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Central Basin Secures Funding for Bell Gardens' Conservation Makeover ***Local city selected to pilot the California Friendly® City model***

Carson, CA– Central Basin Municipal Water District was awarded a conservation grant by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) to transform the City of Bell Gardens into a “California Friendly City” model by integrating key water-saving measures at public parks and facilities.

Through the Enhanced Conservation Program grant, Metropolitan will provide more than \$100,000 to Central Basin in the next two years to support Bell Gardens in becoming the first city in the region to embrace a comprehensive water conservation program on a citywide scale.

In developing this visionary project, Central Basin worked with Mayor Pedro Aceituno of Bell Gardens and the city’s Director of Recreation and Community Services to create a plan that incorporated innovative conservation measures, many of which are currently endorsed under Metropolitan’s California Friendly Program.

“We are thrilled about this project and believe that Bell Gardens is the ideal setting to showcase the potential regional impact of a California Friendly City,” said Mayor Aceituno. “This is a truly visionary project, made possible through our partnerships with Central Basin and Metropolitan.”

In June 2006, Central Basin submitted the project on the city’s behalf to the Enhanced Conservation Program. The competitive process included a review panel of environmental groups, Metropolitan staff and representatives from non-participating member agencies. The Bell Gardens project was among only a handful of projects selected, chosen for its feasibility, regional applicability and anticipated water savings.

“This is a great example of how collaboration between a city and its water district can lead to innovative solutions,” said Central Basin Director Ed Vasquez, who represents the City of Bell Gardens in Division I. “Not only will the California Friendly City model be instrumental in furthering Metropolitan’s efforts

to expand the current program, the model will have lasting regional impact, and Metropolitan recognizes that.”

The California Friendly program was started by Metropolitan and its member agencies in an effort to promote California native plants. The program proved to be a success, and the brand is now being refined and expanded to encompass larger-scale projects and programs that embody water-efficiency. The City of Bell Gardens will support Metropolitan with this effort, serving as a pilot project to evaluate the guidelines for all future California Friendly City makeovers, particularly for lower-income, inner-city communities prevalent in Southern California.

The conservation measures to be adopted by the city will include the installation of synthetic turf at one of the city’s premier soccer fields; 50,000 square feet of California native landscaping; a wireless valve controller system to irrigate various sites throughout the city’s 122-acre parkland; and the installation of waterless urinals and high-efficiency toilets throughout public facilities.

Central Basin will begin working with the city and Metropolitan to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy and start the installation of selected measures. As a second phase to the project, community members will be encouraged to follow the city’s example, adopting water conservation as a viable and rewarding way of life.

Central Basin is a public agency that wholesales imported water to cities, mutual water companies, investor-owned utilities and private companies in southeast Los Angeles County, serving a population of more than 2 million. In addition, Central Basin provides the region with recycled water for municipal, commercial and industrial uses. Formed in 1952, Central Basin is committed to ensuring a safe and reliable water supply for the region.

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