



## Inland Valley to benefit from water bond

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The passage of several water bills will channel state grant money to the Inland Empire, allocating 25 percent of matching funding to all new water management construction projects.

"It gives us an ability to get more done with less (local) dollars," said Ken Manning, the Chino Watermaster board's chief executive officer.

California lawmakers passed an \$11.1 billion overhaul of the state's water system this month, and if the bond is approved by voters next fall, it will provide funding for new dams, groundwater cleanup, conservation and habitat restoration.

"This is without any doubt the most comprehensive water infrastructure package that has passed here," Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said.

Currently, the Watermaster board oversees 26 recharge facilities - used to sink water into the underground - in the basin and wants to build four or five more.

Modernization of some of the facilities is in the plans as well as installing eight to 10 more injection wells throughout the basin. The improvements should be completed by 2015 and

come with a price tag of \$100million to \$150million. The state's share will be more than \$25million.

"It (the water bond) will help create jobs and bring dollars to our region," said Assemblyman Anthony Adams, R-Claremont.

The water agreement marked the first time groundwater management was included as a separate chapter in a bond, and does not have to compete with surface water projects, Manning said.

Adams lauded the last-minute negotiations to increase funding for groundwater management from \$500million to \$1billion.

"I'm really proud to be a part of making that possible," Adams said. "We fought really hard. We (Chino groundwater basin) are the safety net for California. If the Delta should collapse and Southern California is cut out of the water supply, we will be able to provide safe water to everybody."

Richard Atwater, general manager of the Inland Empire Utilities Agency, has been closely following the developments in Sacramento.

"I was very skeptical in the beginning," Atwater said. "We've been arguing about water since the Gold Rush days. This is a historic moment for California."

Drought-proofing of local communities will continue. The bond would fund expansion of the

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purple pipes that carry recycled or treated water to other parts of the region, Assemblywoman Norma Torres, D-Ontario, said.

"This is a huge opportunity for us in the Inland Empire and San Gabriel Valley to expand the infrastructure for deliverance of brown water," Torres said. "Hopefully, the voters will look at this bond as something for the entire state of California."

Legislators required cities to use 20percent less water by 2020. Inland Valley residents' efforts to reduce water use this summer resulted in a decline ranging from 5 percent to 15 percent.

"I think it's very achievable," Atwater said. "The deadline is a decade away. We have a lot of time."

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