

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 25, 2011

CONTACT: Melinda Terry  
(916) 446-0197

NORTH DELTA LANDOWNERS VOTE TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY

*Assessment adjustment approved with 64 percent of the weighted vote*

SACRAMENTO, CA – The North Delta Water Agency (NDWA) announced today that property owners have agreed to pay more to uphold an exceptional contract with the State that protects water quality and supply for lands within the Agency’s boundaries, an area spanning approximately 300,000 acres and portions of four counties in the north Delta. Official results will be announced at the May 4, 2011, NDWA Board meeting, at which time the Board will consider action to adopt the new assessment rates.

Ballot tabulation was completed by a third-party finance and accounting firm on Friday, with results showing that 64 percent of the weighted ballots returned by property owners were in favor of the benefit assessment. In total, 3,620 of the approximately 15,100 ballots were returned, representing approximately 62 percent of the total possible weighted vote.

Assessment revenues – which have not been increased since 1997 – are primarily used to pay for a contract with the State that assures NDWA landowners a dependable supply of suitable quality water for reasonable and beneficial use. Under the contract, the State is required to release enough stored water from the State Water Project into the northern Delta to make up for deficiencies in natural flow available to meet the needs of NDWA landowners, even during water shortages; and, ensure that the supply of water will be sufficient to hold back the intrusion of salt water, providing a minimum standard for water quality.

“Many property owners, especially those with large agricultural parcels, understand that the contract is an insurance policy for our water rights,” said Henry Kuechler, Chair of the North Delta Water Agency Board. “Given the increasing scrutiny on water rights and water allocations, we need the protections now more than ever before.”

The assessment is expected to raise approximately \$1.25 million each year, if levied at the maximum rates. In addition to covering annual contract payments to the State, assessment revenues will be used to defend and enforce contract protections. The latter may become necessary in the face of proposed changes to water resources legislation, policies, and plans, such as the Bay Delta Conservation Plan and the Delta Stewardship Council’s Delta Plan.

“With approval of the assessment, we can continue to make annual contract payments and represent the interests of our property owners in policy and planning venues that impact water quality and supply in the north Delta,” said Melinda Terry, the Agency’s manager. “In doing so, we will make certain that the water supply reliability for the North Delta is maintained as options to provide water supply reliability are considered for the rest of the State.”

For more information, please contact Melinda Terry, Manager of the North Delta Water Agency, at (916) 446-0197.

# # #

*The North Delta Water Agency was formed in 1973 to protect the water supply and quality for landowners within the Agency’s boundaries, which includes approximately 19,000 parcels in Sacramento, Solano, San Joaquin, and Yolo Counties.*