REPORT

DATE: August 30, 2007

TO: Energy and Environment Committee

FROM: Daniel E. Griset, Program Manager, 213.236.1895, griset@scag.ca.gov

SUBJECT: One Water, One Watershed (OWOW)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL:

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Support the comprehensive water management strategy of One Water One Watershed and direct SCAG staff to collaborate with OWOW in ways that will promote the active use of comprehensive water and resources management in watersheds throughout the SCAG region.

BACKGROUND:

At its last meeting, the Water Policy Task Force was briefed on the One Water One Watershed (OWOW) initiative. This initiative proposes a new level of planning integration in which water resource management is considered in conjunction with other regional priorities such as transportation, land use, open space and habitat protection, parks and recreation, flood control and environmental justice. Based on its continuing interest in the use of integrated resources planning throughout the SCAG region, including planning of water resources, the Task Force acted to urge SCAG support for the OWOW initiative and encourage the use of its integrated approaches in other watersheds in the region.

OWOW is a response to significant conditions that are threatening water supplies and water quality in the Santa Ana River watershed:

- Climate Change that is reducing water supplies at the same time when water needs are increasing in the watershed.
- Uncertainties associated with Colorado River supplies created by the prospects of a long-term drought and entitlement claims of the Upper Basin states.
- Dangers of reduced water supplies from the State Project Water owing to catastrophic levee failure and ecosystem and species declines.
- Lost capacity in the watershed to benefit from natural hydrology and infiltration as land development occurs and population increases lead to greater water needs.

The OWOW is in the process of building a coalition of stakeholders in the watershed to prepare a comprehensive integrated regional water management plan that "builds collaborative support, develops multi-benefit projects, provides a single unified proposal, and secures increased funding to address water resource threats to the watershed."

This process is a much more comprehensive approach than the one used to bring $250 million to the watershed from Proposition 13. In that successful effort the funded projects were principally those sponsored by the SAWPA member agencies.

OWOW is organized with a Steering Group and Working Group:

- The Steering Committee is composed of County Supervisors, Mayors, elected water officials and members of the business and environmental community.
- A Working Group will develop plans and solutions with leaders from water agencies, county governments, universities and non-profit organizations.

As it prepares an integrated water management for the watershed, OWOW will work with and evaluate 10 major elements or "pillars" of water resource management:

1. Water Supply Reliability (including groundwater management, water storage, water conveyance)
2. Water Quality Improvement (including desalination)
3. Flood Control and Stormwater Runoff (including TMDL and NPS pollution control)
4. Water Recycling (including wastewater treatment and collection)
5. Environmental Enhancement and Habitat (including wetlands, forest and wildlife conservation)
6. Water Conservation (including rainwater capture and recharge)
7. Climate Change (including carbon "footprinting" and energy benefits)
8. Land Use (including smart growth, low impact development)
9. Environmental Justice (including perchlorate cleanup, disadvantaged communities)
10. Parks, Recreation, Open Space (including trails)

The financial objective of this new initiative is $200 million in new state bond funding.

This effort is well aligned with priorities that are now being developed in the Water Resources Chapter of an updated Regional Comprehensive Plan for the SCAG region. The priorities include the important linkages between water supply and water quality, land use and the protection of natural areas, water conservation and reuse and water system reliability and cost-effectiveness. Taken together these linkages constitute a much needed integration of resources planning that can contribute to more sustainable urban activities in a growing SCAG region.

The OWOW effort is consistent with the draft Goals and Outcomes for the Water Resources Chapter that was received and endorsed by the Regional Comprehensive Plan Task Force at its July 9, 2007 meeting and forwarded on to the Energy and Environment Committee as an information item at its August 30, 2007 meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT:
Support of this strategy will not result in a fiscal impact on SCAG.

Reviewed by: *Division Manager*

Reviewed by: *Department Director*

Reviewed by: *Chief Financial Officer*