

# EID News



El Dorado Irrigation District — serving people, agriculture, businesses, and the environment in El Dorado County since 1925

**For immediate release  
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## **EID votes to fund water rights application**

### **New water supply needed to leverage storage benefits obtained in SMUD agreement**

**Placerville, CA . . .** At its June 11 meeting, the El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) Board of Directors unanimously approved and authorized execution of a cost-share agreement to fund the process of applying for water rights that were reserved long ago for El Dorado County, but are currently held by the City of Sacramento. In initiating discussion of the matter, Board member John Fraser declared, “We need to send a message that it’s time to move forward. The City of Sacramento has no incentive to talk to water groups in El Dorado County unless we file an application for the return of water rights that the city holds, but doesn’t exercise.”

EID will contribute up to \$1.2 million in the first year and \$225,000 in subsequent years of what is expected to be a lengthy process that will be led by the El Dorado Water and Power Authority (EDWPA).

As background, an October 17, 2005 agreement between Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) and EDWPA gave EID—an EDWPA member—access to 30,000 acre-feet of SMUD storage and related water transmission facilities, plus an additional 15,000 acre-feet of storage for drought needs. But the facilities agreement with SMUD did not include rights to water that is needed “to fill the bucket,” said EID General Counsel Tom Cumpston. “The City of Sacramento currently holds those rights, but its entitlement is legally subordinate to El Dorado’s needs as the county where the water originates.”

For nearly two years, EDWPA has been proposing a voluntary solution to Sacramento, in which El Dorado would help pay for the city’s mandatory water meter retrofit program in exchange for the water supplies the program will conserve. “All attempts to get the city to sit down and negotiate a resolution to this issue have failed up to now,” said EID Board President Bill George. Board member George Wheeldon added that EID and EDWPA “need to show the city we are serious. This is one of the most important votes we’ll ever cast.”

The cost-share agreement, with El Dorado County, El Dorado County Water Agency, EDWPA, and Georgetown Divide PUD, sets the stage for the water rights application. The agencies predict it will cost up to \$2.5 million in 2007 and about \$700,000 in 2008 to cover the costs of legal and filing fees, the required environmental reviews, miscellaneous studies, and other reasonable and necessary costs. “Filing the application alone will cost about \$400,000,” Cumpston said, “and the environmental reviews could cost around \$500,000.” As the primary beneficiary of the SMUD agreement, EID’s share of the costs will be the largest.

“That’s a lot of money, no doubt,” said Board member Harry Norris. “But it is for a vital reason—water supply and drought protection for our customers. And I’m pleased by the substantial contributions that the County and County Water Agency have agreed to make. Residents throughout the county will benefit from a positive result.”

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