

VWVRA SUBREGIONAL FACILITIES DRAFT  
PROGRAM EIR/EIS  
SECTION 5  
GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS

The long range land use plan for communities in the VWVRA service area was discussed in §4.6, Population, Housing and Employment. As noted therein the project area has experienced substantial growth over the past century and especially over the past 25 years. In the decade between 1990 and 2000, the combined population of Apple Valley, Victorville and Hesperia increased by 32%, from 137,300 to 181,300 residents.

The proposed Subregional Facility project is based on plans originally set forth in the 1997 VWVRA Sewerage Facilities Plan, and later amended in the 2000 Amendment to the Sewerage Facilities Plan. In turn, the Facilities Plans were formulated on the basis of area growth and planning forecasts promulgated by the relevant JPA member agencies. VWVRA used these agency forecasts to identify effluent flow volumes, and thereby determine the potential supply of recycled water as well as the anticipated demand areas.

The 1997 data, compiled a year before the City of Adelanto withdrew from VWVRA, indicated a 2000 planning area population of roughly 230,900 (221,500 excluding forecasts for Adelanto). However, area planning agencies scaled back their growth estimates in the late 1990s, which prompted VWVRA to prepare the 2000 update. In whole, the 2000 Amendment reflected a 13.4% reduction in 2000 population estimates, and a 20.1% reduction in area-wide forecasts for 2020.<sup>80</sup> As part of the §4.6 analysis, the 2000 Amendment forecasts were compared with data from the 2000 Census. The comparison indicated that all of the revised forecasts were within 5% of the actual Census data. These findings support a determination that project planning is consistent with actual growth as well as the relevant agency forecasts.

As discussed throughout this EIR/EIS, the absence of adequate water supplies is currently a critical issue for Victor Valley, and an impediment to growth in Victorville, Hesperia, Apple Valley and the County of San Bernardino service areas. Since 1998, producers of groundwater within the project area have been subject to the terms of the *Stipulated Judgment* in the Mojave Adjudication.

The *Stipulated Judgment* now governs groundwater production, use, and transfer through certain provisions that determine 'base annual production' (basically, each producer's share of groundwater supply), 'free production allowance' (the amount each producer can pump each year), 'ramp down of production rights' (an incremental, phased reduction in the amount each producer can pump), 'make up water' (the amount of groundwater flow each subarea must pass on to downgradient subareas), 'replacement water' and 'transfer of production rights' (payments or transfers for pumping above the free production allowance), and 'carry over rights' (credits

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<sup>80</sup> Note that VWVRA member agencies are currently updating projections of sewered and nonsewered populations (again through the year 2020). Results are anticipated to be available later in 2004, after release of this Draft EIR/EIS.

carried forward for pumping less than the free production allowance). The structure of the *Stipulated Judgment* has allowed growth to continue relatively unabated through creative use of the replacement and transfer provisions ("paper transfers"). However, room for creativity will continue to diminish as the incremental ramp-down provisions take effect and growth in the Basin will increasingly depend on access to alternative supplies.

***The Judgment has allowed growth to continue through creative paper transfers, but this would diminish as ramp-down provisions take effect.***

In this context, the proposed VVWRA recycled water project would alleviate an obstacle to development. Access to the recycled product would allow some producers in the study area to reduce their groundwater pumping; in turn, these users may face less difficulty in complying with established production allowances. However, it is the opinion of the Watermaster (the entity charged with enforcing the *Stipulated Judgment*) that credits cannot be granted, sold or traded for the use of recycled water. Since the recycled supply is intended only for nonpotable uses, the alleviation of a growth obstacle would apply directly to irrigation users.

Ultimately, the *Stipulated Judgment* is structured to ensure that area growth will be most closely linked to the volume of imported supply brought into the project area. Since sewage flows are directly linked to population growth, future increases in recycled supply would also be linked to the volume of imported supply brought into the Basin.

***Ultimately, the Judgment is structured to ensure that area growth is linked to the volume of imported supply brought into the region.***

#### ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

There is no difference between the preferred project and the alternative technologies in terms of growth-inducing potential.

#### ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

There is no difference between the preferred project and the environmentally preferred alternative in terms of growth-inducing potential.