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April 6, 2005

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Eric L. Gillies
 Project Manager
 California State Lands Commission
 100 Howe Ave, Suite 100
 South Sacramento, CA 95825

Dear Mr. Gillies:

Comments on Draft EIR for Disposition of Offshore Cooling Water Conduits,
 SONGS Unit 1 (State Clearinghouse Number SCH 2004061092)

MEMBER AGENCIES

- City of Brea
- City of Buena Park
- East Orange County Water District
- El Toro Water District
- Emerald Bay Service District
- City of Fountain Valley
- City of Garden Grove
- City of Huntington Beach
- Irvine Ranch Water District
- Laguna Beach County Water District
- City of La Habra
- City of La Palma
- Mesa Consolidated Water District
- Moulton Niguel Water District
- City of Newport Beach
- City of Orange
- Orange County Water District
- Orange Park Acres Mutual Water Co.
- City of San Clemente
- City of San Juan Capistrano
- Margarita Water District
- County Water District
- Seal Beach
- Water District

3.6.1

The Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC) is a wholesale water agency serving most of Orange County, with a service population of about 2.3 million residents, including service to 30 retail water agencies. We have taken the time to carefully review the draft EIR for the Disposition of Offshore Cooling Water Conduits for SONGS Unit 1 and have a number of comments as outlined below.

One of MWDOC's overarching goals and responsibilities is to work with its agencies to improve water system and supply reliability in the County. We have a number of efforts underway to help improve reliability. These include construction of regional reservoirs in South Orange County; construction of interties and pump stations to better integrate the water systems from North and South Orange Counties; development of projects to move groundwater from North to South County during emergency situations; implementation of Water Use Efficiency measures to utilize existing water resources as efficiently as possible; transfers and storage of wet-year water to help during drought situations; and development of local supplies in South Orange County, including groundwater, recycled water and desalinated ocean water. MWDOC is currently evaluating ocean desalination at both Dana Point and at Camp Pendleton. Water delivered from either of these two sites would provide two benefits in South Orange County – a new source of water and improved system reliability to deal with emergency types of situations. South Orange County currently depends on one treatment plant in Yorba Linda and many miles of transmission pipeline to supply 97% of the potable water needs. A problem with the treatment plant or pipelines leaves South Orange County stranded with only several days of supplies in storage. An ocean desalination plant at Dana Point or Camp Pendleton or both would greatly enhance the system reliability in South Orange County.

3.6.2 { Over the past several years, MWDOC has been conducting feasibility investigations for ocean desalination at both the Dana Point and Camp Pendleton locations. Some of the work conducted at the Camp Pendleton site was done in conjunction with San Diego County Water Authority. An ocean desalination plant at Dana Point can only be made large enough to help out a portion of South Orange County. An ocean desalination plant at Camp Pendleton could be made large enough to further augment supplies to South Orange County, the Marine Corps Base at Camp Pendleton and the northern service area of the SDCWA. Development of the sites at Dana Point and Camp Pendleton are not mutually exclusive – both locations could be developed. Several more years of work will be required at both sites before ocean desalination projects can be recommended for implementation. Our plan is to preserve these sites while continuing to conduct additional feasibility work to better understand the issues at both sites.

3.6.3 { At this time, MWDOC is unable to state with any certainty if the intake and outfall at SONGS Unit 1 would be used for ocean desalination purposes to serve Orange County, nor are we aware of any other public purpose other than the possible use as a sewer outfall by Camp Pendleton. However, we believe that the public could potentially benefit from these facilities in the future as part of an ocean desalination plant or some other use and therefore we urge the State Lands Commission to protect the facilities in their current configuration under the “No Project” alternative or protect the facilities in their slightly modified configuration under the “Artificial Reef” alternative. We believe either of these two alternatives are superior to the “Proposed Project” which would not only involve considerable construction in the ocean environment, but the use of the facilities would be lost over time as they are allowed to naturally fill in with sand and sediment. Our recommendation was developed for the following reasons:

- 3.6.4 {
- The “Proposed Project” in the draft EIR involves excavation and other work to the existing intake and outfall pipelines in the marine environment, which would result in impacts to the area. Preservation of the facilities could be accomplished under the “No Project” alternative without any impacts to the marine environment. Under the “Artificial Reef” alternative, the environment would be improved through creation of a reef area.
 - Given that Units 2 and 3 navigational buoys will need to be maintained for a number of years, we do not view the additional burden on SCE to maintain the navigational buoy for Unit 1 to be significant.
 - The public would best be served by protection of the existing facilities until such time as it has been determined that the facilities would not serve any public good.

3.6.5

- The State Taskforce on Desalination recommended the inclusion of “desalination, where economically and environmentally appropriate, as an element of a balanced water supply portfolio...” and recommended local governments assess “the availability of land and facilities for environmentally and economically acceptable seawater desalination.” There are only a limited number of viable sites for ocean water desalination plants along the California coast (particularly in already developed coastal areas) and the development of these sites for other purposes would systematically eliminate potential desalination plants from ever being constructed at these locations. We believe the State of California and the State Lands Commission have a responsibility to its citizens to preserve viable ocean water desalination sites along the California coast. We would support an effort to establish a state policy to require viable ocean desalination sites be considered for preservation in regulatory and resource decisions made by state administrators, regulatory bodies, and coastal land use decision making entities. Your decision for the “No Project” or the “Artificial Reef” alternatives would further this effort.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter. We look forward to working with you toward preservation of the facilities and site. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 714-593-5024 or e-mail at kseckel@mwdoc.com.

Sincerely,



Karl W. Seckel, P.E.
Assistant Manager/District Engineer

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1 **3.6 Municipal Water District of Orange County, April 6, 2005**

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3 3.6.1 Comment noted.

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5 3.6.2 Comment noted.

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7 3.6.3 Support for the “No Project” or “Artificial Reef Alternative” acknowledged.

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9 3.6.4 Comment noted.

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11 3.6.5 Comment noted.

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