

NOTICE AND AGENDA

Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees

SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO.1

will be held at 3:00 P.M., Tuesday, February 18, 2025

1070 Faraday Street, Santa Ynez, CA - Conference Room

Notice Regarding Public Participation: For those who may not attend the meeting but wish to provide public comment on an Agenda Item, please submit any and all comments and written materials to the District via electronic mail at general@syrwd.org. All submittals should indicate "February 18, 2025 Board Meeting" in the subject line. Materials received by the District during and prior to the meeting will become part of the post-meeting Board packet materials available to the public and posted on the District's website.

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **REPORT BY THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD REGARDING COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR POSTING OF THE NOTICE AND AGENDA**
4. **ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS, IF ANY, TO THE AGENDA**
5. **PUBLIC COMMENT** - Any member of the public may address the Board relating to any non-Agenda matter within the District's jurisdiction. The total time for all public participation shall not exceed fifteen (15) minutes and the time allotted for each individual shall not exceed three (3) minutes. The District is not responsible for the content or accuracy of statements made by members of the public. No action will be taken by the Board on any public comment item.
6. **CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 21, 2025.**
7. **CONSENT AGENDA** - All items listed on the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine and will be approved or rejected in a single motion without separate discussion. Any item placed on the Consent Agenda can be removed and placed on the Regular Agenda for discussion and possible action upon the request of any Trustee.
CA-1. Water Supply and Production Report
CA-2. Central Coast Water Authority Update
8. **MANAGER REPORTS - STATUS, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE BOARD ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:**
 - A. **DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION**
 1. Financial Report on Administrative Matters
 - a) Presentation of Monthly Financial Statements - Revenues and Expenses
 - b) Approval of Accounts Payable
 - c) Quarterly Balance Sheet Inclusive of Reserve Accounts and Proposed Transfer to Reserve Accounts
 2. Personnel Recruitment Update
 3. Draft Resolution No. XXX - A Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 Amending Its Policy Regarding Suspension of Water Service for Nonpayment and Amending Section 1401-A of the District's Rules and Regulations to Incorporate the Policy
 - B. **OPERATIONS**
 1. General Update

9. **REPORT, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE BOARD ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:**
 - A. **SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT ACT**
 1. Eastern Management Area (EMA) Update
 - B. **SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT – GROUNDWATER PRODUCTION CHARGES**
 1. ID No.1 Payment Under Protest for Production Period July 1 through December 31, 2024
10. **REPORTS BY THE BOARD MEMBERS OR STAFF, QUESTIONS OF STAFF, STATUS REPORTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMITTEE REPORTS, AND OTHER MATTERS AND/OR COMMUNICATIONS NOT REQUIRING BOARD ACTION**
11. **CORRESPONDENCE: GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FILING OF VARIOUS ITEMS**
12. **REQUESTS FOR ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING AGENDA:** Any member of the Board of Trustees may request to place an item on the Agenda for the next regular meeting. Any member of the public may submit a written request to the General Manager of the District to place an item on a future meeting Agenda, provided that the General Manager and the Board of Trustees retain sole discretion to determine which items to include on meeting Agendas.
13. **NEXT MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:** The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for March 18, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.
14. **CLOSED SESSION:**
The Board will hold a Closed Session to discuss the following Items:
 - A. **CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - EXISTING LITIGATION**
[Subdivision (d)(1) of Section 54956.9 of the Government Code – 2 Cases]
 1. Name of Case: Adjudicatory proceedings pending before the State Water Resources Control Board regarding Permit 15878 issued on Application 22423 to the City of Solvang, Petitions for Change, and Related Protests
 2. Name of Case: Central Coast Water Authority, et al. v. Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, et al., Santa Barbara County Superior Court Case No. 21CV02432
 - B. **CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - POTENTIAL LITIGATION**
[Subdivision (d)(4) of Section 54956.9 of the Government Code – Potential Initiation of Litigation By the Agency – One Matter]
15. **RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION:**
[Sections 54957.1 and 54957.7 of the Government Code]
 - A. Report (if any) on Closed Session Agenda Items 14.A – 14.B
16. **ADJOURNMENT**

This Agenda was posted at 3622 Sagunto Street, Santa Ynez, California, and notice was delivered in accordance with Government Code Section 54950 et seq., specifically Section 54956. This Agenda contains a brief general description of each item to be considered. The Board reserves the right to change the order in which items are heard. Copies of any staff reports or other written documentation relating to each item of business on the Agenda are on file with the District and available for public inspection during normal business hours at 3622 Sagunto Street, Santa Ynez. Such written materials will also be made available on the District's website, subject to staff's ability to post the documents before the regularly scheduled meeting. Questions concerning any of the Agenda items may be directed to the District's General Manager at (805) 688-6015. If a court challenge is brought against any of the Board's decisions related to the Agenda items above, the challenge may be limited to those issues raised by the challenger or someone else during the public meeting or in written correspondence to the District prior to or during the public meeting. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any individual needing special assistance to review Agenda materials or participate in this meeting may contact the District Secretary at (805) 688-6015. Notification 72 hours prior to the meeting will best enable the District to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.

SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT,
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO.1
JANUARY 21, 2025 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1, was held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, in-person at 1070 Faraday Street.

Trustees Present: Jeff Clay
 Mike Burchardi
 Brad Joos
 Mark Moniot

Trustees Absent: Nick Urton

Others Present: Paeter Garcia Racel Cota Karen King
 Dan Drugan Gary Kvistad Kylie Kelleher

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:

President Clay called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m., he stated that this was a Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees. Ms. Cota conducted a roll call and reported that four Trustees were present, with Trustee Urton absent.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

President Clay led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. REPORT BY THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD REGARDING COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR POSTING OF THE NOTICE AND AGENDA:

Ms. Cota reported that the Agenda for this meeting was posted in accordance with the California Government Code commencing at Section 54953, as well as District Resolution No. 340.

4. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS, IF ANY, TO THE AGENDA:

There were no additions or corrections to the Agenda.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT:

President Clay welcomed any members of the public and offered time for members of the public to speak and address the Board on matters not on the Agenda. There was no public comment. Mr. Garcia reported that no written comments were submitted to the District for the meeting.

6. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 19, 2024:

The Regular Meeting minutes from December 17, 2024 were presented for consideration.

President Clay asked if there were any changes or additions to the Regular meeting minutes of December 17, 2024. There were no changes or additions requested.

It was **MOVED** by Trustee Joos, seconded by Trustee Burchardi, and carried by a unanimous 4-0-0 voice vote with Trustee Urton absent, to approve the December 17, 2024 Regular meeting minutes as presented.

1 7. CONSENT AGENDA:

2 The Consent Agenda report was provided in the Board packet.

3
4 Mr. Garcia reviewed the Consent Agenda materials for the month of December.

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6 It was MOVED by Trustee Joos, seconded by Trustee Moniot, and carried by a unanimous 4-0-0
7 voice vote with Trustee Urton absent, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

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9 8. MANAGER REPORTS - STATUS, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE BOARD ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING
10 SUBJECTS:

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12 A. DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

13
14 1. Financial Report on Administrative Matters

15 a) Presentation of Monthly Financial Statements - Revenues and Expenses

16 Ms. Cota announced that the Financial Statements were provided to the Board via
17 email earlier in the day, included in the meeting handout materials, and posted on the
18 District's website.

19
20 Ms. Cota reviewed the Statement of Revenues and Expenses for the month of
21 December. She stated that the Statement of Revenues and Expenses year-to-date
22 includes figures that were halfway through the fiscal year end 2024-25, and budget is
23 on-track. She highlighted various line-items related to revenue and expense
24 transactions that occurred during the month. Ms. Cota stated that revenue exceeded
25 expenses by \$585,725.72 and the year-to-date December 2024 net income was
26 \$3,027,152.95.

27
28 b) Approval of Accounts Payable

29 Ms. Cota announced that the Warrant List was provided to the Board via email earlier
30 in the day, included in the meeting handout materials, and posted on the District's
31 website.

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33 The Board reviewed the Warrant List which covered warrants 26317 through 26375 in
34 the amount of \$512,001.05.

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36 It was MOVED by Trustee Moniot, seconded by Trustee Joos, and carried by a
37 unanimous 4-0-0 voice vote with Trustee Urton absent, to approve the Warrant List
38 for December 18, 2024 through January 21, 2025.

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40 2. Personnel Policy Manual

41 a) Resolution No. 850: A Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River
42 Water Conservation District, Improvement No.1 amending the District's Personnel
43 Policy Manual.

44
45 The Board packet included a December 30, 2024 Memorandum from Stradling Yocca
46 Carlson & Rauth and a copy of Resolution No. 850.

47
48
49 Mr. Garcia explained that Mr. Jeff Dinkin, the District's employment legal counsel,
50 conducted an annual review of the District's Personnel Policy Manual, and based
51 upon his assessment of existing policies, changes in the law, and discussion with
52 management, five revisions to the Personnel Policy Manual are being proposed to the
53 Board. He reviewed the suggested revisions to Section 1(5) - Equal Employment
54 Opportunity, Section 4(17) - Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation Prevention

1 Policy, Section 4(24) – Voice Mail, E-Mail, Cell Phone and Technology Policy, Section
2 3(17) – Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking and Other Crimes,
3 and Section 4(5) – Improper Employee Conduct.
4

5 No public comment was provided.
6

7 It was **MOVED** by Trustee Burchardi, seconded by Trustee Clay, to adopt Resolution
8 No. 850, a Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water
9 Conservation District, Improvement No.1 Amending the District’s Personnel Policy
10 Manual. Resolution No. 850 passed by the following roll call vote:
11

12 **Ayes, Trustees:** Mark Moniot
13 Mike Burchardi
14 Brad Joos
15 Jeff Clay
16

17 **Noes, Trustees:** None
18 **Abstain, Trustees:** None
19 **Absent, Trustees:** Nick Urton
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21 **B. OPERATIONS**
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23 1. General Update

24 Mr. Drugan provided an update on the Motor Control Center (MCC) replacement work
25 being conducted at the Meadowlark Pump Station. He indicated that all four pumps
26 have been tested and are working with the new MCC instruments in place. Additionally,
27 a new manual transfer switch was installed, which allows the pump station to be
28 operated on backup generator power.
29

30 Mr. Drugan also reported on debriefing notes provided by County officials regarding
31 the Buellton fire incident that occurred in October and knocked out communication for
32 the Santa Ynez Valley. He reported that District staff is reviewing Satellite phone options
33 and noted that Starlink is very popular.
34

35 2. Temporary Water Service – CalTrans Highway 154 Roundabout Project

36 Mr. Garcia discussed the CalTrans roundabout construction project currently taking
37 place at Highway 154 and Edison Street in Santa Ynez. He noted that the District is
38 providing temporary construction water to Granite Construction for the project. Mr.
39 Garcia explained that the temporary water service is being provided by a metered fire
40 hydrant near the intersection of North Refugio Road and Roblar Avenue. He reported
41 that Granite Construction requested to have the construction water delivered via
42 temporary pipeline through a culvert under Highway 154, and that District management
43 responded that an indemnification and release of liability agreement would be needed
44 for that type of arrangement to be considered by the District. Mr. Garcia noted that
45 Granite Construction decided not to pursue its request any further and that construction
46 water continues to be provided at the above-mentioned hydrant location.
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3 9. REPORT, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE BOARD ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:

4 A. SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT ACT

5 1. Eastern Management Area (EMA) Update

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7 Mr. Garcia reported that he and Trustee Joos attended the December 19, 2024 meeting of
8 the Eastern Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency (EMA GSA). A copy
9 of the meeting notice and agenda was included in the board packet. The next meeting of
10 the EMA GSA is currently scheduled to be held on January 23, 2025.

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12 10. REPORTS BY THE BOARD MEMBERS OR STAFF, QUESTIONS OF STAFF, STATUS REPORTS,
13 ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMITTEE REPORTS, AND OTHER MATTERS AND/OR COMMUNICATIONS
14 NOT REQUIRING BOARD ACTION

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16 Mr. Garcia briefly discussed the Family Farm Alliance monthly newsletter.

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18 11. CORRESPONDENCE: GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FILING OF VARIOUS ITEMS:

19 The Correspondence List was received by the Board.

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21 12. REQUESTS FOR ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING AGENDA:

22 There were no requests from the Board.

23
24 13. NEXT MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

25 President Clay stated that the next Regular Board meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled
26 for February 18, 2025.

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28 14. CLOSED SESSION:

29 The Board adjourned to closed session at 4:18pm.

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31 A. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - EXISTING LITIGATION

32 [Subdivision (d)(1) of Section 54956.9 of the Government Code – 2 Cases]

33
34 1. Name of Case: Adjudicatory proceedings pending before the State Water Resources
35 Control Board regarding Permit 15878 issued on Application 22423 to the City of
36 Solvang, Petitions for Change, and Related Protests

37
38 2. Name of Case: Central Coast Water Authority, et al. v. Santa Barbara County Flood
39 Control and Water Conservation District, et al., Santa Barbara County Superior Court
40 Case No. 21CV02432

41
42 B. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - POTENTIAL LITIGATION

43 [Subdivision (d)(4) of Section 54956.9 of the Government Code – Potential Initiation of
44 Litigation By the Agency – One Matter]

45
46 15. RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION:

47 [Sections 54957.1 and 54957.7 of the Government Code]

48
49 A. Report (if any) on Closed Session Agenda Items 14.A – 14.B

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51 The Board reconvened to open session at approximately 4:48p.m. Mr. Garcia announced that the
52 Board met in closed session in accordance with Agenda Items 14.A through 14.B. He reported
53 that there was no reportable action regarding any of the closed session Agenda Items.

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16. ADJOURNMENT:

Being no further business, it was **MOVED** by Trustee Moniot, seconded by Trustee Joos, and carried by a 4-0-0 voice vote, with Trustee Urton absent, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 4:48 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Racel Cota, Secretary to the Board

ATTEST:

Jeff Clay, President

MINUTES PREPARED BY:

Kylie Kelleher, Executive Administrative Assistant

DRAFT

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT,
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO.1
February 18, 2025

Consent Agenda Report

CA-1. Water Supply and Production Report. Total water production in **January 2025 (215 AF)** was 48 AF higher than total production in **December 2024 (167 AF)**, 121 AF higher than the most recent 3-year running average (2021-2024) for the month of **January (94 AF)**, and 105 AF higher than the most recent 10-year running average (2014-2024) for the month of **January (110 AF)**. Notably, total production in January 2025 was the District's highest January production over the last 10-year period, which is attributable to last month's lack of rainfall in our service area. Notwithstanding this high production value for January 2025, generally the District's overall demands and total production have been trending well below historic levels for domestic, rural residential, and agricultural water deliveries due to water conservation, changing water use patterns, and private well installations.

For the month of **January 2025**, **approximately 141 AF** was produced from the Santa Ynez Upland wells and **approximately 74 AF** was produced from the Santa Ynez River alluvium. As reflected in the Monthly Water Deliveries Report from CCWA, the District did not request or take any SWP supplies for the month. Direct diversions to the County Park and USBR were **1.37 AF**.

The USBR Daily Operations Report for Lake Cachuma in January (ending January 31, 2025) recorded the end of month reservoir elevation at **745.06'** and end of month storage of **169,679 AF**. USBR recorded total precipitation at the lake of **0.37 inches** for the month (exact same as December 2024). SWP deliveries to the reservoir for South Coast entities were **41.5 AF**. Reported reservoir evaporation in **January** was **457.1 AF**.

Based on the updated maximum storage capacity of 192,978 AF (previously 193,305 AF), as of **February 12, 2025** Cachuma reservoir was reported at **87.6%** of capacity, with then-current storage of **168,977 AF** (Santa Barbara County Flood Control District, Rainfall and Reservoir Summary). At a point when reservoir storage exceeds 100,000 AF, the Cachuma Member Units typically have received a full allocation. Conversely, a 20% pro-rata reduction from the full allocation is scheduled to occur in Water Years beginning at less than 100,000 AF, where incremental reductions may occur (and previously have occurred) at other lower storage levels. In recent years, Reclamation approved a 100% Project allocation for federal WY 2023-2024 based on extraordinary rain conditions that spilled the reservoir in early 2023. The reservoir spilled again in early 2024 and Reclamation issued another 100% Project allocation for federal WY 2024-2025, which began October 1, 2024. ID No.1 currently holds approximately 4,075 AF of contractual Project supplies in the reservoir, including approximately 1,424 AF of carryover and 2,651 AF of current year allocation.

Water releases for the protection of fish and aquatic habitat are made from Cachuma reservoir to the lower Santa Ynez River pursuant to the 2000 Biological Opinion issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the 2019 Water Rights Order (WR 2019-0148) issued by the State Board (SWRCB). These releases are made to Hilton Creek and to the stilling basin portion of the outlet works at the base of Bradbury Dam. The water releases required under the NMFS 2000 Biological Opinion to avoid jeopardy to steelhead and adverse impacts to its critical habitat are summarized as follows:

NMFS 2000 Biological Opinion

- *When Reservoir Spills and the Spill Amount Exceeds 20,000 AF:*
 - *10 cfs at Hwy 154 Bridge during spill year(s) exceeding 20,000 AF*
 - *1.5 cfs at Alisal Bridge when spill amount exceeds 20,000 AF and if steelhead are present at Alisal Reach*
 - *1.5 cfs at Alisal Bridge in the year immediately following a spill that exceeded 20,000 AF and if steelhead are present at Alisal Reach*
- *When Reservoir Does Not Spill or When Reservoir Spills Less Than 20,000 AF:*
 - *5 cfs at Hwy 154 when Reservoir does not spill and Reservoir storage is above 120,000 AF, or when Reservoir spill is less than 20,000 AF*
 - *2.5 cfs at Hwy 154 in all years when Reservoir storage is below 120,000 AF but greater than 30,000 AF*
 - *1.5 cfs at Alisal Bridge if the Reservoir spilled in the preceding year and the spill amount exceeded 20,000 AF and if steelhead are present at Alisal Reach*
 - *30 AF per month to “refresh the stilling basin and long pool” when Reservoir storage is less than 30,000 AF*

The water releases required under the SWRCB Water Rights Order 2019-0148 for the protection of fish and other public trust resources in the lower Santa Ynez River and to prevent the waste and unreasonable use of water are summarized as follows:

SWRCB Order WR 2019-0148

- *During Below Normal, Dry, and Critical Dry water years (October 1 – September 30), releases shall be made in accordance with the requirements of the NMFS 2000 Biological Opinion as set forth above.*
- *During Above Normal and Wet water years, the following minimum flow requirements must be maintained at Hwy 154 and Alisal Bridges:*
 - *48 cfs from February 15 to April 14 for spawning*
 - *20 cfs from February 15 to June 1 for incubation and rearing*
 - *25 cfs from June 2 to June 9 for emigration, with ramping to 10 cfs by June 30*
 - *10 cfs from June 30 to October 1 for rearing and maintenance of resident fish*
 - *5 cfs from October 1 to February 15 for resident fish*
- *For purposes of SWRCB Order WR 2019-0148, water year classifications are as follows:*
 - *Wet is when Cachuma Reservoir inflow is greater than 117,842 AF;*
 - *Above Normal is when Reservoir inflow is less than or equal to 117,842 AF or greater than 33,707 AF;*
 - *Below Normal is when Reservoir inflow is less than or equal to 33,707 AF or greater than 15,366 AF;*
 - *Dry is when Reservoir inflow is less than or equal to 15,366 AF or greater than 4,550 AF*
 - *Critical Dry is when Reservoir inflow is less than or equal to 4,550 AF*

Based on recent dry conditions locally, inflows to Cachuma Reservoir this water year have not exceeded 33,707 AF and therefore have not triggered higher fishery release requirements from Bradbury Dam (Table 2 flows under Order 20219-0148; highlighted above).

