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Bill to Expand the Use of Recycled Water in California is Signed into Law

SACRAMENTO – Assembly Bill (AB) 574, by Assemblymember Bill Quirk (D-Hayward), to expand California’s ability to use recycled water, has been signed into law.

“California is a world leader in potable reuse, using highly purified recycled water for drinking water purposes. The use of recycled water for non-potable uses such as agricultural and landscape irrigation is already well established and has been regulated for decades in California,” said Assemblymember Quirk.

In December 2016, the State Water Resources Control Board (Board) released a study titled, “Investigation on the feasibility of developing uniform water recycling criteria for direct potable reuse.” The study found that the use of recycled water for direct potable reuse has great potential but it presents very real scientific and technical challenges that must be addressed to ensure the public’s health is reliably protected at all times.

Currently, no regulations exist in the United States, at the federal or state level, for direct potable reuse. In order to meet future demands, California will need to increase and expand its use of recycled water, especially as a source of drinking water. AB 574 will enable additional safe uses of recycled water.

“The nation is looking for California to be a leader in potable reuse,” says California Coastkeeper Alliance Policy Director Sean Bothwell, one of the co-sponsors of AB 574. “We applaud Governor Brown for signing AB 574 into law and creating a pathway for direct potable reuse as a drought-proof water source that will help California thrive in a drier future.”

“AB 574 represents a new water future for California,” said Jennifer West, Managing Director of WaterReuse California, and the other co-sponsor of AB 574. “The bill directs the Water Board to take the next step in advancing potable reuse, which will provide a new sustainable, locally controlled source of drinking water.”

“The Board took the first step in expanding our opportunity to respond to another drought by establishing a framework for developing regulations. AB 574 will make it clear the Board has the authority to move forward and establishes timelines to ensure that they get done. I am thankful to my

supporters for helping to push this important issue forward and for their help in advocating for AB 574,” said Assemblymember Quirk upon learning his bill was signed.

AB 574 goes into effect January 1, 2018 and directs the Board to have regulations completed by December 31, 2023.

ATTACHMENT: Assemblymember Quirk on the floor.

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*Elected in 2012, Bill Quirk brings his PhD in astrophysics and career as an educator and scientist to the State Assembly. He is the Chair of the Assembly Committee on Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials. He is also Chair of the Select Committee on California’s Clean Energy Economy. He is a member of the Agriculture, Public Safety, Revenue and Taxation, and Utilities and Energy Committees. **Website of Assemblymember Quirk:** <http://www.asmdc.org/quirk>*