

## FACT SHEET

### SB 485 (Hernandez) – Chapter 678, Statutes of 2015 Stormwater Management Authority for the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County

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**Summary:** SB 485 allows the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County to assist local jurisdictions in Los Angeles County in stormwater and dry weather runoff projects.

**Background and Rationale:** The Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (Districts) are organized pursuant to the County Sanitation District Act, Health and Safety Code Section 4700 et seq, and are authorized under statute to manage wastewater and solid waste (Sections 4741 and 4741.1). The Districts are a group of 24 special districts created in the 1920s by statute for the express purpose of wastewater management. In the 1950s, the statute was amended to authorize solid waste management by county sanitation districts. Each district is governed by a board of directors comprised of the presiding officers of each jurisdiction in the service area. In Los Angeles County, all county sanitation districts share one staff, resulting in efficient, cost effective regional operations. The Districts are one of the largest producers of recycled water in the state.

Beginning in 1991, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board imposed requirements via permit on local jurisdictions' municipal separate stormwater system ("MS4"). The requirements were gradually increased in several subsequent permit renewals, culminating in the most recent permit adopted in December 2012. Compliance with the MS4 permit requirements is anticipated to cost billions of dollars. The requirements not only address stormwater but also prohibit discharge of dry weather runoff (such as over-irrigation). While the Districts already have authority to accept dry weather runoff into the sewer system as "wastewater", SB 485 provides the Districts with statutory authority to manage stormwater and dry weather runoff to cost effectively aid jurisdictions in complying with their stormwater-related regulatory requirements. Projects will be determined on a case-by-case basis in conjunction with local jurisdictions within the Districts' service area.

**What Does SB 485 Do:** The legislation is specific to the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County. The language supplements the existing powers of each of the 24 Districts and allows each District to acquire, construct, operate, maintain, and furnish facilities for all or any of the following purposes:

- Diversion of stormwater and dry weather runoff from the stormwater drainage system;
- Management and treatment of stormwater and dry weather runoff;
- Discharge of the water to the stormwater drainage system or receiving waters; and
- The beneficial use of the water.

Under the provisions of SB 485, local jurisdictions are not required to participate in projects done pursuant to this authority and the bill clarifies that nothing in this statute is intended to change any existing or established water rights, adjudicated and appropriative rights, water rights law, or any obligations under the Service Duplication Act. Prior to initiating a stormwater or dry weather runoff program or project within the boundaries of an adjudicated groundwater basin, the Districts will consult with the relevant watermaster, and similarly, the Districts will consult with the Water Replenishment District of Southern California and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District for the purpose of avoiding potential conflicts with their respective water replenishment, flood protection and water conservation activities.

**Link to final bill language:**

[http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/15-16/bill/sen/sb\\_0451-0500/sb\\_485\\_bill\\_20151009\\_chaptered.pdf](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/15-16/bill/sen/sb_0451-0500/sb_485_bill_20151009_chaptered.pdf)

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