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New State Water Policy Provides Clear Path for Seawater Desalination Permitting in California

Huntington Beach, CA – Today, the State Water Resources Control Board approved the long-awaited seawater desalination amendment to the state's Ocean Plan. The new policy confirms that seawater desalination facilities can be sited, built, and operated without significant, unmitigable impacts to coastal and marine resources, and reinforces the role seawater desalination will play in addressing current and future water demand across California.

The State Water Board's approval of the seawater desalination policy affirms the discretion of the state's nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards to determine on a project and site-specific basis compliance with the California Water Code (Porter-Cologne), which requires projects to use the best available site, design, technology and mitigation measures feasible to minimize the intake and mortality of marine life.

"We thank the State Water Resources Control Board and its staff for their thoughtful work on the seawater desalination policy," said Scott Maloni, Vice President of Poseidon Water. "Adoption of the Ocean Plan amendment reinforces state water resource management plans and policies that identify the Pacific Ocean as a drinking water resource. California's coastal communities can now look with greater certainty to the west for a reliable, environmentally-friendly, drought-proof source of drinking water."

The State Water Resources Control Board also adopted into the Ocean Plan Amendment a definition of feasibility that states, "*Feasible shall mean capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, social, and technological factors.*" This is the same legal definition of feasibility utilized by the Coastal Commission under the Coastal Act as well as under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Governor Brown's California's Water Action Plan highlights the benefits that desalination provides to regions across the state, as a tool to both improve water supply reliability and increase self-reliance at the regional and local level. The State Water Board's action on the latest desalination amendment will provide greater clarity to regional boards and other permitting agencies – further improving the permitting process for much needed water supplies while protecting California's environment.

This latest action takes place following executive orders signed by Governor Jerry Brown and extensive statements from his administration about the need to provide certainty and inject timeliness into the water project permitting process. Last week, the Governor called on his Office of Planning and Research to help local water agencies reduce the time required to comply with state-required environmental reviews. In early-April, the Governor signed Executive Order B-29-15, which prioritized state review and decision-making of any water infrastructure projects.

Poseidon Water specializes in developing and financing water infrastructure projects, primarily seawater desalination and water treatment plants in an environmentally sensitive manner . These projects are implemented through innovative public-private partnerships in which private enterprise assumes the developmental and financial risks. For more information on Poseidon Water and the proposed Huntington Beach desalination facility, visit <http://HBfreshwater.com>.

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