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# TRAILBLAZERS

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL

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**PIONEER SPIRIT** Chris Garrett considers himself an infrastructure lawyer. "I want to get my clients approvals for everything they try to build." He read about the Carlsbad Desalination Project in San Diego County in the newspaper, met with the developer and has been working on it for 12 years. "We've run a multiagency 'regulatory gauntlet,' but the project finally broke ground last year." The project will be the largest desalination facility in the Western Hemisphere when construction is completed in 2016.

**TRAILS BLAZED** Regulatory agencies had three major concerns: marine environment, energy cost and greenhouse gas emissions from the electricity to build the project. Part of the reason the process was so slow was that different agencies wanted to deal with the same issues using different procedures. "Four different agencies—the city of Carlsbad, the State Lands Commission, the Regional Water Quality Control Board and the California Coastal Commission—each looked at the question of whether microscopic organisms in the seawater killed by the process would have a significant environmental impact." Each agency had a different process, and each approval led to a lawsuit from a different group. "The facility is 75 percent built and will deliver water by the end of the year. Ultimately it will supply 7 to 8 percent of San Diego's water."

**FUTURE EXPLORATIONS** Garrett says that there is a lot more infrastructure that must be built, such as electrical plants, mass transit and new roads, and developers must come up with processes by which they can both reach out to communities and go through a long-term project to get approvals. "People care about what's being built around them, so people get years to take a look at the issues that surround them."

