



Costa Mesa Sanitary District

....an Independent Special District

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SANITARY DISTRICT TAKES STEPS TO PROTECT BACK BAY

(Costa Mesa, CA) – For the last several months, the Costa Mesa Sanitary District has taken progressive steps to preventing potential sewer spills from entering the Newport Back Bay, a popular recreational and ecological reserve. The District recently finished rehabilitating the existing sewer force main on Irvine Boulevard by slip lining the existing 14” pipe with a new 12” HDPE (high density polyethylene) pipe. The 3,000 feet of new pipe was installed just in time because the existing ductile iron pipe had severe corrosion and was so brittle that officials believe it could not handle very much longer the 1,800 gallons per minute of sewage flow.

Originally, the District was planning on removing and replacing the pipe and budgeted over \$1 million, but due to new trenchless technology, the District was able to complete the project at one-third of the original cost, saving over \$700,000. The new HDPE pipe will last another 50 to 75 years. Now, the District is in the process of using electromagnetic technology to determine the wall thickness and current condition of other force main pipes so that staff can plan the type of work needed before an accident occurs. In addition, the District installed overflow sensors under manhole covers to alert staff of high water before it reaches the top of the manhole. Quick and prompt response to high water is critical to preventing sewer overflows. The sensors give District staff a head start to respond and assess the situation before it becomes an emergency overflow. However, one of the biggest expenditures the District plans on spending this year is the installation of permanent equipment such as by-pass pumps and generators at several of its sewer pump stations, particularly stations near the Back Bay. The by-pass pumps and generators will allow the pump stations to operate in the event of a power outage.

Last year’s power outage in San Diego County that impacted over a million residents and the extraordinary wind storm in Los Angeles County, that left residents without power for more than a week, was a reminder and a good lesson learned on how vulnerable agencies are to power outages. In a power outage event like the one in San Diego County many private and public agencies are going to be seeking emergency generators to power their facilities but unfortunately, there will not be enough generators to go around. So the District is taking the necessary precautionary steps to be self-reliant for at least the first 72 hours in the event of a county-wide emergency. The District plans on spending close to \$1 million for the emergency equipment and installation is expected to be complete by the end of 2012.