CA-2. State Water Project (SWP) and Central Coast Water Authority (CCWA) Updates.

As previously reported, in 2023 DWR declared a 100 percent SWP Table A allocation for the first time since 2006 (compared to a 5 percent allocation in 2022). In 2024, despite above normal precipitation and snowpack, and above-average storage levels in Lake Oroville, DWR took a conservative approach and limited the final Table A allocation to 40 percent. DWR's rationale for its conservative allocation decision was outlined as follows:

Although water year 2024 is currently classified as an Above Normal year, the ability to move water supply south through the system this spring continues to be impacted by the presence of threatened and endangered fish species near SWP pumping facilities in the south Delta. The presence of these fish species has triggered state and federal regulations that significantly reduce the pumping from the Delta into the California Aqueduct, which limits the SWP's ability to move and store water in San Luis Reservoir. This reduced pumping is expected to continue into late spring. The SWP is prepared to increase pumping as soon as the fishery conditions and state and federal operating permits allow.

By notice to the SWP Contractors dated December 2, 2024, DWR issued an initial 2025 SWP Table A allocation of 5 percent (5%). On December 23, 2024, DWR issued an updated notice increasing the 2025 SWP Table A allocation to 15 percent (15%). By notice to the SWP Contractors dated January 28, 2025 DWR has increased the Table A allocation to 20 percent (20%). DWR explained that the Table A increase is based on the northern part of California receiving above-average precipitation through the end of December 2024. DWR's January 28th notice provided an overview of the Table A allocation factors as follows:

To determine the available SWP water supplies, DWR considers factors including SWP contractors' anticipated carryover supplies into 2025, projected 2025 demands, existing storage in SWP conservation facilities, estimates of future runoff, SWP operational and regulatory requirements from the Federal Endangered Species Act and California Endangered Species Act, and water rights obligations under the State Water Resources Control Board's authority.

As reflected in the Agendas for CCWA's January 23, 2025 Board of Directors meeting and January 9, 2025 Operating Committee meeting, CCWA remains engaged in a variety of matters relating to the SWP, including but not limited to: SWP supplies and related SWP operations; water transfers by CCWA member agencies; California Aqueduct Subsidence Issues; SWP Facility Golden Mussel detection; CCWA infrastructure maintenance; and the upcoming CCWA FY 2025-2026 Budget. CCWA and its member agencies also remain engaged in their pending litigation against the Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District to maintain CCWA sovereignty over important decisions pertaining to SWP supplies. The CCWA Board of Directors is currently scheduled to have its next Regular Meeting on February 27, 2025.



January 2025

DAY	ELEV	STORAGE ACRE-FEET		COMPUTED*	CCWA	PRECIP ON		RELEASE - AF.				EVAPORATION		PRECIP
		IN LAKE	CHANGE	INFLOW AF.	INFLOW AF.	RES. SURF. AF.	TUNNEL	HILTON CREEK	OUTLET	SPILLWAY	AF.	INCH	INCHES	
	745.93	172,162												
1	745.91	172,104	-58	20.3	0.0	0.0	39.2	13.2	15.0	0.0	10.9	0.070	0.00	
2	745.89	172,047	-57	19.3	0.0	0.0	37.2	13.2	15.0	0.0	10.9	0.070	0.00	
3	745.86	171,960	-87	-0.2	0.0	0.0	38.4	13.2	15.0	0.0	20.2	0.130	0.00	
4	745.84	171,903	-57	21.7	0.0	0.0	38.6	13.2	16.0	0.0	10.9	0.070	0.00	
5	745.81	171,817	-86	-5.3	0.0	0.0	38.4	13.3	15.0	0.0	14.0	0.090	0.00	
6	745.80	171,788	-29	50.9	0.0	0.0	39.3	13.2	15.0	0.0	12.4	0.080	0.00	
7	745.77	171,702	-86	7.1	0.0	0.0	49.4	13.2	15.0	0.0	15.5	0.100	0.00	
8	745.72	171,558	-144	-33.5	0.0	0.0	60.6	13.2	15.0	0.0	21.7	0.140	0.00	
9	745.69	171,472	-86	33.3	0.0	0.0	73.1	13.2	16.0	0.0	17.0	0.110	0.00	
10	745.64	171,328	-144	-22.1	0.0	0.0	76.7	13.2	15.0	0.0	17.0	0.110	0.00	
11	745.60	171,214	-114	14.8	0.0	0.0	77.4	13.2	15.0	0.0	23.2	0.150	0.00	
12	745.58	171,157	-57	65.6	0.0	0.0	74.8	13.2	16.0	0.0	18.6	0.120	0.00	
13	745.53	171,015	-142	-20.6	0.0	0.0	77.7	13.2	15.0	0.0	15.5	0.100	0.00	
14	745.49	170,901	-114	-12.7	0.0	0.0	59.2	13.2	15.0	0.0	13.9	0.090	0.00	
15	745.45	170,787	-114	-8.7	0.0	0.0	61.7	13.2	15.0	0.0	15.4	0.100	0.00	
16	745.43	170,730	-57	51.7	0.0	0.0	61.0	13.2	16.0	0.0	18.5	0.120	0.00	
17	745.39	170,617	-113	-5.9	0.0	0.0	61.9	13.2	15.0	0.0	17.0	0.110	0.00	
18	745.35	170,503	-114	-12.1	0.0	0.0	59.8	13.2	15.0	0.0	13.9	0.090	0.00	
19	745.32	170,418	-85	5.4	0.0	0.0	50.4	13.2	16.0	0.0	10.8	0.070	0.00	
20	745.29	170,333	-85	4.4	0.0	0.0	49.0	13.1	15.0	0.0	12.3	0.080	0.00	
21	745.27	170,276	-57	36.1	0.0	0.0	48.0	13.2	15.0	0.0	16.9	0.110	0.00	
22	745.23	170,162	-114	-16.4	0.0	0.0	52.6	13.1	15.0	0.0	16.9	0.110	0.00	
23	745.21	170,105	-57	47.9	0.0	0.0	58.9	13.1	16.0	0.0	16.9	0.110	0.00	
24	745.18	170,020	-85	24.8	0.0	0.0	60.2	13.1	15.0	0.0	21.5	0.140	0.00	
25	745.15	169,935	-85	24.6	0.0	0.0	61.5	13.1	15.0	0.0	20.0	0.130	0.00	
26	745.13	169,878	-57	7.0	0.0	30.8	62.0	13.2	15.0	0.0	4.6	0.030	0.13	
27	745.14	169,906	28	10.6	0.0	56.8	10.3	13.1	16.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.24	
28	745.14	169,906	0	65.1	9.7	0.0	34.4	13.1	15.0	0.0	12.3	0.080	0.00	
29	745.11	169,821	-85	-12.9	10.6	0.0	42.3	13.1	15.0	0.0	12.3	0.080	0.00	
30	745.09	169,736	-85	-7.3	10.6	0.0	46.4	13.1	15.0	0.0	13.8	0.090	0.00	
31	745.06	169,679	-57	20.7	10.6	0.0	47.8	13.2	15.0	0.0	12.3	0.080	0.00	
TOTALS			-2,483	373.6	41.5	87.6	1,648.2	408.4	472.0	0.0	457.1	2.960	0.37	
AVERAGE		170,799												

Comments: *Computed inflow is the sum of change in storage, releases and evaporation minus precip on the reservoir surface and CCWA inflow.
 Indicated outlet release includes leakage from outlet valves and spillway gates.
 Data based on a 24 hour period ending 0800.



Santa Barbara County - Flood Control District

130 East Victoria Street, Santa Barbara CA 93101 - 805.568.3440 - www.countyofsb.org/pwd

Rainfall and Reservoir Summary

Updated 8am: 2/12/2025

Water Year: 2025

Storm Number: 7

Notes: Daily rainfall amounts are recorded as of 8am for the previous 24 hours. Rainfall units are expressed in inches.

All data on this page are from automated sensors, are preliminary, and subject to verification.

*Each Water Year (WY) runs from Sept 1 through Aug 31 and is designated by the calendar year in which it ends

County Real-Time Rainfall and Reservoir Website link > <https://rain.cosbpw.net>

Rainfall	ID	24 hrs	Storm 1day(s)	Month	Year*	% to Date	% of Year*	AI
Buellton (Fire Stn)	233	0.11	0.11	0.57	1.75	17%	10%	
Cachuma Dam (USBR)	332	0.14	0.14	0.99	2.25	19%	11%	
Carpinteria (Fire Stn)	208	0.10	0.10	2.13	2.94	28%	17%	
Cuyama (Fire Stn)	436	0.11	0.11	0.14	1.12	24%	15%	
Figueroa Mtn. (USFS Stn)	421	0.14	0.14	0.88	3.38	26%	16%	10.3
Gibraltar Dam (City Facility)	230	0.16	0.16	1.99	2.75	17%	10%	10.5
Goleta (Fire Stn-Los Carneros)	440	0.12	0.12	2.49	5.14	45%	28%	
Lompoc (City Hall)	439	0.13	0.13	1.31	2.88	32%	19%	10.1
Los Alamos (Fire Stn)	204	0.18	0.18	0.80	2.46	27%	16%	
San Marcos Pass (USFS Stn)	212	0.25	0.25	6.34	8.79	41%	25%	
Santa Barbara (County Bldg)	234	0.12	0.12	2.80	3.75	33%	20%	
Santa Maria (City Pub.Works)	380	0.15	0.15	0.68	3.02	37%	23%	
Santa Ynez (Fire Stn /Airport)	218	0.13	0.13	0.36	1.23	13%	8%	
Sisquoc (Fire Stn)	256	0.17	0.17	0.71	2.37	26%	16%	

Countywide percentage of "Normal-to-Date" rainfall : **27%**

Countywide percentage of "Normal Water-Year" rainfall : **17%**

Countywide percentage of "Normal Water-Year" rainfall calculated assuming no more rain through Aug. 31, 2025 (End of WY2025).

AI (Antecedent Index / Soil Wetness)

6.0 and below = Wet (min. = 2.5)

6.1 - 9.0 = Moderate

9.1 and above = Dry (max. = 12.5)

Reservoirs

Reservoir Elevations referenced to NGVD-29.

**Cachuma is full and subject to spilling at elevation 750 ft.

However, the lake is surcharged to 753 ft. for fish release water.

(Cachuma water storage based on Dec 2021 capacity revision)

Click on Site for Real-Time Readings	Spillway Elev. (ft)	Current Elev. (ft)	Max. Storage (ac-ft)	Current Storage (ac-ft)	Current Capacity (%)	Storage Change Mo.(ac-ft)	Storage Change Year*(ac-ft)
Gibraltar Reservoir	1,400.00	1,379.62	4,693	1,070	22.8%	204	-2,165
Cachuma Reservoir	753.**	744.97	192,978	168,977	87.6%	-200	-15,748
Jameson Reservoir	2,224.00	2,219.74	4,848	4,333	89.4%	12	-444
Twitchell Reservoir	651.50	NA	194,971	NA		NA	NA

[Previous Rainfall and Reservoir Summaries](#)

CIMIS Daily Report

Rendered in ENGLISH Units.

Wednesday, January 1, 2025 - Sunday, February 2, 2025

Printed on Monday, February 3, 2025

Santa Ynez - Central Coast Valleys - Station 64

Date	ETo (in)	Precip (in)	Sol Rad (Ly/day)	Avg Vap Pres (mBars)	Max Air Temp (°F)	Min Air Temp (°F)	Avg Air Temp (°F)	Max Rel Hum (%)	Min Rel Hum (%)	Avg Rel Hum (%)	Dew Point (°F)	Avg Wind Speed (mph)	Wind Run (miles)	Avg Soil Temp (°F)
1/1/2025	0.07	0.00	285	6.6	72.3	24.8	44.3	97	22	67	34.0	2.1	50.4	58.7 Y
1/2/2025	0.08	0.00	291	5.7	81.9 Y	27.4	49.1	98	14	48	30.3	2.1	50.0	58.0
1/3/2025	0.07	0.00	245	8.3	73.3	34.3	48.8	96	27	71	39.7	2.7	63.7	57.8
1/4/2025	0.08	0.00	279	7.3	66.5	33.2	49.6	100	30	60	36.5	2.8	66.2	57.8
1/5/2025	0.08	0.00	284	6.1	77.8	30.4	49.5	86	22	50	31.9	2.2	52.3	57.8
1/6/2025	0.09	0.00	299	7.8	79.2	28.2	50.4	94	21	63	38.2	3.3	78.5	57.6
1/7/2025	0.10	0.00	295	7.2	75.2	39.1	55.7	96	19	48	36.2	3.8	91.3	57.7
1/8/2025	0.08	0.00	0	3.6	66.1	27.6	40.8	64	12	42	19.4	1.6	38.7	57.7
1/9/2025	0.08	0.00	310	3.4	77.4	22.8	44.5	78	9	34	18.2	2.1	49.6	57.5
1/10/2025	0.09	0.00	304	3.6	75.9	23.9	47.0	74	11	32	19.1	2.4	56.5	57.0
1/11/2025	0.09	0.00	0	4.0	63.0	34.5	48.2	74	19	35	22.0	2.3	55.4	56.5
1/12/2025	0.08	0.00	313	4.2	69.1	22.5	42.6	80	18	45	22.9	2.3	54.9	56.5
1/13/2025	0.08	0.00	312	3.9	69.2	21.6	41.2	86	16	45	21.4	2.4	58.7	56.1
1/14/2025	0.08	0.00	0 R	3.7	51.4	27.7	35.3 Y	81	16	53 Y	19.8 Y	1.2	29.6	55.4
1/15/2025	0.08	0.00	0 R	3.9	55.1	27.8	38.1 Y	80	15	50 Y	20.9 Y	1.5	35.5	55.1
1/16/2025	0.08	0.00	324	3.5	72.1	19.4	41.6	84	12	39	18.8	2.1	50.7	55.1
1/17/2025	0.08	0.00	0 R	9.8	49.5 Y	48.5	48.8	85	37	84	44.1	1.6	38.2	54.6
1/18/2025	0.07	0.00	288	9.1	64.8	43.5	50.3	89	45	74	42.2	2.7	63.7	55.0
1/19/2025	0.06	0.00	273	9.2	63.0	40.8	49.1	89	50	77	42.2	3.1	74.9	55.8
1/20/2025	0.08	0.00	327	7.5	70.8	31.4	50.5	88	22	60	37.3	2.5	60.5	56.4
1/21/2025	0.08	0.00	342	5.0	69.6	22.2	44.1	94	20	50	26.9	2.4	57.1	56.6
1/22/2025	0.09	0.00	0 R	3.8	56.1	29.4	39.8	83	9	46	20.6	1.2	28.9	56.0
1/23/2025	0.10 R	0.00	0 R	3.4	49.4 Y	30.7	38.6 Y	79	8	42 Y	17.6 Y	1.2	28.3	55.8
1/24/2025	0.09	0.00	338	3.3 Y	76.4	22.3	44.8	71	8	32 Y	17.1 Y	2.1	49.8	55.9
1/25/2025	0.06	0.00	235	7.2	60.2	29.3	44.8	84	54	72	36.2	3.1	75.0	55.8
1/26/2025	0.03	0.22	162	8.9	51.0	36.4	45.1	97	73	87	41.6	3.2	77.7	55.8
1/27/2025	0.07	0.01	329	7.7	63.3	32.6	44.5	100	44	78	37.9	2.5	60.5	55.7
1/28/2025	0.08	0.00	348	7.3	65.1	24.6	43.6	98	31	76	36.5	2.7	64.5	55.4
1/29/2025	0.08	0.00	324	8.8	61.9	39.7	49.8	88	48	72	41.3	2.6	61.3	55.2
1/30/2025	0.07	0.00	286	8.2	61.5	36.5	47.0	94	51	75	39.3	2.3	54.9	55.7
1/31/2025	0.06	0.00	270	8.2	62.7	34.1	46.0	97	50	78	39.5	2.3	56.3	55.8
Tots/Avg	2.41	0.23	228	6.1	66.2	30.6	45.6	87	27	58	30.6	2.3	55.9	56.4

Santa Ynez - Central Coast Valleys - Station 64

Date	ETo (in)	Precip (in)	Sol Rad (Ly/day)	Avg Vap Pres (mBars)	Max Air Temp (°F)	Min Air Temp (°F)	Avg Air Temp (°F)	Max Rel Hum (%)	Min Rel Hum (%)	Avg Rel Hum (%)	Dew Point (°F)	Avg Wind Speed (mph)	Wind Run (miles)	Avg Soil Temp (°F)
2/1/2025	0.09	0.00	335	11.3	74.6	35.5	53.7	98	45	80	47.8	3.0	71.4	55.7
2/2/2025	0.09	0.00	316	12.5	76.0	36.8	57.4	96	41	78	50.5	2.5	58.8	56.4
Tots/Avg	0.18	0.00	326	11.9	75.3	36.2	55.6	97	43	79	49.2	2.8	65.1	56.1

Flag Legend

A - Historical Average	I - Ignore	R - Far out of normal range
C or N - Not Collected	M - Missing Data	S - Not in service
H - Hourly Missing or Flagged Data	Q - Related Sensor Missing	Y - Moderately out of range
Conversion Factors		
Ly/day/2.065=W/sq.m	inches * 25.4 = mm	(F-32) * 5/9 = c
mph * 0.447 = m/s	mBars * 0.1 = kPa	miles * 1.60934 = km



CENTRAL COAST WATER AUTHORITY
MEMORANDUM

TO: Dessi Mladenova, Controller
FROM: Lacey Adam, Senior Accountant
SUBJECT: Monthly Water Deliveries

February 3, 2025

According to the CCWA revenue meters at each turnout, the following deliveries were made during the month of January 2025:

<u>Project Participant</u>	<u>Delivery Amount (acre-feet)</u>
Chorro	115
López.....	0
Shandon.....	0
Guadalupe.....	30
Santa Maria.....	382
Golden State Water Co.....	0
Vandenberg.....	217
Buellton	0
Solvang	0
Santa Ynez ID#1	0
Bradbury.....	<u>42</u>
TOTAL	786

In order to reconcile these deliveries with the DWR revenue meter, which read 793 acre-feet, the following delivery amounts should be used for billing purposes:

<u>Project Participant</u>	<u>Delivery Amount (acre-feet)</u>
Chorro	116
López	0
Shandon.....	0
Guadalupe.....	30
Santa Maria	386*
Golden State Water Co	0*
Vandenberg	219
Buellton	0
Solvang	0
Santa Ynez ID#1	0
Bradbury	<u>42</u>
TOTAL	793

*Golden State Water Company delivered 0 acre-feet into its system through the Santa Maria turnout. This delivery is recorded by providing a credit of 0 acre-feet to the City of Santa Maria and a charge in the same amount to the Golden State Water Company.

Notes: Santa Ynez ID#1 water usage is divided into 0 acre-feet of Table A water and 0 acre-feet of exchange water.


