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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Caltrans Partners with the Environmental Charter Middle School-Inglewood To Teach Students the Imperative Value of Clean Water**

*As Part of Its “Protect Every Drop” Campaign,  
Caltrans Helps Bring Innovative Learning Opportunities to Children in South Los Angeles*

**Los Angeles, CA (Nov. 6, 2017)** – Caltrans is helping to enrich the lives of Los Angeles school children by partnering on a “green lesson plan” with the Environmental Charter Middle School (ECMS) in Inglewood, California.

ECMS-Inglewood, a charter middle school that teaches through the lens of sustainability, recently unveiled 35,000 square feet of new landscaping that will provide opportunities for hands-on instructional resources teaching students the value of protecting our waterways. In alignment with the Caltrans “Protect Every Drop” campaign, the organization’s joint aim is to educate Californians — young and old — about the sources and pathways of stormwater pollution in the hopes of ultimately reducing pollutants in and around the state highway system.

The school’s new 35,000 square feet of landscaping includes several features to support this joint mission, including a living stream that uses stormwater capture elements such as rain gardens, a drybed stream, and rain barrels throughout the campus. These elements are being incorporated into classroom instruction and student learning that supports the Caltrans “Protect Every Drop” clean stormwater message.

“Our actions today directly impact our swimmable, fishable, and drinkable water,” said Phil Stolarski, Caltrans Chief of Environmental Analysis. “Clean water is precious. And that’s why we are so thrilled to partner with the Environmental Charter Middle School-Inglewood on this mission to teach our future leaders that every single drop matters.”

ECMS-Inglewood aims to create vibrant interdisciplinary learning opportunities using the environment to engage students and connect them to the wider world. The dry bed stream will use drought-tolerant, native plants, which require fewer or no pesticides and reduce pollution runoff that could end up in storm drains leading to Los Angeles area waterways, creeks and even the ocean. The dry bed is also built at a slope to capture run-off and allow for rainwater to seep into the soil for moisture and natural filtration.

“We believe that environmental challenges will be the most important issue facing our students in the near future,” said Environmental Charter Middle School-Inglewood Principal Beth Bernstein-Yamashiro.



“This lesson plan and new landscaping gives our students the support they need to excel in, and protect, our modern world.”

**View Photos from the Caltrans/ECMS Partnership**

[Click here to download photos that showcase the Caltrans/Environmental Charter Middle School-Inglewood partnership in action.](#)

**About the Caltrans Protect Every Drop Campaign**

Caltrans’ Protect Every Drop campaign educates Californians about the sources and pathways of stormwater pollution, and works to change behaviors of the public to reduce stormwater pollution on the state highway system.

Caltrans owns and operates storm drain systems along more than 15,000 miles of the state highway system, which discharge into every major watershed of the state. Stormwater picks up pollution washed off of vehicles and roadways when it rains, which makes its way through ditches and pipes that make up storm drain systems. The polluted water then discharges either to an adjacent city or county storm drain system, or to a stream, river or lake – and eventually to bays and the ocean.

The three-year “Protect Every Drop” educational campaign includes a cohesive and integrated public relations, advertising and community outreach program across California in order to help change the behavior of Californians in a way that leads to improved water quality. The campaign is being guided by a steering committee that includes Caltrans, the State Water Boards and the California Stormwater Quality Association.

**About the Environmental Charter Public Schools**

Environmental Charter Schools (ECS) is a growing network of green public schools in underserved communities of South Los Angeles. The mission of ECS is to create and deliver vibrant, innovative, interdisciplinary learning opportunities using the environment to engage students and connect them to the wider world. ECS’ vision is to equip students with the knowledge and skills to graduate from college, inspired to discover their own sense of purposes and empowered to become quality stewards of their own communities.

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