

## News

# Feds boost project to recycle water

By Sandi Hansen INDEX-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

Published:

Mon 3/16 6 PM

The City of Sonoma and Valley of the Moon Water District stand to gain in their efforts to push the expansion of recycled-water use in the area as a result of federal funds approved for local water-recycling projects.

The \$410 billion federal spending bill, recently signed into law by President Barack Obama, provides \$216,000 to complete feasibility and environmental studies for water-recycle projects in the Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District as well as districts in Napa County and North Marin County. These districts are overseen by the North Bay Water Reuse Authority (NBWRA).

"The current drought reminds us that expansion of recycled water is critically needed by local residents, agriculture, the environment and the economy," Bill Long, NBWRA chairman, said. "Every gallon of water that is recycled and used, saves a gallon of limited potable water supplies for drinking, leaving it in rivers for fish or for other critical needs."

The recycled water will not be used for drinking. Highly treated recycled water can safely be used for crop irrigation, parks, lawns, golf courses and industrial applications.

According to Chuck Weir, program manager at NBWRA, among the projects proposed in Phase I of the North Bay Water Recycling Program in the Sonoma Valley region, is expanding the existing use of recycled water in the city and Valley primarily to support agriculture.

In addition, Weir stated, recycled water would be used to speed up the Napa Salt Marsh Restoration Project.

The total cost of the initial phase of the three-county projects is estimated at \$100 million. The first draft of the combined environmental impact statement for the cooperative program is expected to be available in April.

North Marin Water District and Napa County are providing financial and technical support for this regional program.

North Bay Water Reuse Authority's Long praised the work of local legislators in obtaining the money for the recycled-water programs. "We wish to thank Congressman Mike Thompson, Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey and Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer for their efforts to secure funding for these important projects," Long said.