



On June 6, 2014 the Orange County Grand Jury [released a report](#) entitled “*Sustainable and Reliable Orange County Water Supply: Another Endangered Species?*” Among the findings was the urgency for the construction of the Huntington Beach desalination plant to help Orange County diversify its water portfolio with a self-reliant local water supply.

Following are excerpts taken directly from the report. The emphases are added:

- “OC water suppliers with significant public support should ***immediately select, expedite and execute seawater desalination projects*** with sufficient total capacity to replace up to 40% of OC’s imported water.”
- “The two largest projects and ***potential game changers*** are the Huntington Beach Seawater Desalination Plant and the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDPC).”
- “It is critical that a sustainable, properly and cost effectively executive BDPC be implemented and supported by MET and MWDOC, ***but OC should not rely solely on this option!***”
- “Yes, we could probably survive with half the water we currently use if we want to live without green spaces. No, ***we can’t afford to wait*** for a long, drawn out BDCP process to achieve a compromised imported water solution.”
- “A significant impediment to developing large infrastructure projects is the number of local, State, and Federal agencies having sometimes conflicting jurisdictions over the permitting process. For example, a few of the up to 23 permits/approvals are required to construct seawater desalination plants.”
- “The Federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s (NRC) stream-lined procedure for power plants is a one-stop construction and operating permit process which takes about five years. A similar approach could substantially reduce the ***extremely lengthy 10 to 15 years needed*** to execute large water infrastructure projects.”
- “MWDOC and OCWD should assemble and finance a strong inter-agency (OCWD, MWDOC, and select retailers) advocacy group to ***drive the final permitting and construction of several large scale seawater desalination plants*** with the objective of significantly accelerating the process and shortening project schedules.”
- “MWDOC and OCWD should work with legislators, contractors, other stakeholders, and the regulatory agencies to ***streamline and accelerate*** the large infrastructure permitting process. “

- “OC has access to coastal seawater which could be desalinated. Except for the Great Lakes there are ***no other large sources of water that are relatively immune to climate change.***”
- “The San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) estimates that its currently under construction Carlsbad 50 Mgd desalination plant will increase average residential water bills by about \$5 to 7/mo. The proposed Huntington Beach plant is similarly configured...with a less complicated user interconnection and should have a similar cost impact on rates.”
 - ***“This monthly rate increase is about the same as the cost of a Starbucks Venti, a small price to pay for a more secure water source.*** Desalinated water may compare more favorably in future years with imported costs since the latter is estimated to escalate at a faster rate.”
 - “The time to achieve a break even cost has been estimated at between 20 to 30 years assuming a 50 year project life. Increasing water costs and environmental issues will be a reality no matter what new supply options are selected.”
- “Environmental activists assert a high mortality rate in the millions/day for marine life like fish eggs and larvae which are sucked into the seawater intake.”
 - “A well-documented, multi-year evaluation of the impact of the Perth, Australia desalination plant (of similar size to those proposed along the SC coast) found ***no significant marine impacts*** 200 feet from the intake and discharge locations.”
 - “Also, plants that use existing power plant discharges as proposed at Huntington Beach and Carlsbad have ***a small impact on local salinity due to the dilution factor*** of the higher power plant cooling water flows.”
- “If the current extended drought continues or when significant climate changes start to impact source reliability costal Southern California will be in a better position to expedite the permitting and construction of another large seawater desalination plant. ***This venue has minimal coastal impacts and the least impact on public access.***”
- “Huntington Beach is one of several Southern California venues where a world class desalination plant can be built.”
- ***“It’s time to complete the permitting and contract negotiations, and start construction of the Huntington Beach desalination plant!”***