support of H.R. 1526, the “Bay Area Regional Water Recycle Program Authorization Act of 2007.”

At the outset, I want to extend the Coalition’s deepest appreciation to Congressman George Miller for his vision and leadership in introducing this much-needed water legislation which will help eight Bay Area communities increase their municipal water supplies through innovative water recycle projects. I also want to commend Representatives Anna Eshoo, Zoe Lofgren, Ellen Tauscher, Tom Lantos, Mike Honda, Peter Stark, and Jerry McNerney for being original cosponsors of the bill which also affects critical projects in each of their Districts.

Madam Chairwoman, as a matter of background, BARWRP is a collaboration of 17 Bay Area public entities that, in cooperation with state and federal governments, provide water and wastewater utility service to over one-sixth of the population in California. BARWRP’s mission is to pursue water recycling in the San Francisco Bay Area from a regional perspective. The Bay Area Water Recycling Master Plan, completed in 1999, identified 125,000 acre-feet per year of feasible recycled water opportunities by 2010, and 240,000 acre-feet per year by 2025. Since then, BARWRP agencies have invested nearly \$300 million in local funds to water recycling projects, and many more projects are ready to be built. BARWRP efforts have received assistance from the State through Proposition 50 funding opportunities, and are in need of additional support for implementation. The regional approach taken by Bay Area agencies ensures that potential projects with the greatest regional and statewide benefit receive the highest priority and support for implementation. H.R. 1526 embodies these principles as espoused by the Coalition.

While recycled water is an asset to any community, in the San Francisco Bay Area the benefits of water reuse extend through California’s network of water supplies to the State and Nation. The region is part of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta System – the largest estuary on the west coast of North America and a source of drinking water for two-thirds

of California's population. As a result, Bay Area communities help address the needs of the entire region as they pursue recycled water opportunities.

Specifically, this bill would help the eight Bay Area communities increase their municipal water supplies through innovative and much-needed water recycling projects.

These projects offer significant benefits. For California and the Federal Government such benefits include: the preservation of State and Federal reservoir supplies for higher uses rather than for urban landscape irrigation, particularly in drought years; and, a cost effective, environmentally friendly, implementable solution for increased dry year yield in the sensitive Bay-Delta region. The development of this new dry year yield advances the 1992 Central Valley Improvement Act, co-authored by Congressman Miller, which directs the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to identify new dry year water yield projects. Regional and local benefits include: the preservation of ever-declining water supplies from the Sierra and Delta for higher uses; drought-proof assistance for the region (as you know, California's snowpack is at its lowest in 19 years); provision of a sustainable and reliable source of water in light of climate change; provision of environmental enhancement opportunities; and results in a reduction in wastewater discharges to the sensitive Bay-Delta environment.

The bill would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the following Bay Area Water Reuse Projects: Antioch Recycled Water Project (Delta Diablo Sanitation District, City of Antioch); North Coast County Water District Recycled Water Project (North Coast County Water District); Mountain View/Moffett Area Water Reuse Project (City of Palo Alto, City of Mountain View); Pittsburg Recycled Water Project (Delta Diablo Sanitation District, City of Pittsburg); Redwood City Recycled Water Project (City of Redwood); South Santa Clara County Recycled Water Project (Santa Clara Valley Water District, South County Regional Wastewater Authority); and, South Bay Advanced Recycled Water Treatment Facility (Santa Clara Valley Water District, City of San Jose). This Coalition or partnership is a great example where project sponsors have come together to pursue a federal partnership as a region on a water supply issue, rather than as individual agencies.

The bill provides that each community with a project would be eligible to receive 25% of the project's cost. The total cost of the seven projects is \$110 million, but the Federal Government's share is only \$27.5 million. State money is available for a portion of the project costs. For the most part, the projects are ready to proceed and start delivering their benefits – the projects having been repeatedly vetted, both internally at the local level and through the various steps of the federal review process. In fact, two of the projects – Pittsburg and Palo Alto – have met USBR's strict Title XVI Feasibility Guidelines and are the first projects in the history of the Title XVI program to do so. However, Federal funding is needed for all of the projects to make implementation a reality.

These seven projects are estimated to create 12,205 acre-feet of new water available annually in the short term, and 37,600 acre-feet annually in the long term, all while reducing demand on the Delta and on existing water infrastructure.

It is also noteworthy that each of the sponsors of the projects listed in the Bill have committed to satisfying all of the USBR Title XVI feasibility criteria. Sponsors are not seeking to have their projects' legislated into compliance.

Timing for a federal partnership is critical. Two of the seven projects listed in the bill, Pittsburg and Palo Alto, have received a State grant funding commitment which requires that construction begin by July 15, 2007. Without a federal partnership in place at the start of fiscal year 2008, the projects are underfunded and may not proceed.

The bill would also direct the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to fully fund the San Jose Area Water Reclamation and Reuse Project, already authorized by law and woefully underfunded since then.

Members of the Subcommittee, water recycling offers great potential to states like California that suffer periodic droughts and have limited fresh water supplies. To address these issues, H.R. 1526 would establish a partnership between the Federal Government and local communities to implement a regional water recycling program in the Bay Area. This legislation is critical to meeting the water needs of the Bay Area. Accordingly, the Coalition urges support of H.R. 1526.

Thank you.