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Revived water storage plan attracts potential customers

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10:00 PM PDT on Thursday, July 16, 2009

Western Municipal Water District in Riverside is among five Southern California suppliers that have expressed interest in a controversial proposal to store and draw water from an underground basin in the Mojave Desert, officials confirmed Thursday.

The project in the Cadiz Valley, about 40 miles east of Twentynine Palms, would involve burying 44 miles of pipeline to move surplus Colorado River water to an underground reservoir the size of Rhode Island. The water rights and 55 square miles of land belong to Cadiz Inc.

The company also wants to draw water from beneath nearby dry lake beds that it says would otherwise be lost to evaporation.

The Santa Monica-based company says that five water providers signed letters of intent to evaluate the project and share the costs of an environmental review, with options to buy the water.

--Janet Zimmerman

jzimmerman@PE.com