Agricultural Partnerships: Key to Southern California’s Water Supply

Bill Hasencamp
Manager, Colorado River Resources
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
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- Regional water wholesaler to 6 counties
  - 5,200 square mile service area
- 26 Member Agencies
- ~19 million residents
- Regional economy: $1 trillion
- Retail demand in 2009:
  - 4 million acre-feet
  - Provided about ½ of retail demands
MWD Member Agencies
Metropolitan Service Area Supplies

Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow

Early 1990s
Heavy dependence on Imported supply

Today
Less than half of the region’s Water is imported

Tomorrow
Maintaining the balance
Partnered Local Supplies

Recycling

Groundwater Recovery

Desalination

Conservation
Metropolitan’s Northern and Central Cal. Transfer Partners

Storage based transfers
Semitropic Water Dist.
Arvin-Edison
Kern Delta, North Kern
Mojave, San Bernardino

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Innovative Transfers Workshop
Lessens Learned

- Transfers can be effectively implemented to meet water supply needs
- For large agencies, individually developed transfer partnerships are more successful than a state drought water bank
- Transfer structure has huge effect on its success
Transfers Refilled
Colorado River Aqueduct

Supply (TAF)

Basic Apportionment

2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010
A tale of 2 transfers: PVID/MWD vs. IID/SDCWA

- Transfers implemented to reduce CA’s dependence on Colorado River Water
- Both long-term transfers
  - PVID/MWD through 2040
  - IID/SDCWA through 2047, may be renewed to 2077
- Provide similar water supply benefits
  - PVID/MWD 30,000 to 120,000 AF per year
  - IID/SDCWA ramping from 10,000 AF to 200,000 AF per year
- Transfers viewed differently by local communities
  - PVID region very supportive of transfer
  - Transfer very unpopular in IID region
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Palo Verde Land Fallowing Program

- 35-year program with voluntary farmer participation
  - Sign-up payment $3,120/acre
  - Annual payment $700/acre
- Farmer fallows between 10% and 35% at MWD’s call
  - Up to 120,000 AF available
- Flexible and reliable water supply while stabilizing farm economy
- $6 million into community improvement programs
A Tale of 2 Transfers: PVID/MWD vs. IID/SDCWA

- Negotiated with Directly with Farmers
- Payments to Farmers
- Farmers get nearly all proceeds; cover Irrig. District’s marginal costs
- Farmers agree to long-term program
- 3rd Party Impact Fund managed by volunteer local entity

- Negotiated with Elected Officials
- Payments to Irrig. Dist.
- Irrig. Dist. gets most of money, farmers compete for funding
- Farmers participate one year at time
- 3rd Party Impact Fund managed by Irrigation District
Summary

- Agricultural partnerships key to meeting future urban needs
- Can be quickly implemented and cost-effective
- Individual partnerships more effective than government run programs
- Transfer success depends on how transfer is structured
Bill Hasencamp
213-217-6520
whasencamp@mwdh2o.com