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Statement on California Coastal Commission Staff’s Recommendation on Huntington Beach Desalination Facility

Huntington Beach, Calif. (April 25, 2022) – Poseidon Water released the following statement today in response to the California Coastal Commission staff’s recommendation to deny a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) for the construction of the proposed Huntington Beach Desalination Facility (“Facility”).

“For nearly 20 years, Poseidon has worked through California’s complex and evolving regulatory framework. We have worked with Coastal Commission staff to answer questions, address concerns, provide technical and engineering reports, and propose effective and thorough mitigation solutions. We’re proud to be leading the way with a new, drought-resistant water source that will improve Orange County’s water resiliency as the West continues to face the worst drought in 1,200 years.

We believe the Commission staff has erred in its recommendation. The proposed Huntington Beach facility has already been found by local and state environmental agencies to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act, Ocean Plan, Water Code and Public Trust Doctrine.

State regulators determined the facility will use the best available, site, design, technology and mitigation measures feasible to protect marine life. The facility, sited on industrial land and safe from effects of sea level rise, is 100 percent carbon neutral and seeking to be the first desalination facility in the Western Hemisphere to be powered with 100 percent renewable energy.

California’s elected officials and regulators should consider the dire consequences that this recommendation will have for desalination in California. The reality is that no public agency — and very few private entities — could spend the time and money the California Coastal Commission has required to vet a large-scale desalination project. No water infrastructure project in the state of California has ever undergone this level of study and scrutiny. If this recommendation stands, it will effectively be the death knell for desalination in California.

The impacts of climate challenge are accelerating. California's elected officials and regulators should be working hand-in-hand with the private sector to find innovative solutions that reduce our dependence on imported water and improve water resiliency," said Poseidon Director of Communications Jessica Jones.

The Huntington Beach desalination plant has bi-partisan support from Orange County's Sacramento legislative delegation and from community, environmental, business and labor organizations.

On April 29, 2021, the proposed Huntington Beach Desalination Facility became the first, new seawater desalination facility permitted under the state's new seawater desalination regulations adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board in 2015. As such, the Facility has been found by the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board to use the best available, site, design, technology and mitigation measures feasible to minimize the intake and mortality of all forms of marine life. The state's penultimate water quality regulatory agency further found the Facility fulfills an identified need for drinking water and complies with the state's Human Right to Water policies.

The Facility's CDP will be considered by the Commission during its upcoming May 12th hearing.

About Poseidon Water

Poseidon Water is a private company that partners with public agencies to deliver water infrastructure projects. The company's primary focus is developing large-scale reverse osmosis seawater desalination plants implemented through innovative public-private partnerships in which private enterprise assumes the developmental and financial risks. For more information on Poseidon's Carlsbad Desalination Plant, visit the plant website at www.carlsbaddesal.com. For more information on Poseidon's Huntington Beach desalination plant, visit the project website at www.HBfreshwater.com.

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