The exchange water is allocated as follows

<u>Project Participant</u>	<u>Exchange Amount (acre-feet)</u>
Goleta	0
Santa Barbara	0
Montecito	0
Carpinteria	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	0

Bradbury Deliveries into Lake Cachuma are allocated as follows:

<u>Project Participant</u>	<u>Delivery Amount (acre-feet)</u>
Carpinteria	0
Goleta	0
La Cumbre	40
Montecito	0
Morehart	2
Santa Barbara	0
Raytheon	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	42

cc: Daniel Brooks, GWD
Mike Babb, Golden State WC
Joshua Haggmark, City of Santa Barbara
Janet Gingras, COMB
Craig Kesler, San Luis Obispo County
Paeter Garcia, Santa Ynez RWCD ID#1
Shad Springer, City of Santa Maria
Todd Bodern, City of Guadalupe
Robert MacDonald, Carpinteria Valley WD
Mike Alvarado, La Cumbre Mutual WC
Pernell Rush, Vandenberg SFB
Nick Turner, Montecito WD
Jose Acosta, City of Solvang
Rose Hess, City of Buellton

NOTICE TO STATE WATER PROJECT CONTRACTORS**Date: January 28, 2025****Number: 25-01****Subject: Increase of State Water Project 2025 Allocation to 20 Percent****From:**

John Yarbrough
Deputy Director, State Water Project
Department of Water Resources

With the northern part of California receiving above average precipitation through the end of December 2024, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) is increasing the State Water Project (SWP) allocation from 15 percent to 20 percent of most State Water Project (SWP) contractors' requested Maximum Annual Table A Amounts for 2025, as shown in Attachment A – 2025 SWP Allocation. DWR may revise the SWP allocation if water supply conditions change.

To determine the available SWP water supplies, DWR considers factors including SWP contractors' 2025 carryover supplies and 2025 demands, existing storage in SWP conservation facilities, estimates of future runoff, SWP operational and regulatory requirements from the Federal Endangered Species Act and California Endangered Species Act, and water rights obligations under the State Water Resources Control Board's authority.

To schedule SWP water deliveries under this allocation, DWR will develop the 20 percent water delivery schedules by prorating the 30 percent schedules submitted by the SWP contractors in October 2024 (as part of initial requests) or as revised with any subsequent updates. If an SWP contractor foresees any changes to their water delivery schedule, please communicate such changes to DWR in a timely manner.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at John.Yarbrough@water.ca.gov.

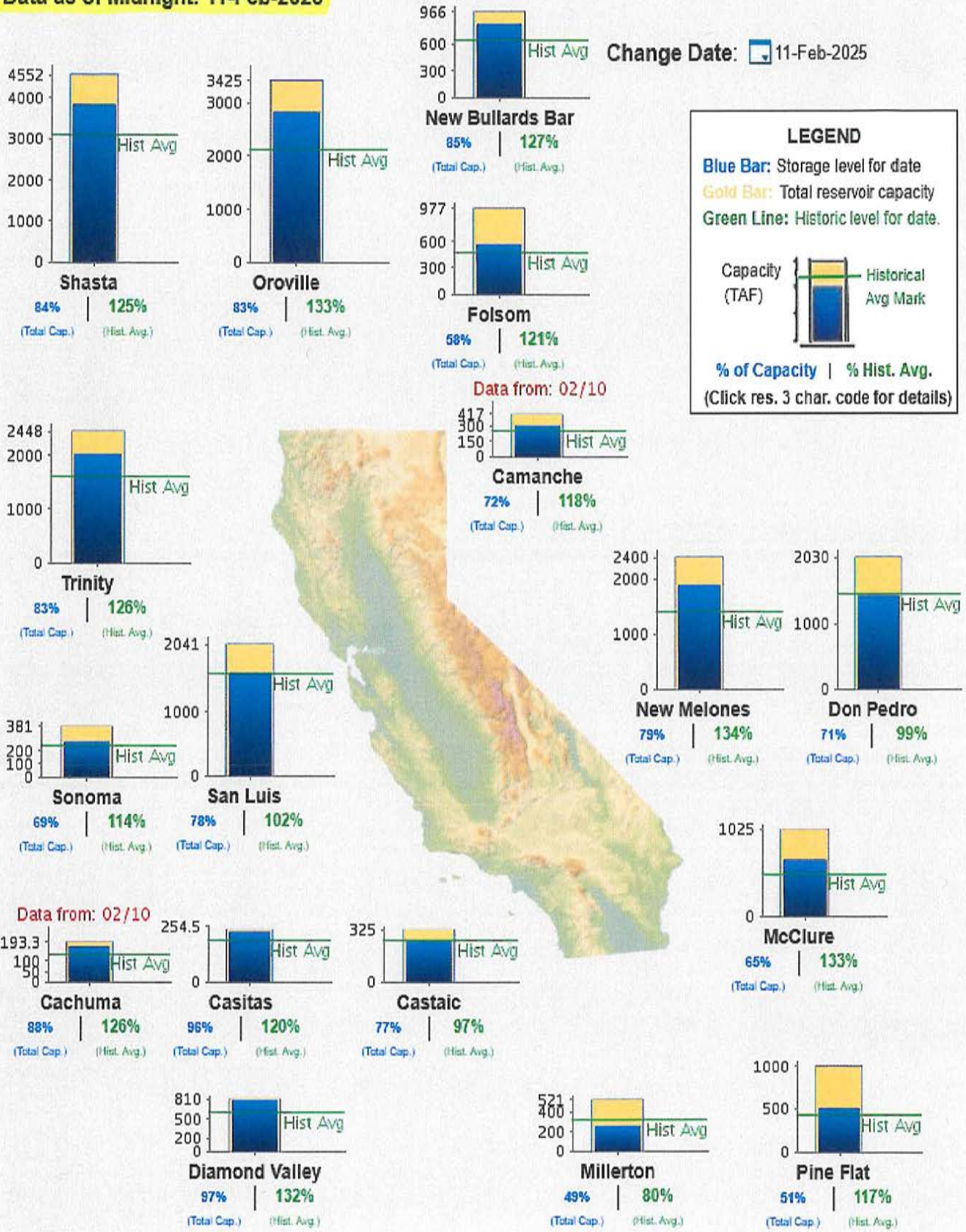
Attachment A: 2025 State Water Project Allocation, updated January 28, 2025

Attachment A
2025 STATE WATER PROJECT ALLOCATION
 Updated
 January 28, 2025

SWP Contractors	Maximum Annual Table A Amount (Acre-Feet) (1)	Approved Table A Allocation (Acre-Feet) (2)	Approved Allocation as a Percentage of Maximum Annual Table A Amount (3) = (2)/(1)
<u>FEATHER RIVER</u>			
County of Butte	27,500	6,000	~22%
Plumas County FC&WCD	2,700	540	20%
City of Yuba City	9,600	3,360	35%
Subtotal	39,800	9,900	
<u>NORTH BAY</u>			
Napa County FC&WCD	29,025	10,159	35%
Solano County WA	47,756	16,715	35%
Subtotal	76,781	26,874	
<u>SOUTH BAY</u>			
Alameda County FC&WCD, Zone 7	80,619	16,124	20%
Alameda County WD	42,000	8,400	20%
Santa Clara Valley WD	100,000	20,000	20%
Subtotal	222,619	44,524	
<u>SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY</u>			
Oak Flat WD	5,700	1,140	20%
County of Kings	9,305	1,861	20%
Dudley Ridge WD	41,350	8,270	20%
Empire West Side ID	3,617	724	20%
Kern County WA	982,730	196,546	20%
Tulare Lake Basin WSD	86,854	17,371	20%
Subtotal	1,129,556	225,912	
<u>CENTRAL COASTAL</u>			
San Luis Obispo County FC&WCD	25,000	5,000	20%
Santa Barbara County FC&WCD	45,486	9,098	20%
Subtotal	70,486	14,098	
<u>SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA</u>			
Antelope Valley-East Kern WA	144,844	28,969	20%
Santa Clarita Valley WA	95,200	19,040	20%
Coachella Valley WD	138,350	27,670	20%
Crestline-Lake Arrowhead WA	5,800	1,160	20%
Desert WA	55,750	11,150	20%
Littlerock Creek ID	2,300	460	20%
Metropolitan WDSC	1,911,500	382,300	20%
Mojave WA	89,800	17,960	20%
Palmdale WD	21,300	4,260	20%
San Bernardino Valley MWD	102,600	20,520	20%
San Gabriel Valley MWD	28,800	5,760	20%
San Geronio Pass WA	17,300	3,460	20%
Ventura County WPD	20,000	4,000	20%
Subtotal	2,633,544	526,709	
TOTAL	4,172,786	848,017	~20%

CURRENT CONDITIONS: MAJOR WATER SUPPLY RESERVOIRS:11-FEB-2025

Data as of Midnight: 11-Feb-2025



[Click for printable version of current data.](#)

Report Generated: 12-Feb-2025 3:31 PM

The CSI link has been disabled to zoom in, for the lack of historical data.

A Meeting of the

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE
CENTRAL COAST WATER AUTHORITY**

will be held at 9:00 a.m., on Thursday, January 23, 2025
at 255 Industrial Way, Buellton, California 93427

Members of the public may participate by video call or telephone via
[Microsoft Teams](#) Meeting ID: 255 983 543 71 Passcode: bZ3Y3dL9
or by dialing [+1 323-484-5095](#), and entering access Code/Meeting ID: 806 236 27#



Please note: public participation by video call or telephone is for convenience only and is not required by law. If technical interruptions to the video call/telephone occur, the chair has the discretion to continue the meeting and participants are invited to take advantage of the other participation options above.

Eric Friedman
Chairman

Jeff Clay
Vice Chairman

Ray A. Stokes
Executive Director

Brownstein Hyatt
Farber Schreck
General Counsel

Member Agencies

City of Buellton

Carpinteria Valley
Water District

City of Guadalupe

City of Santa Barbara

City of Santa Maria

Goleta Water District

Montecito Water District

Santa Ynez River Water
Conservation District,
Improvement District #1

Associate Member

La Cumbre Mutual
Water Company

Public Comment on agenda items may occur via video call or telephonically, or by submission to the Board Secretary via email at lhw@ccwa.com no later than 8:00 a.m. on the day of the meeting. In your email, please specify (1) the meeting date and agenda item (number and title) on which you are providing a comment and (2) that you would like your comment read into the record during the meeting. If you would like your comment read into the record during the meeting (as either general public comment or on a specific agenda item), please limit your comments to no more than 250 words.

Every effort will be made to read comments into the record, but some comments may not be read due to time limitations. Please also note that if you submit a written comment and do not specify that you would like this comment read into the record during the meeting, your comment will be forwarded to Board members for their consideration.

Pursuant to Government Code section 54957.5, non-exempt public records that relate to open session agenda items and are distributed to a majority of the Board less than seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting will be available on the CCWA internet web site, accessible at <https://www.ccwa.com>.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

II. Closed Session

- A. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION Initiation of litigation pursuant to Government Code section 54956.9(d) (4): 1 case
- B. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – EXISTING LITIGATION
Government Code section 54956.9(d) (1)
Name of case: Central Coast Water Authority, et al. v. Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, et al. (Case No. 21CV02432)
- C. PUBLIC EMPLOYEE EMPLOYMENT
(Gov't Code Section 54957)
Title: Executive Director

III. Return to Open Session

IV. Public Comment – (Any member of the public may address the Board relating to any matter within the Board's jurisdiction. Individual Speakers may be limited to five minutes; all speakers to a total of fifteen minutes.)

V. Consent Calendar

- * A. Minutes of the October 24, 2024 Regular Meeting
 - * B. Bills
 - * C. Controller's Report
 - * D. Operations Report
- Staff Recommendation: Approve the Consent Calendar*

255 Industrial Way
Buellton, CA 93427
(805) 688-2292
Fax (805) 686-4700
www.ccwa.com

- * Indicates attachment of document to original agenda packet.
- ◆ Hard copies of the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report are included for Board members and are available to all interested parties upon request, or online at www.ccwa.com.

Continued

#52513v1

VI. Executive Director's Report

- A. Water Supply Situation Report
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.
- B. California Aqueduct Subsidence Update
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.
- C. State Water Project Facility Golden Mussel Detection
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.
- * D. Solstra California Communities LLC's Solomon Hills Project
Staff Recommendations: (1) Approve January 15, 2025 Waiver of Conflict of Interest letter from CCWA counsel, Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP, re. Solstra California Communities LLC; (2) Approve Cost Reimbursement Agreement between CCWA and Solstra California Communities LLC; (3) Find that Board's approval of the Cost Reimbursement Agreement is exempt from CEQA; and (4) provide direction with respect to the development of policies and procedures regarding the conveyance of imported water through CCWA facilities.
- * E. FY 2024/25 Second Quarter Investment Report
Staff Recommendation: Accept report.
- * F. FY Ended June 30, 2024 and 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report
◆ *Staff Recommendation:* Accept the FY Ended June 30, 2024 and 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report
- * G. FY 2025/26 Budget Preparation Schedule
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.
- H. State Water Contractors Report
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.
- * I. Legislative Report
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.
- * J. JPIA President's Special Recognition Award
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.

VII. Reports from Board Members for Information Only

VIII. Items for Next Regular Meeting Agenda

IX. Date of Next Regular Meeting: February 27, 2025

X. Adjournment



Central Coast Water Authority

(<https://www.ccwa.com/>)

[Contact Us \(/contact-us\)](/contact-us)

THIS ITEM APPEARS ON

[BOARD MEETINGS \(/BOARD-MEETINGS\)](/board-meetings)

FEB
27
2025

Board Meeting

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255 INDUSTRIAL WAY, BUELLTON CA 93427

TELEPHONE (805) 688-2292

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[BOARD MEMBER PORTAL \(HTTPS://CCWABOARDPORTAL.SPECIALDISTRICT.ORG/\)](https://ccwaboardportal.specialdistrict.org/)

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DRAFT RESOLUTION NO. XXX
A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO. 1
AMENDING ITS POLICY FOR SUSPENSION OF WATER SERVICE FOR NONPAYMENT

WHEREAS, on September 28, 2018 the Governor of the State of California signed Senate Bill 998 into law, which created the Water Shutoff Protection Act (Act) and established certain statewide standards and procedures relating to the discontinuation of residential water service for nonpayment; and

WHEREAS, the Act is set forth in the California Health and Safety Code, Section 116900 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, on October 13, 2023 the Governor of the State of California signed Senate Bill 3 into law, which amended various provisions of the Act; and

WHEREAS, the Act requires certain water systems as defined by the Act, including the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 (District), to adopt a written policy regarding the discontinuation of residential water service for nonpayment; and

WHEREAS, among other things, the Act prohibits water systems from discontinuing residential water service for nonpayment until a payment by a customer has been delinquent for at least sixty (60) days, and establishes certain standards and procedures that water systems must follow in connection with the discontinuation of residential water service; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Act, in April 2020 the District adopted its Policy for Suspension of Water Service for Nonpayment (Policy) pursuant to District Resolution No. 798, which Policy was incorporated into Article 14, Section 1401-A of the District's Rules and Regulations; and

WHEREAS, from time to time, the District may desire to amend its Policy to promote administrative efficiency and uphold Districtwide interests in carrying out the Act and provisions of the Policy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1, as follows:

1. The Recitals set forth above are true and correct, and incorporated herein.
2. The District's Policy Regarding Suspension of Water Service for Nonpayment (Policy), attached hereto as Exhibit A, is hereby amended and

adopted, and Article 14, Section 1401-A of the District's Rules and Regulations is hereby amended as set forth in Exhibit A to incorporate the amended and adopted Policy.

3. The Policy shall be in full force and take effect immediately.

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, being the duly qualified President and Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing Resolution was duly and regularly adopted and passed by the Board of Trustees of said District at a Regular meeting held on **March 18, 2025** by the following roll call vote:

AYES, in favor thereof, Trustees:

NOES, Trustees:

ABSENT, Trustees:

Jeff Clay, President

ATTEST:

Racel Cota, Secretary to the Board of Trustees

POLICY FOR SUSPENSION OF WATER SERVICE FOR NONPAYMENT

[California Health & Safety Code §§ 116900-116926]

*Adopted by Resolution No. XXX of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 on **March 18, 2025***

1. **Application of Policy.** This Policy for Suspension of Water Service for Nonpayment ("Policy") is adopted by the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 ("District") in accordance with the requirements of the California Water Shutoff Protection Act, California Health and Safety Code Section 116900 et seq. (the "Act"), as may be amended from time to time. Pursuant to the Act, this Policy is only required to apply to the District's water service accounts that are used to provide residential water service, including Domestic and Rural Residential/Limited Agriculture accounts that provide service to single-family residences, multifamily residences, mobile homes, and farmworker housing. Notwithstanding the limiting provisions of the Act, various portions of this Policy are written to apply to all of the District's accounts as a means of promoting administrative efficiency and parity among the District's Customers.

2. **Contact Information.** For questions or assistance regarding water bills issued by the District, or regarding options for averting suspension of residential water service, Customers may contact District staff via telephone at (805) 688-6015 or via email at general@syrwd.org. Customers may also visit the District's office in person at 3622 Sagunto Street, Santa Ynez, California 93460 during normal business hours (excepting holidays), Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

3. **Billing Period and Late Penalties.** Water bills issued by the District are due and payable to the District on or before the last business day of the month in which the bill is issued via mail and/or electronic mail. Bills not paid in full by the close of business on the due date are considered Past Due. Ten (10) calendar days after the Past Due date, ~~the Customer will be sent a "Past Due and Pending Shutoff Notice" as further provided in Section 4.1 below, at which time~~ a ten percent (10%) late penalty is assessed on the outstanding account balance, and the District may issue a Past Due and Pending Shutoff Notice for the account in question at a time determined by the District. The District may consider Customer requests to waive a late penalty under extraordinary circumstances, provided that ~~thea written~~ request is made to the District no later than twenty (20) calendar days after the Past Due date, and provided further that a late penalty has not been waived for the requesting Customer within the previous twelve (12) month period. Decisions not to waive a late penalty are final and not subject to the review or appeal provisions of Section 6 below. The District will not assess a late penalty on a Past Due balance of twenty dollars (\$20.00) or less, where any balance at or below twenty dollars will be carried over and added to the Customer's account for the next billing period.

4. **Suspension of Water Service for Nonpayment.** If all or any portion of a water service bill is Past Due for sixty (60) calendar days or more, the District may suspend water service to the service address.

4.1 Written Notice to Customers and Occupants. The District will provide a mailed notice to the Customer of record no less than ~~seventen (107) business~~ days before suspension of water services. ~~Pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 116908(a), s~~Such written notice may be provided early in the 60-day delinquency period and in the form of the Past Due and Pending Shutoff Notice described in Section 3 above. If the Customer's address is not the

address of the property to which service is provided, the notice also will be sent to the address of the property to which water service is provided, addressed to "Occupants," provided that the District shall not be responsible for sending notice to a property address that does not receive mail delivery from the U.S. Postal Service. The notice(s) will contain:

- (a) the name and address of the Customer of record;
- (b) the amount of the Past Due amount, including applicable penalties;
- (c) the date by which payment in full must be made to avoid suspension of service;
- (d) the process and deadline by which the Customer may request in writing an extension of time to pay the Past Due amount, including applicable penalties, or request an alternative payment schedule, an amortization arrangement, a temporary deferral of payment, or a reduction of payment under Section 4.43 or Section 5.4 below;
- (e) the process by which the Customer may request review and appeal of the bill for water service;
- (f) information that residential tenants or occupants, if not the Customer of record, may have the right to become Customers of the District without being required to pay any Past Due amounts on the account; and
- (g) the District's contact information.

