Gina Molise, public affairs representative with the San Diego County Water Authority, introduced Wade Griffis, the construction administrator for the San Vicente Pipeline project. Wade provided an overview of the Emergency Storage Project. Over the years, up to 90 percent of San Diego County's water has been imported from the Colorado River and Northern California through two aqueducts. The Water Authority has recognized that the system is vulnerable because those two aqueducts cross earthquake fault lines. If the aqueducts are ruptured because of an earthquake or other natural disaster, some communities could be without water in as little as three days. To avoid this risk, the Water Authority is increasing its water storage capacity within the county and is improving its ability to move water around the county through several projects as part of the Emergency Storage Project. These projects include the Olivenhain Reservoir and Lake Hodges Pipeline (completed), the Lake Hodges Pump Station and San Vicente Pipeline (currently under construction), and the San Vicente Dam Raise (construction begins this summer). Wade showed the locations of these projects on an Emergency Storage Project map as well.

Wade explained the San Vicente Pipeline will be 11 miles long and will connect San Vicente Reservoir to the Second Aqueduct located just west of I-15 at Mercy Road. The tunnel is 12 feet in diameter, and the pipeline is 8.5 feet in diameter. He showed a map of the pipeline alignment and four access points for the tunnel.

At the time of this meeting, the tunnel for the pipeline is approximately 90 percent complete. Wade explained that one tunneling machine is currently excavating the remaining mile in the eastern portion of the tunnel. Once the tunnel is finished on the east side of the project, crews will begin installing pipe between the San Vicente Portal and Central Shaft.

In the western portion of the tunnel, tunneling has been completed and pipe installation is well under way. Wade explained that steel pipe sections 50 feet long and 8.5 feet in diameter are lowered into the tunnel by a crane at the Central Shaft and installed from west to east. More than 1,000 pipe sections will be used to build the 11-mile pipeline. Currently, pipe installation west of central shaft is about 75 percent complete and is expected to be completed by June. The contractor’s next steps include grouting between the pipe and tunnel walls to keep the pipe in place.
and lining the pipe with cement mortar. This work should be done by the end of this year in the western portion of the tunnel. All work for the pipeline is expected to be complete by late summer 2010.

Gina explained San Diego County is in a drought and faces water restrictions in July. Southern California’s water deliveries will be reduced by an estimated 13 percent, but San Diego’s water supply will be reduced by only 8 percent because of the region’s successful effort to diversify its water supply. The Water Authority has embarked on a 20-Gallon Challenge program, encouraging residents to save 20 gallons of water per person, per day. Gina encouraged everyone to visit the website at www.20GallonChallenge.com and to try to reduce their water usage as much as possible. She also distributed sprinkler head adjusters and toilet leak detection tablets to the committee and audience members.

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