



Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority

Water Infrastructure, Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Compliance



Key Contacts:

Michael W. McKinney

President

202.969.6009 ext. 700

m.mckinney@capitolcore.com

Washington D.C. and Austin, Texas

Jeff M. Simonetti

Senior Vice President

916.576.0689 extension 702

j.simonetti@capitolcore.com

Sacramento, California

Situation

The Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority is responsible for management of groundwater supplies in an isolated basin at the edge of California's Mojave Desert. The region is home to the U.S. Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, a critical flight operations and weapons development/testing installation for the U.S. Military. The Indian Wells Valley is a critically overdrafted groundwater basin and the Authority enacted a plan to interconnect the region to outside water transmission sources for the purpose of importing needed water supplies as well as develop an advanced treatment facility for water recycling. The infrastructure costs is over \$300 million, with a 20-year timeline for completion, to achieve water resiliency in the Indian Wells Valley. Two critical items were essential 1) funding from federal and state sources and 2) purchasing imported water supplies to meet resiliency needs.

Objectives

- Obtain \$12.9 million in state/federal funding for planning and permitting activities for the infrastructure projects
- Purchase between 3,000 - and 7,000-acre feet of permanent water supplies (known a "Table A")



Case Study

Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority

Activities

- Developed an achievable strategic funding plan that focused on securing government lending, legislative and programmatic (agency) funding.
- Explored all available state and federal agency program funding opportunities, including via the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, California Department of Natural Resources, California Department of Water Resources, and State Water Resources Control Board.
- Met with and educated policymakers in the U.S. Congress, California Legislature, Executive Office of the President, and senior California officials. Advocated for legislatively-directed spending requests and project authorizations (a means of creating agency funding) for the project.
- Developed and launched a three-year legislative agenda for Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority projects. The agenda included a strategic funding plan.
- Met with water agencies, districts, and major land-owners throughout the State to identify and begin negotiations for purchase of 3,000 - to 7,000-acre feet of permanent water supplies.
- Sought regulatory approvals through state agencies to allow for purchased water transfer

Results

This is an ongoing project.

- Obtained \$7.6 million for planning/permitting activities on the interconnection project through agency programs.
- Identified approximately 40,000-acre feet of permanent and short-term water rights for purchase
- Began negotiations with public agency for purchase of permanent water supplies
- Worked with state regulatory agencies to determine approval procedures for conveyance, storage, and purchase approvals for water supplies.

Summary

This is an integrated and multi-disciplinary government relations effort working at the federal, state and local government levels to effectuate an overall plan to bring water resiliency to a drought-stricken region. The process required diligently working with multiple key stakeholders ranging from the U.S. Navy to local water authorities with excess supply. Unique to the project is Capitol Core Group's intergovernmental affairs activities, identifying and negotiating with water rights holders throughout the state as well as planning for transfer and potential storage of purchased water. As part of that intergovernmental relations effort, we sought a regulatory approval process to allow for conveyance of those purchased water supplies.

Our efforts, thus far, have secured over \$7.6 million in state funding, general approval of a regulatory process for water purchases, and continued negotiation for imported water supplies in an isolated groundwater basin. Pending before the legislatures and state agencies is an additional \$12.3 million in federal/state funding for the current fiscal year, thus exceeding our objectives and moving the infrastructure projects to construction activities.