4.2 Residential Tenants or Occupants. In cases where individually metered residential water service is provided ~~through an individual or master meter~~ to ~~tenants or residential~~ occupants of a detached single-family dwelling residential structure, a multiunit residential structure, mobile home park, or permanent residential structure in a labor camp as defined by the Health and Safety Code farmworker housing, and the District is informed that the owner, ~~landlord~~, manager, or operator of said residence(s) is the Customer of record instead of the ~~tenants or residential~~ occupants, the District will attempt to inform the ~~residential tenants or~~ occupants of said residence(s) by written notice, at least ten (10) calendar days prior to suspension of water service, that the account is Past Due and that water service to the residence(s) is subject to suspension. The written notice ~~may~~ will be addressed to "Occupants" and may be provided as the Past Due and Pending Shutoff Notice as described in Section 3 above. The notice will inform the residential ~~tenants or~~ occupants that they may have the right to become Customers of the District without being required to pay any Past Due amounts on the delinquent account. Further terms and conditions for ~~tenants or such~~ occupants to become Customers of the District are provided in Section 8 below.

4.3 Additional Courtesy Notices Prior to Suspension of Service. In cases where a water service bill remains Past Due ~~for more than fifty (50) calendar days~~ and written notice of possible suspension of service for nonpayment ~~already has been provided~~ in accordance with this Policy to a Customer pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 116908, which ~~prior~~ notice may include the Past Due and Pending Shutoff Notice described in Section 3 above, the District may, in its sole and absolute discretion, attempt to provide additional courtesy notice prior to suspension of water service to the service address, where such additional courtesy notice may include a manual telephone call, an automated call, a door tag, or other means determined by the District.

4.4 Special Medical and Financial Circumstances Under Which Residential Water Service Will Not Be Suspended.

- (a) The District will not suspend residential water service for nonpayment if all of the following conditions are satisfied:
- (i) the Customer, or a tenant of the Customer, submits to the District the certification of a licensed primary care provider, as that term is defined in Section 14088(b)(1)(A) of the California Welfare and Institutions Code, that suspension of residential water service will be life threatening to, or pose a serious threat to the health and safety of, a resident of the premises where residential service is provided; and
 - (ii) the Customer demonstrates to the District through documentation that he or she is financially unable to pay for residential water service within the District's normal billing cycle, where the Customer is deemed financially unable to pay during the normal billing cycle if (a) any member of the Customer's household is a current recipient of CalWORKs, CalFresh, general assistance, Medi-Cal, Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment Program, or California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, or (b) the Customer declares under penalty of perjury that the household's annual income is less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level; and
 - (iii) the Customer is willing to enter into an amortization agreement, alternative payment schedule, or a plan for deferred or reduced payment, with respect to all Past Due charges, including applicable penalties, subject to terms acceptable to the District.
- (b) Any Customer who ~~receives a Past Due and Pending Shutoff Notice described in Section 4.1 and~~ desires to avoid suspension of service under this Section 4.4 shall be responsible for contacting the District to establish all of the conditions and provide the documentation set forth in Section 4.4(a) above, which must be completed. ~~The Customer must contact the District~~ as soon as practicable after receiving the Past Due and Pending Shutoff Notice.
- (c) If all of the conditions set forth in Section 4.4(a)-(b) are satisfied by the Customer, the District may, in its sole and absolute discretion, offer one or more of the following payment options to the Customer, as further described in Sections 5.2 through 5.5 below:
- (i) participation in an alternative payment schedule;
 - (ii) amortization of the unpaid balance;
 - (iii) temporary deferral of payment; or
 - (iv) partial reduction of the unpaid balance, provided that no reduction shall result in additional charges to other ratepayers.

- (d) The terms, conditions, and any other parameters of a payment option(s) offered by the District to a Customer pursuant to this Section 4.4 shall be established by the District in its sole and absolute discretion.
- (e) The payment option and terms provided by the District will result in payment by the Customer of all Past Due amounts, including applicable penalties, to the District within twelve (12) months; provided, however, that a longer period may be established to account for extraordinary circumstances.
- (f) Notwithstanding the provisions of Sections 4.4(a)-(e) above, the District may suspend residential water service to a Customer where: (i) for sixty (60) calendar days or more the Customer fails to comply with the terms of an alternative payment schedule, amortization agreement, or a deferral or reduction of payment plan provided by the District; or (ii) while undertaking an alternative payment schedule, amortization agreement, or a deferral or reduction of payment plan provided by the District, the Customer fails to pay his or her current residential service charges for sixty (60) calendar days or more. In such cases, the District will post a final notice of intent to suspend residential water service in a prominent and conspicuous location at the property at least five (5) business days prior to the suspension of service. Any final notice and suspension of service under this Section 4.4(f) shall not be required to provide the information already provided to the Customer under Section 4.1 above, and shall not be subject to the review or appeal provisions of Section 6 below.
- (g) District decisions under the provisions of this Section 4.4 shall be delegated to and made by the District's General Manager and/or his or her designee.

5. Alternative Payment Arrangements and Related Procedures.

5.1 Procedures for Customers to Request Payment Plan Options. Separate and distinct from alternative payment arrangements that may be offered by the District to a Customer pursuant to the provisions and conditions of Section 4.4 above, the District may, in its sole and absolute discretion, and in response to a written request submitted by a Customer to the District in accordance with this Policy, offer one or more of the following payment options to a Customer, based on emergency or other extraordinary circumstances, where the Customer is unable to pay ~~this or her~~ Past Due amount in full, including applicable penalties, by the due date: (i) participation in an alternative payment schedule; (ii) amortization of the unpaid balance; (iii) temporary deferral of payment; or (iv) partial reduction of the unpaid balance, provided that no reduction shall result in additional charges to other ratepayers.

- (a) Any Customer who ~~is subject to~~~~receives~~ a Past Due and Pending Shutoff Notice may submit a written request to the District to pay the entire Past Due amount, including applicable penalties, through an alternative payment option. The Customer's written request must be submitted to the District within ~~fifteen~~ (10) ~~15~~ calendar days of ~~the Customer's receipt of~~ the Past Due and Pending Shutoff Notice. Requests not submitted within the ~~15~~10-day time period are deemed untimely and need not be accepted, reviewed, or decided by the District. For purposes of this Section 5.1(a), ~~the District's Past Due and Pending Shutoff Notice shall be deemed received by a Customer five (5) calendar days after being issued by the District, and~~ a Customer's written request for an alternative payment option

shall be deemed submitted by the Customer on the postmarked date if delivered by mail, and on the date of transmittal if delivered by electronic mail or personal service to the District's office during normal business hours. In no case shall a Customer's request for an alternative payment option under the provisions of Sections 5.2 through 5.5 below require the District to offer or approve aan alternative payment option to the Customer.

- (b) The terms, conditions, and any other parameters of aan alternative payment option(s) offered by the District to a Customer pursuant to this Section 5.1 shall be established by the District in its sole and absolute discretion.
- (c) To the extent a payment option is offered by the District, the terms of the option will result in payment in full by the Customer of the entire Past Due amount, including applicable penalties, to the District within a period of up to twelve (12) months; provided, however, that ordinarily a shorter/longer period may be established by the District to account for extraordinary circumstances.
- (d) Notwithstanding the provisions of Sections 5.1(a)-(c) above In cases where a Customer has agreed to an alternative payment option under this Section 5, the District may suspend water service to a Customer where: (i) for sixty (60) calendar days or more the Customer fails to comply with the terms of an alternative payment schedule, amortization arrangement, or a deferral or reduction of payment plan provided by the District; or (ii) while undertaking an alternative payment schedule, amortization arrangement, or a deferral or reduction of payment plan provided by the District, the Customer fails to pay his or her current service charges for sixtythirty (30/60) calendar days or more. In such cases, the District will post a final notice of intent to suspend water service in a prominent and conspicuous location at the property at least five (5) business days prior to the suspension of service. Any final notice and suspension of service under this Section 5.1(d) shall not be required to provide the information already provided to the Customer under Section 4.1 above, and shall not be subject to the review or appeal provisions of Section 6 below.
- (e) District decisions under the provisions of this Section 5.1, and Sections 5.2 through 5.5 below, shall be delegated to and made by the District's General Manager and/or his or her designee.

5.2 Alternative Payment Schedule. If approved by the District under Section 4.4 or Section 5.1 above, a Customer's payment of ahis or her Past Due amount, including applicable penalties, may be madepaid pursuant to an alternative payment schedule not to exceed twelve (12) months. The alternative payment schedule may allow periodic lump-sum payments that do not coincide with and may be more or less frequent than the District's established due date for regular monthly bills. The Customer shall be required to pay the entire Past Due amount, including applicable penalties, in full by the due date established by the District and must otherwise remain current on all water service rates and charges accruing during any and all billing periods subsequent to the alternative payment schedule provided by the District. The alternative payment schedule will be set forth in writing to and signed by the Customer. As a general rule, while subject to the terms of an alternative payment schedule, a Customer may not request a

separate alternative payment schedule, amortization, temporary deferral, or payment reduction for a separate Past Due amount.

5.3 Amortization. If approved by the District under Section 4.4 or Section 5.1 above, a Customer's payment of ~~this or her~~ Past Due amount, including applicable penalties, may be amortized over a specified period ~~not to exceed twelve (12) months~~. If amortization is approved, the Past Due amount, including applicable penalties, will be divided equally by the number of months in the amortization period, and that additional amount will be due along with the Customer's regular monthly bills. The Customer shall be required to pay the entire Past Due amount, including applicable penalties, in full by the due date established by the District and must otherwise remain current on all water service rates and charges accruing during any and all billing periods subsequent to the amortization schedule provided by the District. The amortization schedule will be set forth in writing to and signed by the Customer. As a general rule, while subject to the terms of an amortization schedule, a Customer may not request a separate alternative payment schedule, amortization, temporary deferral, or payment reduction for a separate Past Due amount.

5.4 Temporary Deferral of Payment. If approved by the District under Section 4.4 or Section 5.1 above, a Customer's payment of ~~this or her~~ Past Due amount, including applicable penalties, may be temporarily deferred for a period not to exceed six (6) months after the amount was originally due. The Customer shall be required to pay the entire Past Due amount, including applicable penalties, in full by the due date established by the District and must otherwise remain current on all water service rates and charges accruing during any and all billing periods subsequent to deferred payment plan provided by the District. The deferred payment plan will be set forth in writing to and signed by the Customer. As a general rule, while subject to the terms of a temporary deferral of payment plan, a Customer may not request a separate alternative payment schedule, amortization, temporary deferral, or payment reduction for a separate Past Due amount.

5.5 Payment Reduction. Under extreme or emergency circumstances, a Customer may request a partial reduction of ~~this or her~~ Past Due amount, including applicable penalties; provided, however, that a partial reduction in excess of twenty-five percent (25%) of the unpaid amount requires approval by the Board of Trustees, and provided further that in accordance with the Act no such reductions shall be approved to the extent they may result in additional charges to other ratepayers. Any partial payment reduction will be set forth in writing to and signed by the Customer.

6. **Procedures to Request Review or Appeal of a Bill for Water Service.**

6.1 Deadline for Requesting Bill Review. A Customer may request review of a bill for water service by submitting a written request to the District within ~~fifteen~~ (1045) calendar days of the Customer's receipt of the bill. Bill reviews under this Policy shall not include any review or challenge regarding the District's underlying water use rates or other charges as adopted by the Board of Trustees under separately applicable laws and procedures. For purposes of this Section 6.1, a bill shall be deemed received by a Customer five (5) calendar days after being issued by the District, and a Customer's written request for review shall be deemed submitted by the Customer on the postmarked date if delivered by mail, and on the date of transmittal if delivered by electronic mail or personal service to the District's office during normal business hours.

6.2 Review by District. A timely written request for review of a bill for water service will be reviewed and determined by the District's General Manager, who will provide written notification of the determination to the Customer.

6.3 Appeal to Board of Trustees. Any Customer who submits a timely written request for review of a bill pursuant to Section 6.1 above may appeal the District's determination made under Section 6.2 above to the District's Board of Trustees by submitting a written notice of appeal to the District, which written appeal must be received by the District within fifteen (15) calendar days of the Customer's receipt of the District's determination under Section 6.2. For purposes of this Section 6.3, the District's determination shall be deemed received by a Customer five (5) calendar days after being issued by the District, and a Customer's written notice of appeal shall be deemed submitted by the Customer on the postmarked date if delivered by mail, and on the date of transmittal if delivered by electronic mail or personal service to the District's office during normal business hours. Upon receiving a notice of appeal, the District will schedule the matter to be heard by the Board of Trustees at an upcoming Board meeting. Written notice of the date, time, and place of the appeal to be heard by the Board will be provided to the appealing Customer ~~at least ten (10) calendar days before the Board meeting.~~ The decision of the Board shall be final.

6.4 Water Service Pending Appeal. In the event a Customer timely submits a written appeal of a water bill matter to be heard by the Board of Trustees, the District will not suspend water service to the Customer while the appeal is pending.

7. **Specific Programs for Low-Income Customers.**

7.1 Reconnection Fee Limits and Waiver of Interest. For Customers who receive residential water service and can demonstrate to the District, through verifiable documentation described in Section 7.2 below, a household income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, the District will:

- (a) Limit any reconnection of service fees to the actual costs of reconnection, not to exceed fifty dollars (\$50) during normal operating hours and one hundred fifty dollars (\$150) during non-normal operating hours. These limits are subject to an annual adjustment for changes in the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) beginning January 1, 2021; and
- (b) Waive interest charges on delinquent bills once every 12 months for matters that have been referred to collections.

7.2 Qualifications. For purposes of Section 7.1 above, the District will deem a Customer receiving residential water service to have a household income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level if (a) any member of the household is a current recipient of CalWORKs, CalFresh, general assistance, Medi-Cal, Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment Program, or California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, or (b) the Customer declares under penalty of perjury that the household's annual income is less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

8. **Procedures for Occupants or Tenants to Become Customers of the District for Purposes of Receiving Residential Water Service.**

8.1 Applicability. This Section 8 shall apply only when the property owner, landlord, manager, or operator of a residential service is listed as the Customer of record instead of the actual tenants or occupants of the residence(s) receiving the water service, and the service is subject to suspension due to nonpayment.

8.2 Agreement to District Terms and Conditions of Service. The District may make residential water service available to the actual residential tenants or occupants of a service

address if one or more tenant or occupant agrees to assume financial responsibility for subsequent charges to the account and agrees to the terms and conditions of water service according to requirements of the District's Rules and Regulations. In cases where more than one residential address or residential unit is served by a single or master meter, the District may make residential water service available to the separate residence(s) if one or more of the tenants or occupants being served by the meter agrees to assume financial responsibility for subsequent charges to the account and agrees to the terms and conditions of water service according to requirements of the District's Rules and Regulations; provided, further, that if a physical and legal means is available to the District to selectively suspend residential water service to those tenants or occupants who do not agree to assume financial responsibility for subsequent charges to the account or who otherwise do not meet applicable requirements, the District may make service available to the tenants or occupants who agree to assume financial responsibility for subsequent charges to a separate account(s) in accordance with the District's Rules and Regulations.

8.3 Verification of Occupancy or Tenancy. To be eligible to become a Customer of the District without paying the Past Due amount on a delinquent account, the tenant(s) or occupant(s) seeking to become a new Customer must verify that the existing Customer of record for the delinquent account is or was the owner, landlord, manager, or operator of the residential dwelling(s). At the discretion of the District, verification documents may include, but are not limited to, a lease or rental agreement, rent receipts, a government agency document indicating that the tenant(s) or occupant(s) are renting the property, or other evidence satisfactory to the District of a tenancy or occupancy relationship with the Customer of record for the delinquent account.

9. **Language for Policy and Certain Written Notices.** This Policy and ~~all~~ written notices ~~required hereunder provided under Section 4 and Section 5 above~~ shall be made available provided in English, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Korean, and any other language spoken by ten percent (10%) or more of the Customers within the District's service area.

10. **Other Remedies.** In addition to suspension of water service, the District may pursue any and all other remedies available in law or equity for nonpayment of water rates, service charges, and applicable penalties, including, but not limited to, filing a claim or legal action, or referring the unpaid amount to collections. In the event a claim or legal action is decided in favor of the District, the District shall be entitled to the payment of all costs and expenses, including but not limited to attorneys' fees and costs, consultants' fees and costs, and accumulated interest.

11. **Suspension of Water Service for Other Customer Violations.** The District reserves the right to suspend water service for any and all violations other than nonpayment as set forth in this Policy, including but not limited to violations of District ordinances, policies, Rules and Regulations, or other applicable federal, state, or local laws.

12. **Fees and Charges Incurred.** Except as otherwise expressly stated in this Policy, any rates, fees, charges, penalties, or other liabilities incurred by a Customer and due to the District under any District ordinances, policies, Rules and Regulations, or other applicable federal, state, or local laws shall remain due and payable as set forth therein.

13. **Decisions by District Staff.** Any decision which may be taken by the District's General Manager under this Policy may be taken by his or her designee.

NOTICE AND AGENDA OF REGULAR MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SANTA YNEZ RIVER VALLEY GROUNDWATER BASIN
EASTERN MANAGEMENT AREA GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

HELD AT
SANTA YNEZ COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT, MEETING ROOM
1070 FARADAY STREET, SANTA YNEZ, CALIFORNIA
6:00 P.M., THURSDAY, JANUARY 23rd, 2025

Optional remote public participation is available via Telephone or TEAMS

To access the meeting via telephone, please dial: [+1 469-998-7311](tel:+14699987311), [209762335#](tel:+1209762335) or via the Web at: [Join the meeting now](#)

“Join a Meeting” - **Meeting ID 294 811 517 405 Meeting Passcode: 4nNRT3**

***** Please Note *****

The above teleconference option for public participation is being offered as a convenience only and may limit or otherwise prevent your access to and participation in the meeting due to disruption or unavailability of the teleconference line. If any such disruption of unavailability occurs for any reason the meeting will not be suspended, terminated, or continued. Therefore in-person attendance of the meeting is strongly encouraged.

AGENDA OF REGULAR MEETING

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda
3. Public Comment (Any member of the public may address the Board relating to any non-agenda matter within the Board’s jurisdiction. The total time for all public comment shall not exceed fifteen minutes and the time allotted for each individual shall not exceed three minutes. No action will be taken by the Board at this meeting on any public comment item.)
4. Consent Agenda
 - a. Review and consider approval of meeting minutes for the December 19, 2024 EMA GSA Board Meeting
 - b. Review and consider approval of Financial Statements and Warrant List for Q2 FY 2024/25
5. Informational Items
 - a. New EMA GSA Well Permits Approved by County of Santa Barbara EHS
 - i. None
 - b. Freeman Diversion United Water Presentation and Tour – 1:00 - 3:30 PM Wednesday, March 26th, 2025
 - i. RSVP to Executive Director by Friday, February 14th, 2025
 - ii. Complete and return waiver to Executive Director by Monday, March 3rd, 2025
 - c. Verbal Update on EMA GSA Rate Study
6. Review and provide input on the Draft EMA GSA 5-Year Budget
7. Review and provide input on Draft Well Registration and Metering Program Outline and Schedule

8. Review and consider approval of Consultant Proposals for the Prop 68 Round 2 Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant EMA GSA Implementation Plan
9. Review and consider approval of request for Agricultural Director representation at EMA GSA Agency Representative Meetings
10. Board of Directors Reports and Requests for Future Agenda Items
11. Adjournment

[This agenda was posted at least 72 hours prior to the regular meeting at 3669 Sagunto Street, Suite 101, Santa Ynez, California, and SantaYnezWater.org in accordance with Government Code Section 54954. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to review agenda materials or participate in this meeting, please contact the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District at (805) 693-1156. Advanced notification as far as practicable prior to the meeting will enable the GSA to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.]



