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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Auburn - Local water leaders joined with U.S. Congressman John T. Doolittle on Monday (Oct. 13) to celebrate the authorization of \$5.1 million in federal funding to the Placer County Water Agency.

More than 50 people, including local and federal officials and water industry representatives, attended the signing ceremony at the PCWA Business Center in Auburn.

In brief remarks to the gathering, Congressman Doolittle said Placer County and surrounding areas continue to grow rapidly and will eventually need more water. He voiced strong support for water conservation efforts but said he sees them only as interim solutions.

Doolittle said he remains committed to the concept of an Auburn Dam but is concerned that the dam might be built only after a catastrophe such as flood or drought.

Following his remarks, Doolittle took part in a ceremony with PCWA Board Chairman Mike Lee and Lt. Col. Mark W. Connelly to formalize a project agreement between PCWA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The agreement covers federal funding made available through the Water Resources Development Act of 1999. The funding is anticipated over a six-year period, with \$545,000 already appropriated for 2003 and approximately \$1 million expected in each of the next five years.

The \$5.1 million in federal funds will be matched with \$1.7 million in Agency funds and used to improve efficiency of the PCWA water delivery system.

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The agency plans to increase water efficiency through the replacement of more than 15,000 older water meters and through the addition of pipeline and concrete lining on open canals where appropriate to increase their efficiency.

The Water Agency is the county's largest water purveyor, serving more than 34,000 accounts in five service zones. The agency also owns and operates the Middle Fork American River Project, which includes five hydroelectric power plants and two major reservoirs and generates 244 MW of electricity. Encompassing 1,500 square miles, PCWA is the water resource advocacy agency in Placer County from Lake Tahoe to the Central Valley.