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SAWPA PRESENTS FINAL RESULTS OF ANNUAL EMERGING CONSTITUENTS SAMPLING IN SANTA ANA RIVER WATERSHED

RIVERSIDE, CA—The Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA), a regional leader for water quality research and protection, is taking advantage of advances in detection technology to get a more accurate picture of what is in our water. For the second year, SAWPA has tested throughout the watershed for emerging constituents, a term for pharmaceuticals, additives and common household chemicals with no federal or state water quality standards. These constituents, which range from acetaminophen, ibuprofen and caffeine to hormones, pesticides, and other chemicals, occur in water supplies around the U.S. in amounts so small that only the most innovative technology can detect their presence at all. SAWPA's decision to search for and characterize these chemicals puts the organization at the forefront of water quality research.

The final report with results and analysis of the 2011 testing will be submitted to the Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) December 30, 2011; the preliminary report was presented to the Regional Board on December 9th.

“SAWPA's regional role allows it to serve as a coordinator of this testing program, and an important resource on water quality in our watershed,” said Celeste Cantú, general manager of SAWPA. “The goal is to learn as much as we can about our water with the best available science, and to use that information to ensure our water is healthy to drink. “

Rapid improvements in detection capability enable the recognition of a broad spectrum of chemicals at dramatically lower concentrations than was previously possible. Today, trace chemicals can be detected in as low a quantity as one part per trillion, the equivalent of one drop in a lake the size of 20 Olympic swimming pools.

Along with water and wastewater agencies throughout the Santa Ana River Watershed, SAWPA developed a voluntary program to proactively collect and analyze water samples in 27 locations throughout the watershed, from wastewater treatment plants to streams and aqueducts. The sampling, which began in the spring of 2010, analyzed 11 constituents, with two more added in 2011 based upon State Water Board recommendations. The December 9th presentation covered the sampling process, as well as the results and ramifications for the watershed. For more information, visit www.sawpa.org.

SAWPA is a Joint Powers Authority dedicated to a sustainable Santa Ana River Watershed that is salt balanced, drought proofed and supports economic and environmental vitality, as well as an enhanced quality of life.