January 31, 2025

VIA HAND DELIVERY AND FIRST CLASS MAIL

HONORARY TRUSTEE:
Harlan J. Burchardi
1969-2020

TRUSTEES:

DIVISION 1
Mark Moniot

DIVISION 2
Jeff Clay

DIVISION 3
Nick Urton

DIVISION 4
Michael Burchardi

TRUSTEE-AT-LARGE
Brad Joos

GENERAL MANAGER
Paeter E. Garcia

Board of Directors
Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District
3669 Sagunto Street, Suite 101
P.O. Box 719
Santa Ynez, California 93460

RE: Payment Under Protest – Groundwater Production Charges for Period July 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024

Dear Board of Directors:

The Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 (ID No.1) has received a semi-annual demand for payment of groundwater production charges from the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District (SYRWCD) for the period of July 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024. ID No.1 hereby submits its payment under protest to SYRWCD.

For reasons including but not limited to those set forth in previous correspondence from ID No.1 to SYRWCD (see, e.g., June 28, 2022; January 31, 2023, April 26, 2023; June 6, 2023; July 31, 2023; January 31, 2024; April 23, 2024; June 19, 2024; July 30, 2024; all of which are incorporated herein by reference) the groundwater production charges imposed by SYRWCD for fiscal years 2022-2023, 2023-2024, and 2024-2025 do not comport with applicable laws, including but not limited to the requirements of California Constitution, article XIII C, section 1(e), commonly referred to as Proposition 26.

SYRWCD continues to publish assertions that its groundwater production charges, including those in Zone E, are necessary for SYRWCD to provide administrative, staffing, and other support to the three Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) in the basin. However, for very specific reasons set forth in ID No.1 correspondence to your district dated June 19, 2024, the SYRWCD groundwater charges for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 do not correlate to the different costs incurred or direct services provided by SYRWCD within its different Zones. For example, records show that SYRWCD is incurring substantially more costs in the WMA and CMA (by way of loans to those agencies) than in the EMA, and that SYRWCD is being paid by the WMA and CMA to undertake certain "Plan Manager" activities in those areas. SYRWCD's 2024 Rate Study does not account for these and other factors and differences among Zones and fails to describe or demonstrate a reasonable relationship regarding costs incurred by SYRWCD in its different Zones, fees paid to SYRWCD by the WMA and CMA, costs of service allocated to producers in Zone E, or direct benefits provided to Zone E producers that are subject to SYRWCD charges.

Regarding SYRWCD's pump charges for Zone E, SYRWCD acknowledges that the costs it allocates to Zone E and the services/benefits it claims to provide in Zone E are in furtherance of various efforts, activities, and responsibilities of the EMA GSA, which are general in nature and benefit all producers throughout the EMA (i.e., those within and outside the Zone E boundaries of SYRWCD). Indeed, SYRWCD points to no specific or direct benefit that it provides to producers within Zone E that are not enjoyed by producers outside Zone E. Therefore, SYRWCD's pump charge against only a subset of groundwater producers in Zone E contravenes the Proposition 26 standard. (See, e.g., *Newhall County Water District v. Castaic Lake Water Agency* (2016) 243 Cal.App.4th 1430, 1441.)

Pursuant to SGMA, the EMA GSA is the exclusive sustainable groundwater management agency for the EMA, including Zone E of SYRWCD. (Water Code § 10723.8(d).) To that end, the EMA GSA is responsible for various groundwater management activities throughout the upland groundwater areas of the EMA, and for several years has been undertaking work to prepare annual reports, monitor and report on groundwater conditions, make annual groundwater use estimates, and determine groundwater storage and overdraft conditions in the EMA. Meanwhile, SYRWCD continues to perform duplicative work in the EMA and is imposing all of its claimed costs for those activities on only a subset of producers in the EMA (Zone E) who receive no direct or additive benefit from SYRWCD's work.

SYRWCD has failed to show that its groundwater charges for Zone E are not taxes subject to voter approval because (1) the proposed Zone E charge is not imposed for a specific benefit conferred or privilege granted by SYRWCD directly to groundwater producers in Zone E that are not provided to those not charged, and (2) the proposed Zone E charge is not imposed for a specific service or product provided by SYRWCD directly to groundwater producers in Zone E that is not provided to those not charged. Moreover, as discussed above, SYRWCD's 2024 Rate Study Report and Final Budget for FY 2024-2025 show that the proposed Zone E groundwater charge exceeds the costs of any benefits, privileges, and services that SYRWCD purports to provide directly to groundwater producers in Zone E that are not provided to those pumpers in Zone E who are not subject to the charge. Accordingly, SYRWCD's proposed groundwater charges fail to meet the constitutional requirements of Proposition 26.

SYRWCD's January 2025 Newsletter continues to spread various misinformation regarding the need for SYRWCD to impose groundwater pumping charges in only a small sub-portion of the EMA. The entire EMA is governed by the EMA GSA which exists and functions as an independent Joint Powers Agency. SYRWCD does not provide coordination, preparation, implementation, staffing, legal, engineering, consulting, or other administrative support services to the EMA GSA; particularly not in a manner that provides any direct benefit only to those in Zone E. To the extent SYRWCD provides administrative support for DWR grant funding awarded to the three GSAs in the basin, SYRWCD is fully paid for those services pursuant to the Proposition 68 grant award.

Board of Directors
Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District
January 31, 2025
Page 3

Thus, there is no need or right for SYRWCD to impose a pump charge on only a sub-portion of producers in the EMA (i.e., Zone E) to fund services being undertaken on behalf of all producers in the EMA, especially where such services are being fully compensated by the State.

SYRWCD's January 2025 Newsletter wrongly asserts that SYRWCD's ongoing work and pump charges in the EMA are necessary because DWR has not decided on the adequacy of the GSPs. As SYRWCD knows, DWR expressly approved all three GSPs (including the EMA GSP) one year ago in January 2024. Furthermore, for reasons unknown, the SYRWCD Newsletter continues to claim that all pumpers within SYRWCD depend upon SYRWCD to provide "local agency SGMA coverage" in the basin, and that in the absence of such coverage by SYRWCD, the entire basin may not be covered and in that event would be subject to State Board intervention and management as a probationary basin. These statements are fictional and inaccurate. The entire basin is fully "covered" within the boundaries of the three GSAs in the basin (formed as separate Joint Powers Agencies) and Santa Barbara County is a member of all three GSAs/JPAs. Thus, SYRWCD could withdraw from SGMA activities altogether and the entire basin would still be fully covered by the existing GSAs and their existing members. (See Water Code § 10724.) The SGMA "coverage" provided to the basin by SYRWCD is inconsequential. In sum, SYRWCD's January 2025 Newsletter fails to justify SYRWCD's imposition of a groundwater pump charge on a subset of producers in the EMA, i.e., those in Zone E.

For all the reasons stated above and in previous correspondence from ID No.1, SYRWCD should suspend its imposition of groundwater pump charges in Zone E altogether; alternatively, SYRWCD should suspend its imposition of groundwater charges in Zone E against ID No.1. Accordingly, ID No.1 is paying its groundwater production charges for the period July 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024 under protest.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (805) 688-6015 or via email at pgarcia@syrwd.org.

Sincerely,



Paeter E. Garcia
General Manager

cc: ID No.1 Board of Trustees
Gary Kvistad, Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck
Lutfi Kharuf, Best Best & Krieger

**SANTA YNEZ RIVER
WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO. 1**

P.O. BOX 157, 3622 SAGUNTO ST.
SANTA YNEZ, CA 93460

RABOBANK
SANTA YNEZ, CA 93460
90-3842/1222

026359

1/21/2025

PAY TO THE ORDER OF S Y River Water Conservation District

\$ **12,970.00

Twelve Thousand Nine Hundred Seventy and 00/100*****

DOLLARS

S Y River Water Conservation District
P O Box 719
Santa Ynez CA 93460

PAID UNDER PROTEST



[Handwritten Signature]

[Handwritten Signature]

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES

MEMO 705000

⑈026359⑈ ⑆122238420⑆ 1914989711⑈

SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO. 1

026359

S Y River Water Conservation District

1/21/2025

Date	Type	Reference	Original Amt.	Balance Due	Discount	Payment
12/31/2024	Bill	Zone A 7/24 - 12/24	4,765.21	4,765.21		4,765.21
12/31/2024	Bill	Zone E 7/24 - 12/24	8,204.79	8,204.79		8,204.79
					Check Amount	12,970.00

Checking Account 705000

12,970.00

SCANNED
DO 2-11-25

Santa Ynez River

WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

JANUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER

www.SYRWCD.COM

TELEPHONE

(805) 693-1156

MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 719

SANTA YNEZ, CA 93460

Groundwater Production Statement

Production Period: July 1 – December 31, 2024

Due by January 31, 2025

Reference: Water Code Section 75500 et seq.

Enclosed are instructions, semi-annual groundwater production statement(s), and worksheet(s) for reporting your well water production.

- Use the worksheet(s) to calculate water production then statement(s) to calculate cost.
- Return the statement and worksheet(s) with payment to our Post Office box address on or before January 31, 2025.
- Statements without worksheets are deemed incomplete and do not constitute legal submittals.
- All submittals postmarked after January 31, 2025 are debited a 10% penalty and 1% interest per month on any delinquent groundwater charge payment.
- Calculations will be reviewed and correcting adjustments made, if needed. "Prior charges" listed on the statement indicates a penalty, interest, or correcting adjustment for prior statement(s) and is due and payable now.
- Keep the yellow carbon copies for your records.

District staff is available to answer your questions and assist you with your groundwater reporting. Please call us at **805-693-1156 ext. 408** or email gwdept@syrwcd.com.

Current Groundwater Charge Rates

As provided in Resolution No. 730, adopted by the SYRWCD Board of Directors during a public meeting held on June 19, 2024, Groundwater Production Charge rates for all types of water produced **between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025**, were levied per zone consistent with a Rate Study conducted by Raftelis are:

Zone A: **\$22.60 per acre-foot** of water produced

Zone B: **\$15.70 per acre-foot** of water produced

Zone C: **\$13.70 per acre-foot** of water produced

Zone D: **\$13.70 per acre-foot** of water produced

Zone E: **\$13.70 per acre-foot** of water produced

Zone F: **\$13.70 per acre-foot** of water produced

Our Purpose

In 1939, the people of the Santa Ynez and Lompoc Valleys joined together to form this water conservation district. The purpose was to prevent the entirety of the upstream Santa Ynez River being diverted out of the watershed to a coastal stretch of populated and agricultural areas extending from El Capitan on the Gaviota Coast to the Ventura County line. Today, the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District (SYRWCD), among other things, protects water rights and supplies within the Santa Ynez River watershed, manages releases of water from Bradbury Dam to replenish downstream aquifers along the river and on the Lompoc Plain, and monitors, reports, and manages groundwater conditions.

Groundwater charges levied by the SYRWCD are in furtherance of District activities in the protection and augmentation of the water supplies for users within the District or a zone or zones thereof which are necessary for the public health, welfare, and safety of the people of this state (Water Code Section 75521). Such activities include:

- Planning, scheduling, and managing the release of water from and downstream of the Cachuma Project Bradbury Dam for the satisfaction and benefit of downstream water rights, including the timing, volume, and rate of flows to promote recharge in the river alluvium and the Lompoc Plain, as provided in State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Order No. WRO 2019-0148.
- Reporting on Santa Ynez River system conditions, basin surface water use, and water purchased by contract.
- Supporting compliance with agreement(s) and procedures to mitigate downstream flooding because of Cachuma Project storm operations.
- Contributing to the review, preparation, and compliance with applicable biological assessment and opinions, including associated consultations, revisions, and replacements, for the protection of endangered species in the Santa Ynez River, while assuring that downstream water rights and water quality in the basin and downstream of Bradbury Dam are maintained and protected.

- Registering wells and recording and reporting groundwater production within the District.
- Monitoring and reporting on groundwater conditions within the District.
- Levying and collecting charges on groundwater production within the District.
- Making annual groundwater use estimates and forecasting groundwater storage and overdraft amounts within the District.
- Determining water volume for replenishment of the dewatered aquifer storage below Bradbury Dam.
- Participation in the three Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) covering the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin and District. Such participation includes, but is not limited to, coordination, preparation, and implementation activities and provision of administrative support (including arranging GSA committee and citizen advisory group meetings, recordkeeping, and bookkeeping) associated with the GSAs' Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP), annual reports, and associated implementation and other activities. This includes coordinating and contributing to responses to comments made on the GSPs and related technical studies. It also includes participation in discussions of long-term governance and funding for the GSAs.
- The District's administrative support of the GSAs, which requires an expenditure of significant District staff time, has been necessary, in part, because the GSAs have only recently hired their own staff, legal, engineering, and other consultants, and have yet to levy any groundwater fees or charges on landowners or pumpers within the GSAs or otherwise create an independent funding source (aside from grant funding and certain contributions from parties to the Joint Powers Agreements). While it is expected that the District will continue to incur costs to participate in the three GSAs as a member of the EMA GSA and as the Plan Manager and single point of contact for the CMA and WMA GSAs with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), the level of District administrative support could change in the future depending on the GSAs' future funding sources, staffing, and contracting decisions.
- The District's activities as a party to all three GSAs benefits all pumpers within the District, which depend upon the District to provide local agency Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) coverage within its approximately 180,000 acres within the basin. In the absence of such SGMA coverage by the District, the entire basin may not be covered and in such event would be subject to State Water Resources Control Board intervention and management of the basin as a probationary basin (Water Code Section 10735.2 (a)(4)(B)). The District's SGMA activities benefit, among other pumpers in the District, the pumpers in Zones A, who pump from the river alluvium and benefit from the District's investigation and efforts supporting the characterization of those zones as not groundwater subject to SGMA management in the GSPs, and the District's anticipated need to defend that characterization against those who disagree with it and contend such pumping must be managed under SGMA. To date, DWR has not decided on the adequacy of the GSPs, which may include an evaluation of that characterization.
- Facilitating coordination between the GSAs and the DWR for SGMA compliance, for the benefit of all three GSAs.
- Administering SGMA grant funding as the Grantee for the benefit of all three GSAs.
- Participating in the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan process to promote regional water management strategies to ensure sustainable and reliable water supplies, including the protection of agriculture.

Board of Directors

Robert Dunlap (Division 1 - Lompoc)

Larry Lahr (Division 4 - Buellton, Lompoc)

Stephen Jordan (Division 2 - Lompoc)

J. Brett Marymee (Division 5 - Solvang, Santa Ynez)

Philip Carpenter (Division 3 - Vandenberg Village, Mission Hills)

Office Location

Our office is located at 3669 Sagunto Street, Suite 101, Santa Ynez, CA 93460.

Water users in the Santa Ynez - Solvang - Los Olivos areas should not confuse this District with the Improvement District No. 1 (ID1) by the same name. ID1 is a separate district formed many years ago to acquire and serve water in the aforementioned areas.

If you have any questions regarding District activities, please contact Bill Buelow, General Manager, at 805-693-1156.

Acting on Trump's order, federal officials opened up two California dams

Los Angeles Times

IAN JAMES, JESSICA GARRISON

January 31, 2025 at 12:50 PM



Aerial view of Success Dam, which feeds into the Tule River. (Robert Gauthier/Los Angeles Times)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has dramatically increased the amount of water flowing from two dams in Tulare County, sending massive flows down river channels toward farmlands in the San Joaquin Valley.

Federal records show that water releases from Terminus Dam at Lake Kaweah and Schafer Dam at Lake Success jumped early Friday morning.

The sudden increase occurred four days after President Trump said on social media that the U.S. military had "entered" California and "TURNED ON THE WATER." Trump also vowed during a visit to Los Angeles last week to "open up the valves and pumps" in California to deliver more water.

According to federal data, the flow from Terminus Dam into the Kaweah River near Visalia increased from 57 cubic feet per second to more than 1,500 on Friday morning. The flow from Lake Success near Porterville into the Tule River increased from 105 cubic feet per second to 990.

The Army Corps of Engineers is “conducting controlled water releases” from the two dams, said Tyler Stalker, a spokesperson for the Corps in Sacramento. “The action is being coordinated with local officials. The releases are within the capacity of the downstream waterways.”

Responding to questions about the reasons for the sudden increase in water flow, Gene Pawlik, a spokesperson at the Corps' headquarters in Washington, said in an email that the action was “consistent with the direction” in Trump's [recent executive order](#) to enact “emergency measures to provide water resources” in California.

Pawlik said the Army Corps was releasing water from the dams “to ensure California has water available to respond to the wildfires.” It was not immediately clear how or where the federal government intends to transport the water.

Read more: [Trump reenters California’s water wars. It’s unclear who will win](#)

Trump, meanwhile, [shared a photo on X](#) of water pouring from a dam, saying: “Photo of beautiful water flow that I just opened in California.”

“Today, 1.6 billion gallons and, in 3 days, it will be 5.2 billion gallons. Everybody should be happy about this long fought Victory!,” Trump wrote. “I only wish they listened to me six years ago — There would have been no fire!”

The president has sought to link local water supply problems during the L.A. County firestorms, such as [fire hydrants that ran dry](#), with his calls for changing water

management elsewhere in the state. But state officials and water experts [have called](#) the comments inaccurate: Regional reservoirs in Southern California are at record-high levels, and more water from Northern California would [not have affected the fire response](#).

Water was released from the dams as the first of two approaching atmospheric river storms [brought snow and rain](#) to California.



The Success Dam feeds into the Tule River. (Robert Gauthier/Los Angeles Times)

Dam managers in California sometimes release water ahead of major storms to make room in reservoirs for more runoff. But the federal agency's comments about Trump's executive order suggest that this case was different.

State officials were “not part of the decision-making” to release water from the federal reservoirs, said Karla Nemeth, director of the California Department of Water Resources.

“We traditionally have a high degree of coordination at the operational level, which really wasn't a part of this decision,” Nemeth said.

The two reservoirs are used to hold supplies for agricultural irrigation districts. Nemeth noted that winter is not the irrigation season for farms, which require more supplies to grow crops in the summer months, "so there isn't a demand" for the water in the San Joaquin Valley at this time.

The dams are also used to regulate the pace of floodwaters that could otherwise affect downstream areas, Nemeth said. During historic storms in 2023, she said, the state sought to work with local landowners to [capture flood flows](#) where possible to replenish groundwater.

"I really can't speak to the decision process at the Corps to make this release at this time," she said.

Read more: [California snowpack is below average, but winter storms could change that](#)

It was not clear where federal officials intended to send the water that was being released from the dams.

Local water managers said they were caught off-guard by the federal government's plans on Thursday. Dan Vink, a water consultant who previously served as general manager of the Lower Tule River Irrigation District, called the situation "extremely unprecedented."

Vink said local water officials heard Thursday afternoon that the Army Corps planned to "go from a fairly nominal release to channel capacity in two hours."

