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IEUA Announces Passing of Long Time Board Member

Chino, California – It is with great sadness that the Inland Empire Utilities Agency announces the passing of long time Board Member Gene Koopman. Director Koopman, who was first elected to the Board in 1998, passed away at Methodist Hospital of Southern California in Arcadia after a long illness. He was 73 years old.

A man of great integrity and commitment, Director Koopman was dedicated to protecting and improving the Chino Basin. As a long time dairyman, he brought a unique perspective to the water community and was well known for his pragmatic, no nonsense style. A native southern Californian, Koopman moved to Ontario in 1969 to start a dairy farm. During his time as a dairyman, he served the residents of the Agricultural Preserve in a number of roles, including an 18-year tenure on the Milk Producers Council, 10 of which were as chairman; he was a founding member of the Western States Dairy Producers Association; and, he was a nine-year Board member of the Southern California Farm Credit Alliance. In 1993, the Chino Chamber of Commerce honored Koopman as the “Outstanding Dairy Person of the Year.”

IEUA was privileged to have him as a member of its Board. Koopman served as the Board Secretary/Treasurer from 2005-2008, was the past-representative to the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, and at the time of his passing was the Vice Chairman to the Inland Empire Regional Composting Authority and Vice Chairman of the Chino Basin Watermaster Agricultural Pool Committee.

“I, along with every member of the IEUA Board of Directors and staff will miss him greatly,” said Board President Terry Catlin. “Gene was an honest and decent man, and I was fortunate to serve with him from the beginning of his tenure as a Board member. Gene leaves a proud legacy of honor and commitment, and his legacy will continue to inspire future leaders.”

“It is with great sadness and a heavy heart we say goodbye to a dear friend and fellow Board member, Gene Koopman,” said Board Vice President Michael Camacho. “Gene had a wealth of knowledge and perspective that anyone around him benefitted from. He was a proud man that operated with honor and integrity. He had a large presence, larger personality, a deep commanding voice, but a kind heart. My thoughts and prayers go out to the Koopman family and friends. Gene, you will be missed.”

“This is a sad day for us at IEUA and for the Chino Basin—a giant like Gene Koopman (literally and figuratively) cannot be replaced,” said Board member Steven J. Elie. “I hope that we can continue his legacy of fiscal responsibility, tenacity for the greater good, stewardship and good judgment long after his passing today. Whether you agreed with Gene or not, you always knew where he stood. He will be sorely missed.”

“It was an honor to serve with Gene on the IEUA Board,” said Board member Jasmin A. Hall. “His guidance, vast experience and leadership were traits to be truly admired. I will miss his kind presence and his passion for the Basin. My thoughts are with his family and friends.”

Koopman is survived by his wife, Nancy, to whom he was married for 45 years.

The Inland Empire Utilities Agency covers 242-square miles, distributes imported water, provides industrial/municipal wastewater collection and treatment services, and other related utility services to more than 850,000 people. The Agency’s service area includes the Cities of Chino, Chino Hills, Fontana, Montclair, Ontario and Upland, as well as the Cucamonga Valley Water District, Monte Vista Water District, and Fontana Water Company.

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