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Los Angeles, CA - Deputy Secretary of the Interior Steven Griles today joined representatives of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, the San Luis Rey Indian Water Authority, the City of Escondido and the Vista Irrigation District to sign Principles of Agreement for the San Luis Rey Indian Water Settlement Act.

"The agreement on these principles represents a significant step toward the fulfillment of a decades-old promise to secure a permanent source of water for the Pala, Pauma, Rincon, San Pasqual and La Jolla reservations," Griles said. "This agreement is one more example of Interior's commitment to help strengthen Tribal economies and fulfill our Trust obligations."

"I commend all of the parties for their involvement and hard work in reaching an agreement. I want to recognize the negotiation leadership provided by the Department's San Luis Rey implementation team with the able assistance of the Bureau of Reclamation and the Bureau of Land Management," Griles added.

"This is a tremendously important agreement and an important day for the San Luis Rey Indian Tribes. This agreement represents a missing piece of the puzzle that dates back 100 years and it lays the basis for water to be delivered to the reservations," Bob Pelcyger, attorney for the San Luis Water Authority, said.

Under the California 4.4 plan, the Secretary of the Interior is working with the Tribes, the State of California and local water districts to execute a number of required agreements. The agreement to implement the San Luis Rey Water Settlement Act, and the securing of water for these Tribes, is one of those important agreements.

Following extensive discussions, the parties involved have agreed that the water to which the San Luis Rey Tribes are entitled - which will become available through the lining of the All American and Coachella canals will be made available for leasing by the Metropolitan Water District.

"I am delighted that the principles of this agreement not only moves us a step closer to a solution for Southern California water, but is also a significant step in securing benefits for these Tribes that have waited such a long time," Griles said.

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