A release of that magnitude, he said, would normally be coordinated days in advance, in part because farmers might have expensive farm equipment placed near riverbanks. There are also homeless encampments near some riverbanks, and officials would want to make sure people were out of the way and not in danger before unleashing so much water.



People look at a full pool of water behind Schafer Dam forming Lake Success on the Tule River in the Central Valley during a winter storm in Tulare County east of Porterville, Calif., in March 2023. (Patrick T. Fallon/Getty Images)

The local water managers on Thursday communicated their concerns to the Army Corps officials, who agreed to release less water than originally planned and to delay the releases until Friday, Vink said.

Aaron Fukuda, general manager of the Tulare Irrigation District, [told the news site SJV Water](#) that normally such flood releases are done with a great deal of prior notification and coordination. "I've been doing this 18 years and have never seen something like this," he said.

Peter Gleick, a water scientist and senior fellow at the Pacific Institute, said dam managers would typically only release large quantities of water in the winter when major storms create a need to make space for large inflows of runoff. But Southern California has been very dry and the snowpack in the southern Sierra remains far below average, so "there is no indication that that's why these releases occurred."

"In addition, when those kinds of releases do occur, they're always done in consultation with local and state agencies," Gleick said.

"I don't know where this water is going, but this is the wrong time of year to be releasing water from these reservoirs. It's vitally important that we fill our reservoirs in the rainy season so water is available for farms and cities later in the summer," Gleick said. "I think it's very strange and it's disturbing that, after decades of careful local, state and federal coordination, some federal agencies are starting to unilaterally manipulate California's water supply."

Vink agreed, saying that given how dry it has been in the region this winter, there was no need to make such a release. In fact, he said, farmers were counting on that water to be available for summer irrigation.

"This is going to hurt farmers," Vink said. "This takes water out of their summer irrigation portfolio."

Democratic Sen. Alex Padilla criticized the administration's decision and demanded answers.

"Unscheduled water releases require close coordination with local officials and safety personnel, as well as downstream agricultural water users, in order to reduce flood risks to communities and farms," Padilla said in a [letter](#) to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth. "Based on the urgent concerns I have heard from my

constituents, as well as recent reporting, it appears that gravely insufficient notification was given, recklessly endangering residents downstream.”

Padilla asked Hegseth several questions, including who made the decision, how much advance notice was given to irrigation districts and local officials, and what impact the releases will have on communities and landowners. He also asked: “If the purpose of these releases is to help fight wildfires in Los Angeles County (which are already almost fully contained), what is the plan to transport this water to Los Angeles rather than let the water simply be discharged into Tulare Lake where it will evaporate?”

Read more: [Climate change identified as main driver of worsening drought in the Western United States](#)

Meanwhile, Gov. Gavin Newsom took other actions to adjust how the state is managing water. With two storms approaching on Friday, Newsom [signed an executive order](#) that aims to divert and store more storm runoff.

The [order](#) directs the Department of Water Resources and other state agencies to maximize the storage and capture of water from rivers to recharge groundwater and boost reservoirs such as San Luis Reservoir, located south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

“It is more important than ever that we maximize every opportunity to recharge our groundwater supplies,” Newsom said.

“We are also preparing to use every last drop to boost our water supply for communities and farms throughout the state,” Newsom said. “By storing these stormwaters, we are creating a literal rainy day fund to help us recover from a [multiyear drought](#) and prepare for our hotter, drier future.”

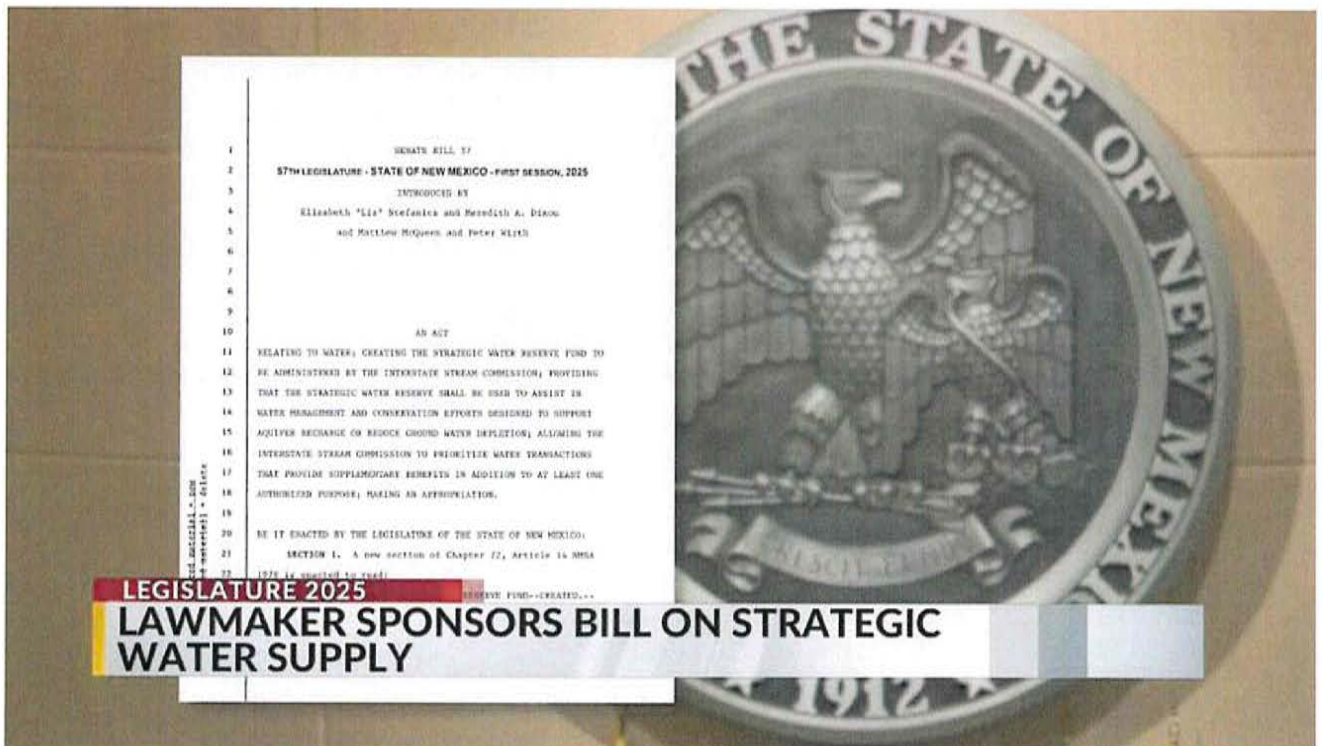
This story originally appeared in Los Angeles Times.

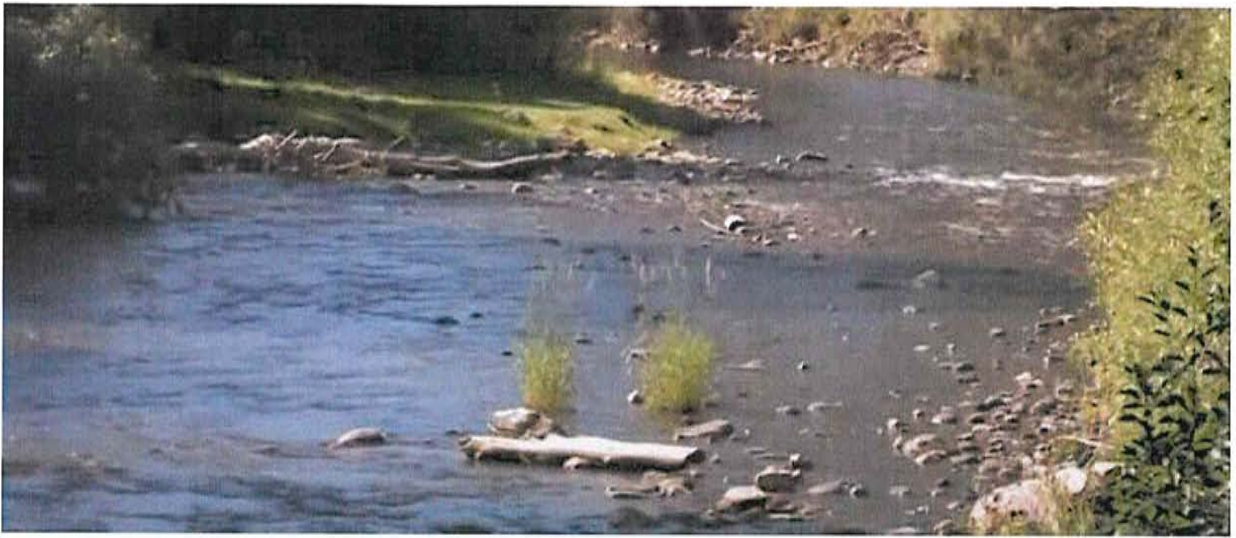
Bill would make funds available to the state to buy water for recreational and cultural use

KRQE Albuquerque

JESSICA BARRON

January 31, 2025 at 2:53 PM





[SANTA FE, N.M. \(KRQE\)](#) – As New Mexico continues to deal with drought, some lawmakers are looking at ways to make sure the state doesn't go dry. One bill is aimed at making funds available to buy water and use it for recreational and cultural reasons. The Strategic Water Reserve was established in 2005 and gave the state power to buy water rights for various reasons.

Story continues below

- **Weather:** [Record winter warmth possible around New Mexico](#)
- **Entertainment:** [City Council set to discuss future for long-awaited United stadium](#)
- **Crime:** [One injured in Grants NMSP officer-involved shooting](#)

The Democrat-sponsored bill wants to expand what that money can be used for. "As you know many of our lakes and ponds and rivers dry up in the summer when people want to go to the state parks, when they want to go out and do outdoor recreation so that's the purpose of this," said Senator Elizabeth Stefanics, (D- Cerrillos).

The Strategic Water Reserve is administered by the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission, which buys water rights in the state for water conservation efforts. It has been used to help the state settle water-related lawsuits or pay farmers not to

use water in times of droughts. Now, Sen. Elizabeth Stefanics (D-San Miguel, Santa Fe, Torrance & Valencia) is sponsoring a bill that would give the reserve \$15 million and allow it to be used for more purposes.

Advertisement

That would include cultural uses such as Native American pueblos and tribes who need access to water for blessings or traditions. She said it could also be used for protecting recreational opportunities, as well as habitat conservation. "Indigenous species, it could be the trout in the Pecos River, it could be some other area in the state where if the water dries up, those endangered species are gone. They die or they just don't spawn," said Sen. Stefanics.

Sen. Stefanics said the bill sets limits for how much money can be used at a time so that the fund can also gain interest for future bodies of water purchases. The bill has yet to be heard in any committee.

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Related articles

Feds raise releases at 2 dams in state

Trump orders huge boost, but California officials and water experts say the timing is wrong for farms.

BY IAN JAMES AND JESSICA GARRISON

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has dramatically increased the amount of water flowing from two dams in Tulare County, sending massive flows down river channels

toward farmlands in the San Joaquin Valley.

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record-high levels, and more water from Northern California would not have affected the fire response.

Water was released from the dams as the first of two approaching atmospheric river storms brought snow and rain to California.

Dam managers in California sometimes release water ahead of major storms to make room in reservoirs for more runoff. But the federal agency's comments about Trump's executive order suggest that this case was different.

State officials were “not part of the decision-making” to release water from the federal reservoirs, said Karla Nemeth, director of the California Department of Water Resources.

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The two reservoirs are used to hold supplies for agricultural irrigation districts.

Nemeth noted that winter is not the irrigation season for farms, which require more supplies to grow crops in the summer months, "so there isn't a demand" for the water in the San Joaquin Valley at this time.

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“I’ve been doing this 18 years and have never seen something like this,” he said.

Peter Gleick, a water scientist and senior fellow at the Pacific Institute, said dam managers would typically release large quantities of water in the winter only when major storms create a need to make space for large inflows of runoff.

But Southern California has been very dry and the snowpack in the southern Sierra remains far below average, so “there is no indication that that’s why these releases occurred.”

“In addition, when those kinds of releases do occur, they’re always done in consultation with local and state agencies,” Gleick said.

“I don’t know where this water is going, but this is the wrong time of year to be releasing water from these reservoirs. It’s vitally important that we fill our reservoirs in the rainy season so water is available for farms and cities later in the summer,” Gleick said. “I think it’s very strange and it’s disturbing that, after decades of careful local, state and federal coordination, some federal agencies are starting to unilaterally manipulate California’s water supply.”

Vink agreed, saying that given how dry it has been in the region this winter, there was no need for such a release.

In fact, he said, farmers were counting on that water to be available for summer irrigation.

“This is going to hurt farmers,” Vink said. “This takes water out of their summer irrigation portfolio.”

Democratic Sen. Alex Padilla criticized the administration’s decision and demanded answers.

“Unscheduled water releases require close coordination with local officials and safety personnel, as well as downstream agricultural water users, in order to reduce flood risks to communities and farms,” Padilla said in a [letter](#) to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth. “Based on the urgent concerns I have heard from my constituents, as well as recent reporting, it

appears that gravely insufficient notification was given, recklessly endangering residents downstream.”

Padilla asked Hegseth several questions, including who made the decision, how much notice was given to irrigation districts and local officials, and what effect the releases will have on communities and landowners. He also asked: “If the purpose of these releases is to help fight wildfires in Los Angeles County (which are already almost fully contained), what is the plan to transport this water to Los Angeles rather than let the water simply be discharged into Tulare Lake where it will evaporate?”

Meanwhile, Gov. Gavin Newsom took other actions to adjust how the state is managing water. With two storms approaching Friday, Newsom [signed an executive order](#) that aims to divert and store more storm runoff.

The [order](#) directs the Department of Water Resources and other state agencies to maximize the storage and capture of water from rivers to recharge groundwater and boost reservoirs such as San Luis Reservoir south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

“It is more important than ever that we maximize every opportunity to recharge our groundwater supplies,” Newsom said.

“We are also preparing to use every last drop to boost our water supply for communities and farms throughout the state,” Newsom said. “By storing these stormwaters, we are creating a literal rainy day fund to help us recover from a [multiyear drought](#) and prepare for our hotter, drier future.”

Dam releases didn't help farms, L.A.

Trump's 'beautiful water flow' perplexes many.

Critics say it was a political ploy.

BY IAN JAMES, JESSICA GARRISON
AND SEAN GREENE

Days after President Trump startled some of his most ardent supporters in California's San Joaquin Valley by having the Army Corps of Engineers suddenly

release water from two dams, many in the region and beyond were still perplexed.

Acting on an order from Washington, the corps allowed irrigation water to flow down river channels for three days, into the network of engineered waterways that fan out among farm fields in the San Joaquin Valley. Coursing from rivers to canals to irrigation ditches, much of the water eventually made its way to retention basins, where it soaked into the ground, replenishing groundwater.

“It’s been recharged to the ground,” said Tom Barcellos, president of the Lower Tule River Irrigation District and a dairyman and farmer. That sounds good, except farmers in parts of the San Joaquin Valley typically depend on water from the two dams to irrigate crops in the summer. In other words, the release of water this time of year, when agriculture usually doesn’t require it, means that growers are

likely to have less water stored in the reservoirs this summer, during a year that so far is among the area's driest on record.

“It would have been better utilized if we could keep it there and use it this summer for irrigation,” Barcellos said. The loss of that water — equivalent to about two days of maximum water use during the summer irrigation season — amounted to “not a lot of harm, not a big foul,” he said.

Still, he said: “I believe someone in D.C. got a little overzealous.”

The sudden, unplanned release of water from the dams has led to criticism from some residents, water managers and members of Congress, who say the unusual discharge of water seems to have been intended to make a political statement — to demonstrate that Trump has the authority to order federal dams or

pumps to send more water flowing as he directs.

“These kinds of shenanigans, they hurt smaller farmers,” said Dezaraye Bagalayos, a local water activist. Small growers have already been struggling, and the release of water from the dams means they will have less when they need it, Bagalayos said.

“The last thing in the world California water management needs is somebody like Trump calling shots when he doesn’t know how anything works,” Bagalayos said. “It’s making an already hard situation very, very difficult. We don’t have a lot of wiggle room in the state of California to be messing around with our water supply like this.”

The Army Corps of Engineers abruptly began releasing large flows on Friday, sending water streaming from Terminus

Dam into the Kaweah River near Visalia and from Schafer Dam into the Tule River near Porterville. The high flows continued for a day, then lessened somewhat, and ended Sunday.

The action occurred after Trump's visit to fire-devastated Los Angeles, when he pledged to "open up the valves" to bring the region more water — even though reservoirs that supply Southern California's cities were at [record levels](#) ([and remain so](#)).

As the water poured from the dams, Trump [posted a photo](#) of one of them, saying it was "beautiful water flow that I just opened in California." The Army Corps of Engineers said the action was "consistent with the direction" in Trump's [recent executive order](#), which calls for maximizing water deliveries.

Neither Trump nor the Army Corps of Engineers provided details about where the water was intended to go. But water released from the two dams serves agriculture in the eastern San Joaquin Valley. It typically does not reach the Los Angeles area, which depends instead on supplies delivered from the aqueducts of the State Water Project on the other side of the valley.

The water releases lowered the levels of the two reservoirs: Lake Success, near Porterville, had been about 20% full. It fell to 18%. Lake Kaweah, near Visalia, was roughly 21% full and similarly dropped to 19% of capacity over the weekend.

Federal records show that more than 2 billion gallons were released from the reservoirs over three days.

Peter Gleick, a water scientist and senior fellow at the Pacific Institute, said that

“for a political photo op and a social media post, the Trump administration has thrown away billions of gallons of California water.” He said the water will not reach any city, “not be used or usable for firefighting, not be used by farmers since this isn’t the irrigation season, and won’t be saved for the dry season, which is coming.”

It was “a needlessly self-destructive action purely for political showmanship,” Gleick said.

“After Trump issued his executive order to do something about California’s water, it appears that Army Corps officials scrambled to respond,” Gleick said.

“California’s water system is very delicately balanced among all of the competing interests, and this episode shows that even slight interference in that system can cause chaos.”

Local water managers said they were caught off-guard Thursday. Dan Vink, a water consultant who previously served as general manager of the Lower Tule River Irrigation District, called the situation “extremely unprecedented.”

A release of that magnitude, Vink said, would normally be coordinated days in advance.

The local water managers on Thursday communicated their concerns to the Army Corps officials, who agreed to release less water than originally planned and to delay the releases until Friday, Vink said. Some water releases went ahead anyway.

The Army Corps of Engineers did not respond to a request for comment Monday about why the water releases were carried out and where the water went.

Barcellos’ Lower Tule irrigation district, together with the Tule River Assn.,

Kaweah & St. Johns Rivers Assn. and Tulare Irrigation District, issued a joint [statement](#) Monday saying supplies in both reservoirs were being stored for the irrigation purposes of various users, to be distributed based on established water rights. According to the statement, the water has been “managed in cooperation with the Corps to achieve the combined benefits of both flood control and water supply for the region.”

The water districts said California’s water operations are “incredibly complex” and that the movement of water supplies “requires an extensive understanding of the plumbing, safety concerns, laws, and coordination among the various owners and operators of water and canals.”

In their statement, they noted that Trump administration officials were in “close contact” with local experts and members

of Congress “as critical decisions were being made.”

They said much of the water was used for groundwater recharge. Some water also flowed in ditches to nature areas, such as the Kaweah Oaks Preserve.

