

Recycled Water Advisory Group Launched

LADWP significantly advanced its ambitious recycled water program in December 2009 when the Recycled Water Advisory Group (RWAG) assembled for the first time to hear a comprehensive overview of how recycled water will play a greater role in our city's water supply in years to come.

The group, comprised of about 50 stakeholders from across the city representing environmental groups, community based organizations, neighborhood councils, homeowner associations and others, came together for a half-day workshop co-presented with the Department of Public Works Bureau of Sanitation. RWAG members will meet bi-monthly to engage in constructive dialogue with the LADWP and other City staff to provide ideas, input and concerns regarding recycled water.

The core presentation was “The Role of Recycled Water in L.A.’s Water Supply” that discussed plans to recycle wastewater into highly purified water for drinking purposes after undergoing groundwater replenishment (GWR) and re-treatment, which is one of the components of the city of Los Angeles Water Supply Action Plan prepared by the LADWP and unveiled by Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa in May 2008. Another is expanding the City’s existing “purple pipe” system that currently delivers recycled water for approved uses such as irrigating municipal golf courses and in the cooling towers of Valley Generating Station.

Stakeholders learned that there are no new supplies of water. Sustained drought conditions and environmental measures in key water supply regions—notably the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Sierra Nevada—have reduced deliveries to Southern California, including Los Angeles, which imports 85% of its water from hundreds of miles away. Thus, continuing to provide a reliable water supply will require increases in both conservation and water recycling.

RWAG will consider key project issues and discuss challenges that the Department may face as it looks to garner community acceptance of these programs. Members will also be asked to carry news of these initiatives back to their stakeholder groups for additional input.

“If the first meeting is any indication, this will be a very productive process going forward,” said Jim Yannotta, assistant director of water resources, who oversees the LADWP’s recycled water program. “As the interest of this group shows, Angelenos are more aware than ever of our water supply challenges and what we can do collectively to address them.”

LADWP has been using recycled water since 1979. Usage has been expanded to include supplying recycled water to the Dominguez Gap Seawater Intrusion Barrier to protect drinking water aquifers in the Harbor area. LADWP is investigating other methods to reuse water, notably GWR to recharge the San Fernando Groundwater Basin.



LADWP’s Water Recycling Group Manager Evelyn Cortez-Davis, left, and Assistant Director of Water Resources Jim Yannotta presented LADWP’s plan to expand recycled water uses at the Recycled Water Advisory Group’s first meeting.

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