



PRESS RELEASE

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Wishtoyo Files Lawsuit over Oxnard GREAT and Other Approvals to Mandate the State Ensures Recycled Water is Used and Managed Reasonably and to Protect Impaired Streams

Los Angeles and Oxnard, CA - As part of our campaign to ensure reasonable use of all of California's scarce water resources, including recycled water, Wishtoyo's Water Initiative has filed a lawsuit in Los Angeles Superior Court against the State Water Resources Control Board and Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Wishtoyo's Petition for Writ of Mandate and Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief seeks to ensure that the State Water Board and Los Angeles Regional Board break their patterns and practices of not adhering to their affirmative duties under the California Constitution, Water Code, and Public Trust Doctrine to ensure that new water, including recycled water, is used and managed reasonably, and when feasible, to protect and restore California's impaired in-stream flow dependent public trust protected resources.

In addition to the suit's statewide ramifications, Wishtoyo seeks to ensure that the City of Oxnard's Groundwater Recovery Enhancement and Treatment ("Oxnard GREAT") recycled water is used and managed reasonably and in a manner that protects the flow deprived Santa Clara River and the Oxnard Plain's over-drafted groundwater aquifers.

The Complaint requests that at the very least, the Boards analyze whether the Oxnard GREAT recycled water they approved for use will be put to reasonable beneficial use, and whether it is feasible to manage the recycled water in a manner that helps restore and protect the Santa Clara River. The lawsuit also seeks to ensure that recipients of Oxnard GREAT recycled water will implement best available agricultural and municipal efficiency and conservation measures, and will use the recycled water for crops and municipal uses that are sustainable for the arid region.

"The California Constitution is clear - all water, even recycled water, must be used reasonably and not wasted," said Jason Weiner, General Counsel and Water Initiative Director for Wishtoyo Foundation. "When new water is brought into a water scarce region, it should not be utilized to perpetuate decades of unsustainable, unreasonable, and wasteful water management and practices that have led to the mining of groundwater aquifers and the draining of the public's streams."

“Rather, when feasible, it should be managed so that more water is left in-stream and in the ground instead of being extracted.”

“In addition to its state wide significance, our Petition has significant local implications because Oxnard GREAT recycled water should be managed to help restore the Santa Clara River’s in-stream flow dependent natural cultural resources the Chumash depend upon, the Santa Clara’s native and endangered fish and wildlife, including the endangered Southern California Steelhead, and the River’s recreational and educational opportunities for economically and politically marginalized residents in Oxnard, Ventura, Saticoy, El Rio, Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru,” said Mati Waiya, Chumash Ceremonial Elder and Wishtoyo Executive Director.

About the Wishtoyo Foundation: Founded in 1997, Wishtoyo is a 501(c)(3) non profit grassroots organization with over 700 members consisting of Ventura County’s diverse residents and Chumash Native Americans. Wishtoyo’s mission is to preserve and protect Chumash culture, the culture of all of Ventura County’s diverse communities, and the environment that our current and future generations depend upon. Wishtoyo shares traditional Chumash Native American beliefs, cultural practices, songs, dances, stories, and values with the public in its Chumash Discovery Village and through educational programs in schools to promote environmental awareness and natural resources stewardship. Wishtoyo also protects, preserves, and restores the ecological integrity and water quality of inland and coastal waterbodies in Ventura, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, and all throughout the traditional Chumash range through restoration projects, scientific analysis, advocacy, litigation, and community organizing, outreach and empowerment. To learn more about Wishtoyo visit us at www.wishtoyo.org.