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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LAGUNA BEACH COUNTY WATER DISTRICT COMMITS TO PARTNER TO ADVANCE DOHENY OCEAN DESALINATION PROJECT

Laguna Beach, CA, August 15, 2024 – The South Coast Water District (SCWD) and Laguna Beach County Water District (LBCWD) are pleased to announce a significant step forward in regional water sustainability efforts. On Thursday, August 15, 2024, the LBCWD Board of Directors voted 4-1 in favor of approving the Cost Share Agreement for Phase 1 of the Doheny Ocean Desalination Project. This landmark agreement underscores the commitment of both districts to secure a reliable, long-term water supply for their communities.

As part of the Cost Share Agreement, LBCWD has committed to funding 20% of the costs associated with the development of the 5 million gallons per day (MGD) Doheny Ocean Desalination Project. This financial commitment equates to approximately \$2.58 million, reflecting LBCWD's share of 1 MGD of the plant's total capacity. This makes LBCWD the second partner in the project, following Eastern Municipal Water District's commitment in December 2023.

Vice President of the LBCWD Board, Alex Rounaghi, who initially expressed skepticism, has voiced strong support following the decision, stating, "Desalination is how we achieve local reliability in Laguna Beach." President Sue Kempf reinforced this sentiment, emphasizing the importance of proactive infrastructure investment: "We'll never be sorry that we planned ahead."

SCWD Director Bill Green and General Manager Rick Shintaku were present to answer questions from both the Board and the public. Topics of discussion included the plant's power redundancy and the potential regional impact of the desalination project.

The next steps for the Doheny Ocean Desalination Project include presenting the Cost Share Agreement to the City of San Clemente in September. Approval by San Clemente will render the agreement effective and allow SCWD to proceed with the final approval from its board and the awarding of the Progressive Design Build Operate Maintain contract.

This collaboration between LBCWD and SCWD demonstrates a shared commitment to innovative solutions that ensure water security for the region, setting a precedent for future water infrastructure projects.

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The [Doheny Ocean Desalination Project](#) would create a new, reliable, local, and drought-proof water supply that would also provide emergency water supplies should the delivery of imported water be disrupted due to earthquakes or other natural disasters. The facility's proposed location between Pacific Coast Highway and Stonehill Drive next to San Juan Creek is within 100 yards of existing regional water transmission lines. SCWD would build the facility on property that SCWD already owns, and the infrastructure is already in place with the Joint Regional Water Supply System to distribute desalinated water to SCWD customers and south Orange County, significantly reducing costs and construction impacts. The facility would have a capacity of up to 5 Million Gallons per Day (MGD).

[South Coast Water District \(SCWD\)](#) provides potable water, recycled water, and wastewater services to approximately 40,000 residents, 1,000 businesses, and 2 million visitors per year in south Orange County, California. SCWD's service area, divided into five districts, includes the communities of Dana Point, South Laguna Beach, and areas of San Clemente and San Juan Capistrano. A five-member elected Board of Directors oversees SCWD's policymaking, financial stewardship, rate-setting, capital programs, and long-term planning.

More information can be found at scwd.org

[Laguna Beach County Water District](#) has proudly provided reliable, safe, and prudently-managed retail water service to its customers since 1925. The District provides water services to 25,000 people within a 8.5 square mile area of Southern Orange County, including portions of the city of Laguna Beach, a portion of Crystal Cove State Park, and the unincorporated community of Emerald Bay.

More information can be found at lbcwd.org