Gleick pointed out that the Tulare Basin is experiencing drought conditions. Since October, the region has had nearly record-low precipitation.

“It’s possible that this summer, we’re really going to wish we had that water back,” Gleick said. “We’re really going to wish we had the water that Trump ordered released, back in the reservoirs.”

Several Democratic members of Congress criticized the Trump administration’s decision and demanded answers.

“This sudden, uncoordinated move raises serious concerns for downstream agricultural operations and communities

since local authorities had little time to adjust or plan accordingly,” Reps. Jared Huffman (D-San Rafael) and Rick Larsen (D-Wash.) said in a letter to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Interior Secretary Doug Burgum.

They said they are worried the releases “did not meet their stated intent of providing Los Angeles with additional water, and could reduce the availability of critical municipal and agricultural water supplies later in the year.”

They asked for information on who specifically — whether Trump or someone else — had given the order, if the Department of Government Efficiency was involved, and if officials had coordinated with state and local officials. (State officials have said they were not involved in the decision .)

“The public deserves clear answers to these questions and assurances that no similar actions will be taken in the future that jeopardize the safety of downstream communities,” or undermine local water planning, Huffman and Larsen said.

Rep. Jim Costa, a Democrat who represents parts of Tulare and Fresno counties, said he has “grave concern” about what occurred.

“An unscheduled release of water at this time of year, when there is little demand for irrigation water and a snowpack that is below average, poses grave threats to a reliable water supply this year,” Costa wrote in a letter to Hegseth.

Matt Hurley, general manager of the McMullin Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency, said he thinks the water releases were intended as a “political statement.”

“Will it help L.A.’s fire? No, absolutely not. But it will help groundwater,” Hurley said. And, he added, that’s one significant positive, as local agencies are focusing on recharging more water to address chronic overpumping that has caused declining water levels.

“From a groundwater manager’s point of view, getting any water in the ground is better than nothing.”

CAPITOL JOURNAL

Trump knows nothing about California's water system

GEORGE SKELTON IN SACRAMENTO

Several years ago, after she'd been elected state Assembly speaker, I asked Karen Bass about her views on the water supply — specifically from the troubled Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. She was honest in her ignorance.

“I’m strictly a city kid,” she replied, smiling. “Coming from L.A., we use [the water]. But we have no concept where it comes from. We get it out of a bottle or the tap.”

Until last month, that is, when firefighters opened taps on hydrants in Pacific Palisades, and there wasn’t any water to douse the flames incinerating houses.

The [water pressure](#) wasn’t strong enough to compete against the catastrophic wildfires fanned by hurricane-force winds. But fingers naturally were pointed at Mayor Bass. Why hadn’t she planned for this disaster? As if anyone could.

Bass has gotten way up to speed on California water since we spoke over lunch back in 2008. What impressed me about her back then — and still does — was her candor in acknowledging what she didn’t know and her commitment to learn. It’s

the mirror opposite of another city kid — the one with Manhattan roots.

President Trump is totally ignorant of California's complex water system and will never acknowledge it. Calling him ignorant is giving the guy the benefit of the doubt. It's saying he's misinformed and fantasizing, not outright lying, as he meddles in California water.

But briefly back to Bass: I asked whether she had any idea how to make the delta a more reliable water source for Central and Southern California without devastating the estuary's communities and farms and killing off the remaining endangered salmon that were vital for the coastal fishing industry.

“I know that it's a tremendous issue — I mean ‘Chinatown,’ the movie,” she said, referring to the 1974 classic about L.A.

draining the Owens Valley in the Eastern Sierra to nurture the city's growth.

“That was the extent of my knowledge. Then I come up here [to Sacramento] and find out I live in a flood plain. I was stunned.”

She took field trips into the San Joaquin Valley farm belt to learn about California's severe water problems. Water became a self-described “high priority” for her.

Trump doesn't need a farm visit. He needs to look at a map and learn something about California geography. And do some simple research about where and how water flows in California — and specifically into the L.A. Basin.

Most of L.A. city's water comes from three sources: The Owens Valley, through its own aqueduct; the Colorado River, under a multistate agreement overseen by the federal government; and the State Water

Project. Colorado River and state water are purchased from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

The federal Central Valley Project provides water for the 444-mile-long Central Valley, mainly its agriculture. It doesn't send any water into Southern California, a fact Trump either doesn't realize or simply ignores. It's state water that is pumped over the Tehachapi Mountains into the Southland, and Trump has no control over it, despite what he implies.

State and federal water both flow from dams and rivers into the delta, where roughly 5 million acre-feet annually is pumped south through canals into the San Joaquin Valley, Central Coast and Southern California.

The president keeps saying California gets water from the Pacific Northwest. No,

that's Oregon and Washington. Their water stays there — although every few years someone voices a crackpot idea about California importing water from the Columbia River. It can't happen politically or economically.

Trump has even recently talked about siphoning water from Canada for California. Except he seems to think the system already exists and the Canadian water flows down here “naturally.” It's hard to really know what he thinks.

Maybe he'll next suggest towing icebergs from Greenland.

But it's clear he believes there's some delta “valve” that could send “massive amounts of water” to L.A. to fight wildfires — if only Gov. Gavin Newsom would twist it open.

Fantasy.

Last week, Trump bragged on his social media platform that the military had

entered California and “under Emergency Powers, TURNED ON THE WATER flowing abundantly from the Pacific Northwest and beyond.” Nothing like that happened. Federal pumps had been briefly shut down for maintenance and were turned back on.

Parroting agriculture interests, Trump claims much of the delta water is wasted because it flows to the sea. Of course it does. That’s necessary to repel salt water and make delta water safe for drinking and irrigation. It also flushes pollution out of San Francisco Bay. It carries sand to beaches and baby salmon to the ocean to grow into iconic, tasty creatures.

Trump has issued two executive orders that would gut the federal Endangered Species Act to [pump more](#) delta water and reduce protection for declining salmon, steelhead trout and ancient sturgeon.

California's coastal salmon industry already is in dry dock. Fishing seasons have been canceled the last two years because there aren't enough fish. Some boat skippers are trying to keep their vessels afloat with whale watching and the scattering of human remains.

Under the guise of providing more water for Southern California — a task impossible for the federal government — Trump, in reality, is trying to increase pumping for San Joaquin Valley irrigation.

And that could end up cutting water for Southern California because the state, under its own endangered species act, would conceivably reduce its pumping to protect declining fish.

If the feds take more water from the delta, "the burden to meet water quality standards would fall on the State Water

Project. This would likely lead to less water available for Southern California — not more,” water experts Greg Gartrell and Sarah Bardeen wrote for the nonpartisan Public Policy Institute of California.

Trump should ask Bass for some tutoring on California water to avoid the consequences of his delusional policies. And invite her into the White House theater so they can watch “Chinatown” together.

From: Department of Water Resources <DWR@public.govdelivery.com>
Sent: Friday, January 31, 2025 5:09 PM
To: Paeter Garcia
Subject: Governor Newsom issues Executive Order N-16-25

[View this bulletin online - Share](#)



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER
MANAGEMENT OFFICE

This is an email from the Department of Water Resources' Sustainable Groundwater Management Office. Please do not reply directly to this email; for more information or general inquiries, please contact: sgmps@water.ca.gov.

Governor Newsom issues Executive Order N-16-25

Governor Newsom today signed Executive Order N-16-25, which set forth the conditions under which water users may divert and store excess water from incoming winter storms.

Specifically, the Executive Order suspends the local flood plan requirement of Water Code 1242.1, which codified many elements of the previous 2023 Flood Executive Orders and allows for diversions of flood flows for recharge without water rights. The State Water Resources Control Board has updated its [1242.1 Technical Guidance](#) that provides additional details of the existing 1242.1 requirements and addresses today's Executive Order.

For more information on the Executive Order:

- [Release Information](#)
- [Executive Order](#)

**EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

EXECUTIVE ORDER N-16-25

WHEREAS on April 21, 2021, May 10, 2021, July 8, 2021, and October 19, 2021, I proclaimed States of Emergency to exist across all counties in the State due to drought conditions; and

WHEREAS on September 4, 2024, I terminated the drought State of Emergency in 19 counties, while maintaining the drought State of Emergency in the remaining 39 counties of the State because the multi-year nature of the drought yielded ongoing, significant impacts in those 39 counties (the "Proclaimed Drought Counties"), which include the Sacramento and San Joaquin River basins; the Tulare Lake basin; the Scott, Shasta, and Klamath River watersheds; and the Clear Lake watershed; and

WHEREAS even now, many groundwater basins remain depleted in the Proclaimed Drought Counties from overreliance and successive multi-year droughts; and

WHEREAS on March 10, 2023, March 31, 2023, and May 17, 2023, I issued Executive Orders N-4-23, N-6-23, and N-7-23, to facilitate Californians' ability to divert stormwaters and flood flows to recharge groundwater basins following storms in early 2023, to mitigate the effects of the drought State of Emergency on groundwater supplies, which were then substantially codified in statute through the enactment of Senate Bill No. 122 (2023), and the relevant provisions of those Orders were subsequently terminated; and

WHEREAS the relevant provisions of Senate Bill No. 122, codified at Water Code section 1242.1, authorize diversions for groundwater recharge where a local or regional agency has adopted a local flood-control plan pursuant to Water Code section 8201 or has considered flood risk as part of its most recently adopted general plan; and

WHEREAS local and regional agencies require more time to adopt these local flood-control plans or to update their general plans, and so the requirement of such plans would interfere with landowners' ability to make use of Senate Bill No. 122 to divert stormwaters for groundwater recharge in the interim; and

WHEREAS the State is anticipating significant precipitation associated with winter storms in late January and early February 2025, and is remaining vigilant to manage the impacts of that precipitation while maximizing opportunities for groundwater recharge and other drought relief; and

WHEREAS under the provisions of Government Code section 8571, I find that strict compliance with various statutes and regulations specified in this Order would prevent, hinder, or delay the mitigation of the drought State of Emergency in the Proclaimed Drought Counties.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor of the State of California, in accordance with the authority vested in me by the State Constitution and statutes, including the California Emergency Services Act, and in particular, Government Code sections 8567, 8571, and 8627, do hereby issue the following Order to become effective immediately.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. All provisions contained in the above-referenced Proclamations of a State of Emergency and related Executive Orders shall remain in full force and effect, except as terminated, withdrawn, or otherwise modified in subsequent Proclamations and Orders.
2. The requirement in Water Code section 1242.1, subdivision (a)(1), that a local or regional agency have "adopted a local plan of flood control pursuant to Section 8201" or have "considered flood risk as part of its most recently adopted general plan" is suspended in the Proclaimed Drought Counties. A local or regional agency in the Proclaimed Drought Counties may therefore trigger the remaining provisions of Water Code section 1242.1 without having adopted a local flood-control plan pursuant to Water Code section 8201 or having considered flood risk as part of its most recently adopted general plan.
3. The Department of Water Resources is directed to take all feasible and appropriate action to maximize diversions of excess flows that become available as a result of the anticipated winter storms, and other winter storms, to storage, including storage in San Luis Reservoir.
4. The Department of Water Resources, the State Water Resources Control Board, the Natural Resources Agency, and the Environmental Protection Agency are directed to identify any obstacles that would hinder efforts to maximize diversions to storage of excess flows that become available as a result of the anticipated winter storms, to remove or minimize such obstacles wherever possible, and to promptly report to my office any additional statutory or regulatory barriers that should be considered for suspension.

I FURTHER DIRECT that as soon as hereafter possible, this Order be filed in the Office of the Secretary of State and that widespread publicity and notice be given of this Order.

This Order is not intended to, and does not, create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, against the State of California, its agencies, departments, entities, officers, employees, or any other person.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have
hereunto set my hand and caused
the Great Seal of the State of
California to be affixed this 31st day
of January 2025.

GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor of California

ATTEST:

SHIRLEY WEBER, PH. D
Secretary of State

Newsom issues order to 'maximize' stormwater capture

Environmental critics say
mandate echoes Trump's,
which they call an 'attack'
on fish and the ecosystem.



GOV. Gavin Newsom said that by storing more storm runoff in reservoirs, “we are creating a literal rainy day fund to help us recover from a multiyear drought.”

(Brian van der Brug Los Angeles Times)

BY IAN JAMES

Gov. Gavin Newsom has signed an executive order that he says is intended to “maximize” the capture of water during winter storms.

Newsom [issued the order](#) Friday, saying it will make it easier to divert and store

water as storms bring rain and snow in the coming days.

“It is more important than ever that we maximize every opportunity to recharge our groundwater supplies,” Newsom said.

“As we anticipate rain and snow in Northern California, we are also preparing to use every last drop to boost our water supply for communities and farms throughout the state.”

Environmental and fishing groups, however, denounced Newsom’s order as being alarmingly similar to federal directives from President Trump, saying the governor’s approach threatens to harm vulnerable fish species and the deteriorating ecosystem of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

“This order reads as though it was written by President Trump,” said Barry Nelson, a

policy representative for the fishing group Golden State Salmon Assn.

He said Newsom's measure appears to mimic an [executive order](#) that Trump announced five days earlier in which he directed federal agencies to "maximize" water deliveries in California and "override" state policies if necessary.

"This reads as almost a carbon copy of that order," Nelson said. "We call on the governor to stand up to protect California's environment, not to assist in federal attacks."

Representatives of water suppliers supported Newsom's order.

The measures "empower California water managers to blunt the destructive impact of flooding while quickly diverting excess water to recharge groundwater supplies," said Cathy Green, president of the Assn. of California Water Agencies.

Green said the order underlines the need to modernize “our permitting process to better reflect the state’s ability to remain flexible in the face of climate change.”

Newsom announced the order as the first of three [atmospheric river storms](#) reached the state, bringing rain and snow after an [unusually dry January](#).

Newsom ordered the state Department of Water Resources to “maximize diversions of excess flows” during winter storms to store more water in reservoirs such as San Luis Reservoir, located south of the Delta near Los Banos. The [order](#) also calls for state agencies to “identify any obstacles that would hinder efforts to maximize diversions” and to promptly report on any “statutory or regulatory barriers that should be considered for suspension.”

State officials said Newsom’s order will make it easier for local agencies to capture

more storm runoff to recharge groundwater, which has been depleted by overpumping in many areas. They said the order builds on [previous directives](#) by the governor in 2023 that helped increase the amount of water used to replenish groundwater.

By capturing more stormwater, Newsom said, “we are creating a literal rainy day fund to help us recover from a multiyear drought and prepare for our hotter, drier future.” His administration’s water supply strategy calls for preparing for a [projected 10% decrease](#) in the state’s supplies by 2040 because of climate change.

Trump has criticized California for what he calls “disastrous” policies and water “mismanagement.”

Conservation advocates said Newsom’s order reveals a similar approach to the president’s directives that they fear could

lead to weaker protections for fish and clean water in the Delta and San Francisco Bay.

“This is a capitulation by Gov. Newsom to Donald Trump’s lawlessness and disdain for California, Californians and our environment,” said Jon Rosenfield, science director for the group San Francisco Baykeeper.

While Trump’s order sought to eviscerate federal environmental protections and undermine state law, Rosenfield said, Newsom similarly chose to “waive state laws that require protection of the Bay’s clean water and fish. As a result, we can expect the Bay’s fish and wildlife to continue to spiral towards oblivion.”

California’s two main water delivery systems in the Delta, the State Water Project and the Central Valley Project,

deliver water to farmlands and about 30 million people.

Pumping has contributed to the ecological degradation of the Delta, where the fish species that are listed as threatened or endangered include steelhead trout, two types of Chinook salmon, longfin smelt, Delta smelt and green sturgeon.

Because of declining salmon populations, fisheries authorities have [shut down the salmon fishing season](#) on the California coast for the last two years, leaving commercial fishermen and charter boat captains [out of work](#).

Another sign of the Delta's ecological deterioration in recent years has been [worsening toxic algae blooms](#).

Rosenfield said that the state's existing rules would provide for diverting ample water during the upcoming storms, and

the state's water supplies in reservoirs are in relatively good shape.

“The only explanation for this move at this time is that Newsom is feeling the political need to prove that he supports diverting as much water or more than Donald Trump,” Rosenfield said.

Westlands Water District, the largest agricultural water agency in the Central Valley, said it supports “streamlining the process to divert and store excess flows, such as from storm events.”

“This flexibility helps with overall water management in California and is an important step to maximize our water supply,” said Elizabeth Jonasson, a spokesperson for Westlands.

The debate that erupted over Newsom's order is the latest in a series of disagreements that have pitted the governor's administration against

environmental and fishing groups in the Delta. Environmental groups, tribes and local agencies have been fighting Newsom's plan to build a \$20-billion [water tunnel beneath the Delta](#).

They have also argued against a state-supported proposal for an alternative to regulatory flow requirements in the Delta that would involve [negotiated agreements](#) with water agencies.

Gary Bobker, program director for the group Friends of the River, said Californians have been looking to Newsom to "defend them from the Trump administration's misguided attempt to force bad policy down the state's throat."

Instead, he argued, the order goes against Californians' interests in preserving healthy rivers, fisheries and clean water.

Nelson, of the Golden State Salmon Assn., said policies like the governor's order

“have led to the collapse of the Bay-Delta environment, and to pushing salmon to the brink of extinction.”

Nelson said he’s concerned the order appears “open-ended,” and could allow for waiving environmental standards even when there is no drought or flooding emergency.

“This order isn’t even pretending that there’s a drought emergency. It’s not pretending there’s a flood emergency,” Nelson said. “It’s simply saying, ‘Let’s suspend environmental laws because it’s raining.’ ”

Paeter Garcia

From: ACWA 2025 Spring Conference + Expo <events@acwa.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 10:07 AM
To: Paeter Garcia
Subject: Register Now for ACWA Conference + Expo Spring 2025!



Get Ready for ACWA's Spring 2025 Conference + Expo – Registration is Live!

ACWA conferences are the premier destination for water industry professionals to learn and connect, and the **Spring 2025 ACWA Conference + Expo** will be hosted at the **Monterey Conference Center**. Registration offers an all-inclusive experience, providing more value for the cost. Full conference registration includes access to:

- **Keynote addresses & programs:** Hear from industry experts on the latest trends and innovations.
- **Networking meals & snack stations:** Enjoy flexible meal breaks that provide great opportunities to connect with peers while staying fueled throughout the event.
- **Exhibit Hall & ACWA-hosted receptions:** Discover cutting-edge products and solutions in the Exhibit Hall, plus network in a more social setting at ACWA-hosted receptions.

Monthly Briefing

A Summary of the Alliance's Recent and Upcoming Activities and Important Water News

President Trump Inaugurated – New Executive Orders Follow

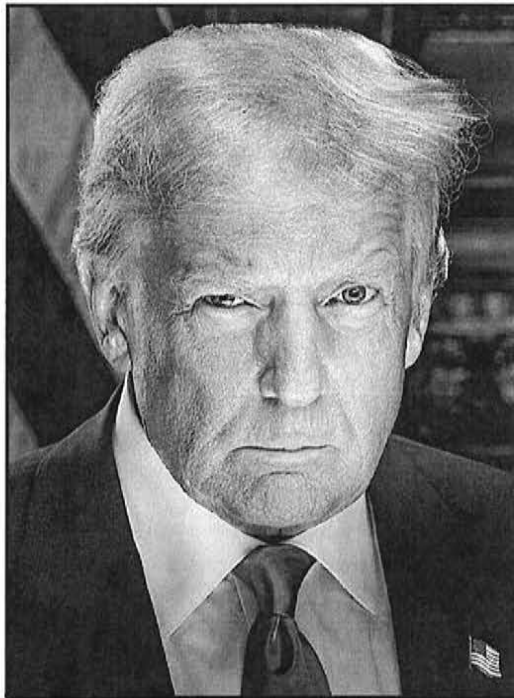
On January 20, 2025, President Donald J. Trump was sworn in as the 47th President of the United States.

