



NEWS RELEASE

Placer County Water Agency

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Auburn - Ownership of the American River Pump Station would be transferred from the federal government to the Placer County Water Agency, under legislation passed Tuesday (May 9) by the U.S. House of Representatives.

The bill (HR 4204), sponsored by Fourth Congressional District representative and House Republican Conference Secretary John T. Doolittle (R-Roseville), would require the Secretary of the Interior to transfer ownership of the American River Pump Station to PCWA once construction is complete. The pump station is now under construction in the river canyon near Auburn.

"The completion of the new pumping plant in 2008 will provided a secure, permanent, and reliable supply of water for Placer County residents, farms and businesses," said Doolittle. "The passage of HR 4204 will enable the local water agency, PCWA, to own and operate this vital facility. I anxiously await the Senate's concurrence and President Bush's signature making the transfer law."

PCWA Board Chairman Alex Ferreira said House passage of the bill is welcome news to the water agency. "The pump station is a key link for us in being able to use our Middle Fork Project water," he said. "It is very important for the water agency to have control and ownership of the pump station."

The pump station is being built by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to replace a former station dismantled in the early 1970s in preparation for construction of the Auburn Dam. The dam project was later suspended over questions about earthquake safety.

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The new pump station is designed to deliver up to 35,500 acre-feet of water per year through the existing Auburn Tunnel to western Placer County. The overall project also restores the river to its natural channel and includes recreational features.

For many years, the bureau has installed temporary pumps each year to provide PCWA with access to its water supplies, but that has cost up to \$450,000 a year. The temporary pumps have been installed in the spring and removed in the fall because of high winter water flows.

"Given that the federal government caused the removal of PCWA's permanent pumping station in the 1970s, it is only appropriate that the federal government now replace what was lost," Doolittle said. "This legislation restores local control over a valuable local resource - water."

Specifics of HR 4204:

- it directs the Secretary of the Interior to transfer ownership of the American River Pump Station Project to PCWA.
- it makes federal costs associated with construction of the project non-reimbursable. The measure authorizes the secretary to grant title to PCWA after complying with requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, and any other applicable law.
- it provides that upon the transfer, the United States shall not be liable for damages relating to the land or facilities.

Based in Auburn, the Placer County Water Agency supplies treated drinking water and irrigation water to more than 36,000 homes, farms and businesses in five service zones across Placer County.