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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Auburn - Directors of the Placer County Water Agency on Thursday (June 2) approved a master facilities agreement covering water service to the proposed Bickford Ranch development.

Located east of Lincoln and south of Highway 193, Bickford Ranch is a planned 1900-acre development of 1800 homes and some commercial uses.

The water agreement, with developer Sun Cal Bickford Holdings, LLC, outlines a broad scope of raw and treated water system improvements that would be constructed by the developer to PCWA specifications and then turned over to the water agency for operation and maintenance.

PCWA Director of Technical Services Brian Martin said additional water facility agreements would be needed through the years as Bickford Ranch is developed.

Before adopting the agreement, the board held a public hearing, which attracted no public testimony; and also accepted a mitigation plan to deal with any potential environmental impacts of the water improvements.

In other business, directors:

- heard a "State of the River Report for the Lower American River" by Leo Winternitz, executive director of the Sacramento Region Water Forum. He outlined current issues regarding flows, river operation, water management and fish and wildlife habitat. He said water quality in the river is good.

- heard an update on the Freeport Regional Water Project from Eric Mische, PhD, general manager of the Freeport Regional Water Authority. The authority is working to develop a new Sacramento River water supply for the Sacramento County Water Agency and East Bay Municipal Utility District.

- moved forward with a plan to purchase additional land along Ophir Road for water system purposes. The property is adjacent to land already owned by the agency.

- heard an update on current river intake studies and refinements for the ongoing American River Pump Station project. The permanent pump station is being constructed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation with completion slated for 2007.

- heard a report from General Manager David Breninger on a proposed water service area boundary agreement with the neighboring Nevada Irrigation District. Breninger said the agreement was approved May 25 by the NID board and would be placed on the PCWA board's next agenda.

The next regular meeting of the PCW A Board of Directors will be held at 3 p.m. on June 16 in the Placer County Board of Supervisors chambers, 175 Fulweiler Avenue, in Auburn. PCWA board meetings are open to the public.