



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact:

July 31, 2014

Ron Wildermuth, Public Information Officer

O: 310-660-6258 | RonW@westbasin.org

C: 310-892-5545

WEST BASIN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER ARRESTED

CARSON, Calif. – West Basin Municipal Water District (West Basin) learned that Ronald C. Smith, West Basin Board member, was arrested on 26 July 2014 for alleged charges of misuse of public funds and giving false affidavits. According to court records, Director Smith has been charged with the following crimes:

- Penal Code section 424 (A) – Two counts. This crime involves the misuse of public funds.
- Government Code section 1090 – One count. This section prohibits a government official from having a financial interest in a contract entered into by his agency.
- Penal Code section 118 (A) – Four counts. This statute makes it a crime to file a false affidavit.

West Basin does not know the facts that underlie these charges, and it should be pointed out that Director Smith is innocent until found guilty by a court of law.

“West Basin was disappointed by this news and it’s unfortunate for all concerned,” said West Basin Board President Donald L. Dear. “We want our customers to know that despite this situation, West Basin will continue its hard work and commitment to maintain our water industry leadership in water recycling, conservation and water reliability.”

Director Smith was elected to the Board of Directors in 2006. Director Smith represents Division I, which includes the cities of Carson, Palos Verdes Estates, Rancho Palos Verdes, Rolling Hills Estates and portions of San Pedro.

By law, Director Smith remains on the West Basin Board and can only be removed from the Board if convicted of a felony crime. Director Smith’s case is being handled by the Los Angeles District Attorney’s Public Integrity Division. The next legal action is a preliminary hearing scheduled for August 12, 2014.

Director Smith’s biography can be found at www.westbasin.org.

-More-

“West Basin wants our communities and stakeholders to know that this situation will not impact our commitment to transparency and sound financial and resource management of public funds. We will continue to provide value to our customers by providing water reliability and drought protection initiatives,” said Gloria Gray, West Basin Board of Directors Vice President.

###

West Basin Municipal Water District is a wholesale water district that serves nearly a million people in 17 cities and unincorporated areas throughout its 185-square mile service area. West Basin is reducing its dependence on imported water through its Water Reliability 2020 program that will double conservation, double recycled water production and add desalted ocean water to its portfolio by the year 2020. Visit www.westbasin.org to learn more.