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Note to editors: Photos of the award recipients are available in electronic format.

Regional Water Authority Honors McCormack, Roccucci As Water Statespersons of the Year; Buck, Winternitz for Distinguished Water Careers

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The Regional Water Authority (RWA) has presented its annual Water Statesperson of the Year award to James L. McCormack, retiring engineer with the Sacramento Water Forum, and Pauline Roccucci, former RWA chair and outgoing director of Placer County Water Agency.

In addition, two long-time water leaders received the Authority's Distinguished Service Award for their career contributions to the region's water community. The recipients were Byron Buck, outgoing board president of the Sacramento Suburban Water District, and Leo Winternitz, former executive director of the Sacramento Water Forum.

Paul Selsky, a member of the Carmichael Water District Board of Directors and chair of the RWA Awards Committee, said the award recipients have been instrumental in building relationships and advancing programs to improve the region's water supply reliability. The awards were presented December 13 at the Authority's annual holiday social.

McCormack, who began his involvement with the Water Forum in 1991, was honored for his role in forming the Central Sacramento Groundwater Authority and for his skillful efforts to promote better land use and water supply planning. Prior to joining the Water Forum, he was a project engineer with Boyle Engineering Corporation from 1989 to 1991, and spent nearly 30 years in the Water Resources and Water Quality Divisions of Sacramento County.

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Roccucci, a former Roseville mayor who served on the RWA Board of Directors since 2000, was honored for her efforts to promote regionalism and strengthen partnerships among water purveyors and local governments in the Sacramento region. In addition to serving as mayor, she has been a member of the Roseville Planning Commission and the Placer County Water Agency Board of Directors, and has worked as a registered nurse since 1968.

Buck and Winternitz were honored with this year's Distinguished Service Award, established in 2002 to recognize service and leadership in the water community over a period of years.

Buck, who serves as chair of the Sacramento Groundwater Authority, was honored for forging relationships both inside and outside the water community and for bringing vision and leadership to regional water issues. He was elected to the Arcade Water District Board of Directors in 1998 and served as president until its consolidation with Northridge Water District to become the Sacramento Suburban Water District. He is also the principal and owner of Byron M. Buck and Associates, a water resources and environmental consulting firm.

Winternitz, who became executive director of the Water Forum in 2001, was honored for his professionalism and skillful diplomacy in balancing the needs of 40 stakeholders to carry out the objectives of the historic Water Forum Agreement. He played a key role in developing a new flow standard for the American River that is supported by the water community as well as environmental groups. Winternitz recently became deputy director of the California Bay-Delta Authority.

RWA is a joint powers authority representing 22 water providers in the greater Sacramento area. Its primary mission is to help its members protect and enhance the reliability, availability, affordability and quality of water resources.

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