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Coastal Commission Renews Water Treatment Plant Permit Saving San Diego \$1.8 Billion

PERMIT APPROVAL PAVES THE WAY FOR 'PURE WATER' RECYCLING PROGRAM

San Diego – The City’s plan to develop a sustainable water supply and divert wastewater flows from the Pacific Ocean came one step closer to reality today when the California Coastal Commission unanimously gave its approval for a modified permit for the Point Loma Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Without the modified permit, converting the plant for secondary treatment capabilities would cost \$1.8 billion. The City’s commitment to reducing ocean discharges and implementing the Pure Water Program were factors in the commission’s decision to approve the modified permit.

“The Coastal Commission’s vote validates that San Diego is a true steward of the environment,” Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer said. “The commission recognizes our efforts to protect the ocean, efficiently operate city facilities and invest ratepayer dollars into infrastructure that will provide a reliable water source for our City.”

The Pure Water Program will use proven water purification technology to clean recycled water to produce safe, high-quality drinking water. It is one of the major sustainability projects that support Mayor Faulconer’s Climate Action Plan.

The program offers a cost-effective investment for San Diego's water needs and, when fully operational in 2035, will provide 83 million gallons of water every day – equal to one-third of the city's entire water supply.

“The Coastal Commission’s decision represents another critical step forward in the development of the Pure Water Program. We are excited about the opportunity to focus our efforts on bringing this innovative project online,” said Halla Razak, Public Utilities Department Director.

The first phase of the Pure Water program is expected to be completed by 2021 and will provide about 15 percent of the City's water supply needs.

Federal law requires all wastewater treatment plants to renew their discharge permits every five years. The City of San Diego is seeking a renewal of a modified permit from the EPA, based on the specific conditions of the treatment process and environmental conditions. The plant has operated under a modified permit since November 1995.

The EPA is expected to finalize the approval of the modified permit within the next month.

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