

Fund water recycling

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ONE OF THE MOST effective ways to conserve water is to recycle it. It makes no sense to flush wastewater into rivers, bays, estuaries and the ocean if it can be treated and used again for other purposes such as irrigating parks and golf courses.

That is the philosophy behind seven water recycling projects that have started or are ready to begin once they are fully funded.

They are the Mountain View Moffett Area Reclaimed Water Pipeline Project, the Pittsburg Recycled Water Project, the Antioch Recycled Water Project, the North Coast County Water District Recycled Water Project, the Redwood City Recycled Water Project, the South Santa Clara County Recycled Water Project and the South Bay Advanced Recycled Water Treatment Facility

The recycled water will be treated and piped to water golf courses, parks, school grounds and roadway medians, and it will be used by some businesses.

But the projects require some federal funding. Half of the money will come from local sources. One-fourth will come from the state, including Proposition 50 funds. One-fourth will come from the federal government under a bill sponsored by Rep. George Miller, D-Martinez.

The measure, HR1526, has passed the House and has been introduced in the Senate. It is essential that the Senate measure, S1475 by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., pass quickly.

To get federal money for the water recycling projects, applications must be made in January 2008.

That is why it is so important that

the Senate approve the authorization of funds now.

Two of the seven Bay Area recycling projects, one in Pittsburg and another in Palo Alto/Mountain View, are already under construction so that they could obtain state funds. But they, like the other five projects, are depending on federal revenues as well.

It is unfortunate that Congress has taken so long to appropriate a modest maximum of \$27.5 million for such worthy projects, which have been financed mostly by local and state governments.

There are considerable statewide and national benefits from recycling water.

The Delta Blue Ribbon Task Force commissioned by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger concluded that conservation must be a key element in the state's water policy. That is particularly important in dry periods, such as the one we are experiencing this year.

Together, the Bay Area projects would recycle 10,000 acre-feet of water per year. That is not a large percentage of the total volume of water used in the region, but it is a significant amount and would help spur more recycling efforts.

Recycling is not the only way to meet the Bay Area's and California's water needs, but it must be part of the solution.

We trust the U.S. Senate will agree and pass S1475 to help local efforts to recycle an essential resource.