



**For Immediate Release**

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## **CENTRAL BASIN EXTENDS THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR DRAFT PEIR**

*The Central Basin Board approves an extended review period for draft environmental impact report at request of stakeholders*

COMMERCE, CA.--The Central Basin Municipal Water District Board of Directors voted Wednesday to extend the deadline for public comment on the draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) of the Central Basin Groundwater Storage Plan until March 1, 2012. This extension, which gives stakeholders and interested parties a total of 110 days to provide comments, was in response to one of several requests made by stakeholders at a public workshop held on November 30th.

“The final draft of this report will show us the potential environmental impacts of a groundwater storage program,” said Central Basin Board President Ed Vasquez. “This report is too important to rush. We are taking our time and doing it right, and we were happy to extend the comment period to allow everyone a chance to participate in the process.”

The stakeholder workshop held on November 30 was one of a series that the District has held since the beginning of the year. More than a dozen representatives from local cities, retailers and agencies attended the meeting to discuss the issues they would like to see addressed in the final PEIR and ultimately, in a groundwater storage program. All issues, from the reported cases of discolored water in the basin, to concerns regarding flood zones, will be addressed in the final version of the document. As a result of the feedback, Central Basin has also pledged to conduct another public meeting that will provide a thorough page by page review of the 1,000-page PEIR. The date for that meeting will be announced soon.

“All of the stakeholder workshops have been incredibly important to this process,” said Central Basin General Manager Art Aguilar. “So far, we’ve gotten great feedback from cities like Lakewood, Cerritos and Norwalk, among others. These are cities that realize this plan is necessary for the region’s future, and want to be a part of it. We look forward to even greater participation from all Central Basin cities and agencies as we go forward.”

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The Central Groundwater Basin extends approximately 270 square miles over most of the Los Angeles Coastal Plain and serves as the primary source of water for more than 2.5 million residents in the region. Although there may be hundreds of thousands of acre-feet of underground storage available, the full potential of this vital public resource largely remains underutilized.

The Programmatic EIR process is intended to engage stakeholders at the beginning of a program's design and development. The final draft of the EIR will assess the true hydrological condition of the Central Groundwater Basin and will serve as the foundation of the District's upcoming Groundwater Storage Plan. So far, Central Basin has hosted four public meetings to discuss the design of the Central Basin Groundwater Storage Plan.

Since the District's founding in 1952, it has been a primary mission of Central Basin to promote, manage and protect the Central Groundwater Basin for the public use and welfare. As the agency granted this statutory authority and duty, the District views this storage plan as crucial to preserving the long-term health and wellbeing for the people of the communities we serve. This is yet another way that the District works to put the interest of the public first, which is why we are proud and committed to providing some of the lowest water rates in the region.

*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. For more information please visit [www.centralbasin.org](http://www.centralbasin.org).*

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