

Supervisors OK use of recycled water

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LOS ANGELES — Back in 2003, 4th District Supervisor Don Knabe predicted that water would become a "bigger issue than power" if the county didn't start to look at ways of using less potable water.

One way is to use recycled water, and a new agency will try to spread that method throughout the county.

At its Feb. 20 meeting, the Los Angeles County Board of

Supervisors unanimously approved several measures meant to encourage the use and development of recycled water, including the creation of an office of water recycling.

The office's goal will be to double the county's use of recycled water by 2030, which would save enough potable water to meet the needs of another 1.3 million people, according to a statement from Knabe's office.

Creating the office, which will be part of the Department of Public Works and will have a budget of \$400,000 for its first year, was one of many suggestions put forth by the report of a county recycled water task force.

Norm Hickling, an aide to 5th District Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, said Knabe has been a leader on water recycling at the county level, but noted that Antonovich has been working to increase water recycling in the Antelope Valley.

"Supervisor Antonovich has been well out in front of this," Hickling said, mentioning Antelope Valley water summits organized by Antonovich.

One result of those summits, Hickling said, has been the drive to create an Integrated Regional Water Management plan, for the

Antelope Valley.

Water stakeholders from city governments, Edwards Air Force Base, county sanitation districts and other groups and organizations, have been meeting monthly since May to create the plan.

The plan is scheduled to be complete by December.

Hickling said the Antelope Valley is well ahead of Los Angeles County in terms of water recycling.

"Up here in the Antelope Valley, we're in the implementation process versus just coming up with an office," he said. "This plan is actually being executed."

Under Antonovich's leadership, Hickling said, the planning and building process for a recycled water "backbone" to serve Lancaster and Palmdale already is under way.

Knabe's statement described the big picture.

"With an estimated 12 million people living in Los Angeles County by 2020, serious steps are needed to increase the use and longevity of our local water supply," Knabe said in the statement.

"By adopting the recommendations of our water recycling task force, we are preparing to meet the water demands of the future with better infrastructure and increased collaboration among water agencies, businesses, the public and municipal agencies throughout the region."

Among the report's other policy recommendations were for the county to develop a recycled water master plan by June 2008, appoint the director of Public Works as the lead county officer for water recycling and to propose regulations by July 1 to require water district customers to use recycled water whenever possible.

Recycled water is not potable — that is, it cannot

be used for drinking or bathing — but can be used for irrigation and other purposes. One of the county office of water recycling's goals will be to educate businesses and the public of the possible uses for recycled water.

Hickling also said there are plans in the works to expand treatment facilities serving Lancaster and Palmdale so they can produce tertiary treated water, which has been treated three times and can be used for all agricultural and irrigation purposes. The plants currently produce secondary treated water, which can only be used for some agricultural purposes, such as irrigating tree farms.

"That would mean it could be used for golf courses, medians, lawns," Hickling said.

"We're starting planning building a backbone system so water from those treatment plants could then be distributed throughout the Antelope Valley."

The backbone would connect to treatment plants in the county's sanitation districts 14 and 20, he said.

Hickling said Antonovich and other area leaders would work with congressional representatives to try to get funding for the system "in the near future."

The cost of the backbone was estimated at \$145 million by the report from the county's recycled water task force.

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Lahontan Region, voted in March to permit Los Angeles County Sanitation District 14, which serves Lancaster, to expand its list of recycled water users.

Directors of the Palmdale Water District approved the proposed recycled water backbone in May.



HICKLING

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