



News from EMWD

Community Involvement Department
951/928-3777, ext. 4219
FAX 951/928-6171
odencransp@emwd.org
P.O. Box 8300
Perris, CA 92572-8300

For Immediate Release

San Jacinto Valley water settlement bill supported in Congress

Perris, CA (March 19, 2008)—Randy Record, a fifth-generation San Jacinto native and farmer, represented the San Jacinto Valley in the nation’s Capitol last week. Speaking before the Subcommittee on Water and Power for the House Committee on Natural Resources, Record encouraged the U.S. House of Representatives to approve legislation that will directly sustain the San Jacinto Valley’s water supply by bringing new water sources to local residents.

In so doing, it would end a long-standing lawsuit by the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians and formalize specific water rights and compensation. It would also provide a framework for funding an assured water supply for the tribe and the groundwater operators, including Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD), Lake Hemet Municipal Water District (LHMWD), and the cities of Hemet and San Jacinto.

Record was in Washington, D.C. as a board member for EMWD and as that agency’s representative on the board of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD). He spoke in favor of H.R. 4841, the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians Settlement Act of 2007. That legislation was introduced by Congresswoman Mary Bono Mack and co-sponsored by Congressmen Jerry Lewis and Joe Baca.

“When eventually approved by the full House and Senate,” Record said, “this settlement will not only end decades of disagreement over local water use, but set an example for others.

“I’ve grown up hearing about this water dispute all my life, and I’m glad to see that we can finally put that conflict behind us. What our current 200,000 valley residents expect is a reliable water supply—most people don’t care about continuing the controversy.”

H.R. 4841 was written in response to a lawsuit stemming from construction of the Colorado River Aqueduct through Mt. San Jacinto in the 1930s, near the Tribe’s reservation. During construction of the 13-mile tunnel, groundwater held in storage deep under the mountain was released, and thousands of gallons of water filled the tunnel. Attempts to prevent this inflow were unsuccessful, and aqueduct inflows averaging 5,000 acre-feet per year continue.

As a result, EMWD was formed in 1950 and annexed to MWD the following year to receive an annual credit equal to the value of the seepage water and pass this credit along to its customers in the form of reduced water rates.

Because of the many local groundwater users, the San Jacinto Valley typically has an overdraft, compared with how much water is replaced naturally, primarily from the San Jacinto River.

In general, the settlement agreement sets quantified water rights for the Tribe and outlines the methods to be used to assure the availability of that supply. It provides a way in which some of that supply will be made available by local public agencies, provides compensation to the Tribe and makes water not needed by the Tribe available for use by the four local agencies.

###

EMWD is the freshwater, wastewater service and recycled water provider to a 555-square mile area from Moreno Valley southward along the I-215 corridor to Temecula and eastward to Hemet and San Jacinto. Approximately 660,000 people live and work in this area. In addition to its own water customers, EMWD supplements water to eight local water agencies and municipalities that have their own water departments. EMWD operates four water reclamation facilities and treats some 45 million gallons of wastewater daily. More information can be found at EMWD’s web site www.emwd.org.