



Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer

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City Project to Divert Wastewater from Ocean Recognized in EPA Tentative Decision to Renew Treatment Plant Permit

PURE WATER PLAN CHAMPIONED BY MAYOR FAULCONER, ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS TO INCREASE S.D. WATER SUPPLY WAS KEY TO EPA'S TENTATIVE APPROVAL

San Diego – The City of San Diego's commitment to clean water was recognized Monday when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced its tentative approval of a modified permit for the Point Loma Wastewater Treatment Plant, an acknowledgement of the City's investment in a water recycling program that will divert millions of gallons of wastewater per day to a water purification facility that would have otherwise flowed into the Pacific Ocean.

"I am pleased the EPA recognizes that our city's plan to create a sustainable, local water supply through water purification will also protect the ocean from pollutants and help San Diego continue to meet clean water standards," Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer said. "This is another validation of the Pure Water program, which will eventually reduce San Diego's reliance on costly imported water. That's good news for San Diego families, businesses and ratepayers who want more local control over our water costs."

The EPA requires the City of San Diego to renew its permits to operate the Point Loma Wastewater Treatment Plant every five years.

The Pure Water project featured prominently in the permit application as a way the City can reduce ocean discharge without expensive upgrades to the Point Loma plant. Once fully

operational, this innovative and ambitious water recycling project would provide 83 million gallons of water every day by 2035 – equal to one-third of the city’s entire water supply. It is one of the major sustainability projects that supports Mayor Faulconer’s landmark Climate Action Plan.

Without the modified permit from the EPA, the cost to modify the Point Loma plant to secondary treatment levels is estimated at \$1.8 billion. The plant has operated under a modified permit since November 1995.

“This tentative approval provides protections against costly upgrades to the Point Loma Wastewater Treatment Plant while creating an opportunity for San Diego to move forward with Pure Water, which is good for ratepayers and the environment,” Councilmember Chris Cate said.

The City Council voted unanimously in 2014 to pursue the Pure Water plan.

“We need water too badly in San Diego to use it once and send it to the ocean. This project marks the beginning of a paradigm shift in how we use and manage water, and it seems as though the agencies recognize that as well. We would love to see a future where very little wastewater is discharged to the ocean and the majority is reused,” said Julia Chunn-Heer Policy Manager of Surfrider San Diego.

“We look forward to working with the EPA to secure final approvals from Regional Water Quality Control Board and the California Coastal Commission,” said Halla Razak, Public Utilities Department Director.

It is anticipated that the EPA Regional Board will hold the first public hearing on the permit approval at its Dec. 14 meeting and will conduct the approval hearing in early 2017. The Coastal Commission’s hearing on the permit occurs after Regional Board approval and is expected to be in spring 2017.