

NEWS RELEASE

January 5, 2016

Contact: Sue Mosburg, (619) 409-6882
Tim Worley, (909) 762-7401

California Water Board backs program targeting utilities' water losses

Approves \$3.2 million in technical assistance for validated water audits

(*Rancho Cucamonga, CA*) – The California-Nevada Section of the American Water Works Association (CA-NV AWWA) will receive \$3.2 million over two years to help California's water agencies produce validated system water audits, in an action approved by the State Water Resources Control Board on January 5. Accurate water audits are the first step in developing systematic water management programs to cut unnecessary losses of both water and revenue, according to experts. Legislation in 2014 and last year now require the approximately 450 urban water systems to submit validated water audits to the state's Department of Water Resources (DWR), but proponents say that the utilities' self interest in discovering and curbing unknown losses of water and money should make the program extremely popular.

"Our goal is to work as a real partner with every water agency in California, meeting them at their level of understanding and providing the assistance and support they need to start on the path to the most economically efficient water management," said Sue Mosburg. The immediate past chair of CA-NV AWWA, Mosburg is a program manager at Sweetwater Authority near San Diego, where she has worked with a team of other employees to learn and refine their water audits over the past five years. She shared her agency's experience as a featured speaker at the first North American Water Loss Conference last month in Atlanta, Georgia.

Mosburg explained that, "Even after five years working on this, we still have more that we will learn about our own system. It is more complicated than it would seem, because it depends on good analysis of so much different data. To do this right definitely requires a strong, committed team effort."

In approving funding for the uncontested program, Water Board chair Felicia Marcus commented that, "It's an important project. It's a way to help in that next phase." Board member Steven Moore commented that "This is a really important step for the state."

The Water Loss Control Collaborative that was approved for state funding is a 23-month program with multiple sessions of technical review and assistance. Partially modeled on a successful statewide water loss control program in Georgia, the program takes a two-pronged approach to meet utilities at their level of experience with the water loss control concepts. The

Collaborative recognizes the efforts of California utilities that have already completed water audits following the American Water Works Association (AWWA) Manual M36 methodology which incorporates the use of the AWWA Water Audit Software. Phase 1 is designed to accommodate new learners, early adopters and advanced practitioners, culminating in the universal submittal of validated AWWA M36 water audits by all retail urban water utilities in California. The learning model is built on a series of progressive steps that provide practical application and learning through reinforcement. About 130 California water agencies have previously submitted water audit results to California Urban Water Conservation Council (CUWCC), in compliance with a recognized Best Management Practice.

According to Tim Worley, Executive Director of CA-NV AWWA, the program will help DWR meet its obligations under SB 555. Worley stated that, “SB 555 calls on DWR to aid water utilities with training and technical assistance, and our program is tailor-made to meet that goal. The bill will also require DWR to collect and review hundreds of system water audits annually, and because this program will raise the quality of those audits, it will be a huge service to the Department.”

More information about the Water Loss Control Collaborative can be found at www.ca-nv-awwa.org. The AWWA Water Loss Control Committee developed the Free AWWA Water Audit Software, and maintains an extensive repository of information on water loss control subjects.

###

The California - Nevada Section of American Water Works Association (CA-NV Section AWWA) is a non-profit association whose mission is to support the drinking water professionals who provide safe and reliable water to millions of people throughout California and Nevada.