Like all presidents before him, President Trump signed numerous executive actions on Inauguration Day and throughout the first week of his presidency, aimed at overturning the policies of the Biden-Harris Administration and delivering on some of his campaign promises.

"Every radical and foolish executive order of the Biden administration will be repealed within hours of when I take the oath of office," the incoming president said on the eve of his inauguration.

Of the record-setting number of executive actions taken by the Trump administration, there are more than 50 Executive Orders (EOs), and dozens of Presidential Memoranda, Administrative Orders, Presidential Proclamations, and pardons or commutations.

Among other activities, President Trump also took action to initiate the process to remove the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement, halt new offshore wind projects, and rescind environmental justice initiatives.



President Donald J. Trump
(www.whitehouse.gov)

These actions significantly alter U.S. policies on energy, water, and the environment. Notably, the president issued an EO on California water management that was welcomed by some Golden State water organizations (*see related story, Page 3*). Other executive actions have important ramifications for natural resources managers across the West.

A National Energy Emergency

President Trump on Day 1 of his presidency signed an EO to expedite the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure and production, including accelerating permits for energy projects and lifting restrictions on energy exploration in areas like Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge using presidential emergency powers.

"Caused by the harmful and shortsighted policies of the previous administration, our Nation's inadequate energy supply and infrastructure causes and makes worse the high energy prices that devastate Americans, particularly those living on low- and fixed-incomes," the declaration states.

Continued on Page 2

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President Trump's Executive Orders (*Cont'd from Pg. 1*)

10-for-1 Deregulation

President Trump has signed an executive order to require 10 rules be rescinded for every one issued by federal agencies. The EO also revoked the Biden Administration's revised cost-benefit analysis guidance, Circular A-4, which had been used to justify aggressive environmental regulations, including climate policies.

"Overregulation stops American entrepreneurship, crushes small business, reduces consumer choice, discourages innovation, and infringes on the liberties of American citizens," stated a related fact sheet released by the White House.

President Trump's executive order rescinds a 2023 circular and reinstates the 2003 version, which conservatives argue is more neutral and less politicized. The change affects whether and how agencies can calculate the social cost of carbon and other economic impacts of regulations in their analysis.

Environmental advocates viewed this as a setback for climate policy, while free-market proponents praised the return to prior standards.

Critics of the EO, including former Biden regulatory official Richard Revesz, warn that reverting to outdated methodology weakens environmental protections and makes new regulations vulnerable to legal challenges.

"If a subsequent administration wants to depart from the best understanding, the regulations that rely on their new circular are definitely going to get challenged on the grounds that they rely on shoddy science and economics," Mr. Revesz said.

"Revoking the 2023 circular was the right thing to do," said Susan Dudley, who led the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs during the George W. Bush administration.

Unleashing American Energy

This EO unleashes energy production in the U.S. and revokes many climate-related policies. It also pauses disbursement of federal funding authorized by the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), specifically calling out EV auto credits and subsidies and requiring federal agencies to prepare a report in 90 days to ensure approved funding is lawful and consistent with the EO directives.

Federal Funding "Pause"

A federal judge quickly moved to block the Trump Administration's attempt to freeze funding at Interior, EPA, and other federal agencies, ruling that the move violated the Constitution and key statutes. Judge John McConnell of the U.S. District Court for Rhode Island issued a temporary restraining order (TRO), arguing that the executive branch cannot unilaterally pause congressionally appropriated funds without approval.

The next day, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released a two-sentence memo, rescinding the original memo published by the office two days earlier.

"If you have questions about implementing the President's Executive Orders, please contact your agency General Counsel," the new memo stated.

Despite the White House's claim that President Trump's EOs remain in effect, the court found that affected agencies were still enforcing the now-withdrawn OMB directive to pause disbursements, which was also subject to a DC federal court ordered stay. The court's order blocked further implementation of the funding freeze.

Judge McConnell on February 6 extended the TRO for at least another 14 days as the case continues to progress through court.

"I don't like a temporary restraining order sitting out there indefinitely, obviously, and I don't think the parties do, either," Judge McConnell said.

According to White House Secretary Karoline Leavitt, the move to rescind the OMB memo is an effort to end the confusion and legal challenges that ensued.

"This action should effectively end the court case and allow the government to focus on enforcing the President's orders on controlling federal spending," Ms. Leavitt said. "In the coming weeks and months, more executive action will continue to end the egregious waste of federal funding."

These executive orders, in part, pause the use of funds for certain project activities - primarily those focused on energy and equity-related activities - funded through the IRA and IIJA.

Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OREGON) said the funding pause order suggests that President Trump plans to bypass Congress' spending powers.

"The law is very clear that he has to do what has been passed by Congress," said Senator Merkley, the ranking member on the Senate Budget Committee. "He is not a king. ... I call on him to abide by the law."

While these recent actions halt the implementation of the directives included in the OMB Memo, the administration will continue to conduct a comprehensive review of programs and awards to ensure alignment with its policies and priorities under last week's EO's.

Questions Abound

The "shock and awe" associated with the rapid-fire release of President Trump's recent executive actions and the resulting federal policy shifts have created uncertainty for many Family Farm Alliance members, particularly local governments and public agencies who have IIJA - and IRA-funded construction projects ongoing or in the queue.

"The funding freeze raised many questions that we are working to address," said Mark Limbaugh with The Ferguson Group, the Family Farm Alliance's representative in Washington, D.C. "We are monitoring this issue and will provide additional context about the rescission and focus on any remaining outstanding questions."

President Trump Enters California Water Arena with a Splash

Four days after his inauguration, President Trump visited Southern California, where he was greeted on the airport tarmac by California Governor Gavin Newsom. Following a tour of the fire-ravaged communities, he participated in a forum with local elected officials, where the topic of water was discussed at length.

The next day, he signed an executive order that, among other things, addresses management of Central Valley Project water and seeks to advance new storage projects.

"In particular, the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce shall immediately take actions to override existing activities that unduly burden efforts to maximize water deliveries," President Trump's order reads.

Supporters and Detractors

Supporters, including many agricultural water districts, welcome the move as a step toward addressing longstanding water supply challenges in the region.

"We thank the President for his continued focus on highlighting issues of water supply reliability for the people and communities in California," said Federico Barajas, Executive Director of the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority. "We look forward to working with the Administration on a path forward to implement the Order in a way that will improve water supply reliability for the communities, farms, and ecosystems reliant on water from the Water Authority's member agencies."

The Friant Water Authority publicly thanked President Trump for his focus on California's water.

"For too long, outdated regulations and misaligned priorities have left our fields dry and our communities struggling," the Authority said in a press statement. "President Trump's announcement in Southern California underscores his dedication to fixing these issues and delivering durable solutions for the hardworking families and agricultural communities who are the backbone of California's economy."

The order targets water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and directs federal agencies to identify regulatory barriers to water projects within 30 days. Critics, including California officials, conservation groups, and Democratic lawmakers, argued the order misrepresents the relationship between water management and wildfire prevention.

"It's sickening to see this pointless attack on California's water management. And it's disgusting that Trump is still threatening to hold desperately needed relief funds hostage," said Kieran Suckling, executive director of the litigious Center for Biological Diversity, in a statement. This order allows the lead Project 2025 author and incoming director of the Office of Management and Budget to potentially indefinitely withhold all federal financial assistance to California over

perceived disagreements on immigration policies or other extreme MAGA ideas."

Critics claim the order prioritizes agricultural and urban water interests over environmental and local community needs while disregarding scientific and legal frameworks.

Trump Water Tweet Goes Viral

President Trump days later raised the bar with California over water policy with a 1:00 a.m. tweet suggesting U.S. military troops had arrived in the state to turn on pumps and send more



California Governor Gavin Newsom meets President Donald Trump on the tarmac at Los Angeles International Airport on January 24. The President visited Los Angeles to survey areas destroyed by firestorms earlier in the month. (Office of Governor Gavin Newsom)

water flowing.

In his January 27th post on Truth Social, President Trump wrote: "The United States Military just entered the Great State of California and, under Emergency Powers, TURNED ON THE WATER flowing abundantly from the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. The days of putting a Fake Environmental argument, over the PEOPLE, are OVER. Enjoy the water, California!!!"

A firestorm of controversy erupted on social media and in the legacy media as scientists, water managers, state leaders, and various "experts" throughout the state called out the Trump administration's "misinformation" campaign on water management in California.

Gov. Newsom's office fired back at President Trump later in that day in a post on the social media site X.

"The only thing fishy are Trump's facts," Gov. Newsom's press office wrote. "California pumps as much water now as it could under prior Trump-era policies. And there is no shortage of water in Southern California."

Gov. Newsom Issues Executive Order on Water

Despite the rebuke, Governor Newsom three days later signed his own executive order that he said was intended to

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Confirmation of Trump Cabinet Nominees Proceeds Rapidly

Senate Republicans have made good progress pushing for quick confirmation of President Donald Trump's nominees for cabinet positions. Western farmers and ranchers have been keeping a close eye on those nominees who hold sway over federal matters important to their unique interests.

Department of the Interior

The Senate on January 30 confirmed Gov. Doug Burgum as Interior Secretary with broad bipartisan support, including 26 Democrats joining all Republicans in a 79-18 vote.

The Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) Committee vote was similarly bipartisan.

During his confirmation hearing, Mr. Burgum stated, "The American people have clearly placed their confidence in President Trump to achieve energy dominance, and by energy dominance, that's the foundation of American prosperity."

On January 16, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) Committee held a hearing to consider the nomination of Doug Burgum to be the DOI Secretary. Chair Mike Lee (R-UT) noted that 1/5 of the land in the U.S. is under the jurisdiction of DOI, with the percentage much higher in western states. "The decisions made in Washington ripple through our economy and our communities in ways that are unmistakable and not always positive."

Dozens of Democrats crossed the aisle to support President Donald Trump's nominee.

The Interior Department is the most important Federal department from the standpoint of water management and energy production in the Western U.S.

Mr. Burgum, a former North Dakota governor, will be tasked with carrying out President Trump's "energy dominance" agenda, which prioritizes fossil fuel production over renewables.

Katherine (Kate) MacGregor has been appointed Deputy Secretary of the Interior, the position she held under the previous Trump administration. In a statement, President Trump said MacGregor, who is currently vice president of environmental services at electric utility group NextEra Energy, "helped us in our quest to make our Nation Energy DOMINANT."

The Trump White House earlier this month announced the following nominations for positions in the Department of the Interior:

- Leslie Beyer, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Land and Minerals Management
- William L. Doffermyre, of Texas, to be Solicitor of the Department of the Interior
- William Kirkland, of Georgia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs
- Andrea Travnicek, of North Dakota, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Water and Science (ASWS)

"The ASWS position oversees the Bureau of Reclamation and USGS," said Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen. "Andrea Travnicek worked in several deputy positions at Interior in the first Trump Administration and is a known commodity to many of us in Western water."

Most recently, Ms. Travnicek served as the head of the North Dakota state water resources agency.

Prior to Mr. Burgum's Senate confirmation, acting Interior Secretary Walter Cruickshank last month issued a secretarial order temporarily suspending the authority of Interior agencies to take significant actions, such as approving offshore wind leases and resource management plans. These decisions now require top leadership approval, with the order in effect for 60 days unless updated or revoked.

"This move is similar to a Biden-era order in 2021 and is aimed at ensuring alignment with President Donald Trump's policy priorities," said Mark Limbaugh, the Family Farm Alliance's representative in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Cruickshank also appointed more than a dozen acting leaders to key Interior roles under the Federal Vacancies Reform Act. Notable appointments include Karen Hawbecker as acting solicitor, Paul Souza as acting Fish and Wildlife Service director, Jon Raby as acting Bureau of Land Management (BLM) director, and David Palumbo as acting Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation.

Scott Cameron will serve as a senior adviser to the secretary and fill multiple acting roles, including Assistant Secretary for Water and Science.

USDA

President Trump's Agriculture Secretary pick Brooke Rollins took a key step towards confirmation on February 3 as Senate Agriculture Committee lawmakers unanimously voted to advance her nomination.

"My role is to defend, honor and elevate our entire ag community in the oval office ... to ensure that every decision made has that front of mind," she stated at her confirmation hearing.

Ms. Rollins, a former White House aide in Trump's first administration, will be a key figure in farm bill negotiations this year if she is confirmed. She will be challenged to balance advancing Trump's policy agenda against agriculture industry concerns over some of his immigration and tariff proposals.

The Family Farm Alliance works closely with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, which draws on a long history of helping people help the land. For nearly 90 years, NRCS and its predecessor agencies have worked in close partnerships with farmers and ranchers, local and state governments, and other federal agencies to maintain healthy and productive working landscapes.

"Farm Bill conservation programs administered by NRCS can provide useful tools for Western farmers and ranchers,"

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House Passes Wildfire Legislation

The House of Representatives last month passed the *Fix Our Forests Act of 2025* (H.R. 471) - legislation co-sponsored by Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-Ark.) and Rep. Scott Peters (D-CALIFORNIA) and supported by the Family Farm Alliance - with a strong, bipartisan vote of 279-141.

"The House passed the Fix Our Forests Act because good leaders prepare for emergencies," said House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) "Thanks to the leadership of Rep. Westerman, the House is governing by common sense so we can restore the health of our forests and make communities more resilient to these disasters."

Across the United States, 44 million homes are at risk of wildfires in the wildland-urban interface.

"Our bill will help us protect where nature meets homes, pre-position fire-trucks and other resources in high-risk areas, and build homes more resistant to fire," said Rep. Peters. "I implore my colleagues in the Senate to quickly take up this bill."

The recent wildfires in California demonstrate the need to take immediate action to prevent future devastation.

"The current California leadership failed to prepare for the ongoing wildfires and chose to prioritize far-left climate policies over efficient forest management and wildfire prevention," said Speaker Johnson.

This comprehensive legislation increases resiliency to catastrophic wildfires by simplifying and expediting environ-

mental reviews, coordinating resources for communities, and reducing frivolous lawsuits that delay forest management projects.

The House Natural Resources Committee issued a press release that mentions a coalition letter that the Alliance signed on to in support of this bill.

"We represent a broad coalition of stakeholders that includes water providers, farmers, utilities, forestry professionals, and local governmental entities," the coalition letter stated. "We support the *Fix Our Forests Act* and its comprehensive approach to improving forest and watershed health."

Other signatories to the letter included American Farm Bureau Federation, American Forest Resource Council, Association of California Water Agencies, California Farm Bureau Federation, and National Association of Counties.

The Alliance previously supported the *Fix Our Forests Act* in the 118th Congress,

where it passed the House by a bipartisan vote of 268-151, but did not see action in the Senate.

Rep. Tom Tiffany's (R-WI) bill, H.R. 204, the *Accurately Counting Risk Elimination Solutions (ACRES) Act*, also passed the House. This legislation would mandate the Secretaries of USDA and Interior to submit an annual report detailing the number of acres treated for hazardous fuels during the previous year.



Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-Ark.) - the author of the Fix our Forests Act—discusses Western forest health and wildfires with Family Farm Alliance representatives on the balcony of the House Speaker's office at the Capitol, September 2024.

GOP Legislation Would Authorize Dam Protections

Lawmakers from the Pacific Northwest have introduced the "Northwest Energy Security Act" (H.R. 1762/S. 966) to protect the four Lower Snake River dams amid debates over their future.

Led by Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-WASHINGTON) and Sen. Jim Risch (R-IDAHO), the legislation seeks to ensure the continued operation of the dams—Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose, and Lower Granite—citing their importance for clean, affordable hydropower and important transportation routes in the region.

"This legislation upholds the Lower Snake River dams as vital pieces of infrastructure for Central Washington and the Pacific Northwest," said Rep. Newhouse. "I am proud to lead this legislation alongside Senator Risch as we strengthen the coalition to protect our region's clean and affordable sources

of baseload power.

The bill counters ongoing efforts to remove the dams to aid endangered salmon and steelhead populations, a key focus of the Biden Administration's "Resilient Columbia Basin Agreement" from 2023. That \$1 billion settlement prompted studies on the ecological and economic impacts of dam removal.

Nonetheless, Congress holds the ultimate authority to decide the fate of these federal dams.

"The Lower Snake River dams are indispensable to the northwest, and efforts to breach them are profoundly misguided," said Senator Risch. "My Northwest Energy Security Act protects our region's federal dams so that they continue to power Idaho's homes and economy for generations."

Subcommittee Considers Western Water Bills

The House Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries on January 23 held a legislative hearing on four bills including combatting the effects of drought in the West and reauthorizing an important conservation program.

"Today, I convened the first hearing as Chair of the Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries to consider vital legislation, such as my bill extending the System Conservation Pilot Program," said Rep. Harriet Hageman (R-WYOMING). "It's a privilege to guide discussions on issues that directly impact our communities and resources."

H.R. 231, the *Colorado River Basin System Conservation Extension Act of 2025*, introduced by Rep. Hageman, will reauthorize the Colorado River Basin Conservation Pilot Program (SCPP) through FY 2026.

The SCPP allows the Interior Department to provide grants 1) to public entities for water conservation pilot projects if the entity uses water from the Colorado River Basin for municipal purposes; and 2) for new water conservation agreements or for renewing or implementing water conservation agreements.

"This is legislation that the Alliance conditionally supported in the last Congress," said Family Farm Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen. "Our long-stated concerns remain regarding the emphasis some people place on 'demand management' in agriculture as a solution to the supply challenges of the Colorado River."

Chair Hageman made a similar point at the hearing.

"To be clear this program is not and should not be viewed as a permanent solution to addressing the drought conditions in the basin," she said. "However, at this time it is a tool that the Upper Basin States can use to reduce risk to test new innovative water management strategies."

H.R. 331, introduced by U.S. Rep. Russ Fulcher (R-IDAHO) is supported by the Alliance. It would amend the *Aquifer Recharge Flexibility Act* to clarify and streamline the process for transporting water for aquifer recharge projects across federal land, such as that owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

"The BLM right-of-way process can be onerous and will add significant time to the development of recharge projects," said Wesley Hipke of the Idaho Department of Water Resources at the hearing, noting that, if not addressed, could severely hamper Idaho's ability to reach the goals of recovery and stabilizing the Eastern Snake River Plain Aquifer.

"The Alliance supports this legislation," said Mr. Keppen.

H.R. 635, the *WaterSMART Access for Tribes Act*, introduced by U.S. Rep. Melanie Stansbury (D-NEW MEXICO), will allow the Secretary of the Interior to reduce or waive cost-share requirements for tribal governments under Reclamation's WaterSMART program.

Most WaterSMART projects require at least 50 percent cost sharing to leverage non-federal financial resources. In the 116th Congress, WaterSMART was amended to allow Reclamation to contribute up to 75 percent of the cost of certain projects that are focused on environmental benefits.

Alliance Leads Colo. River Coalition Letter on Bay-Delta Water Plan

The Family Farm Alliance at the beginning of the new year helped lead a coalition of nearly 20 Colorado River Basin farm and water organizations who weighed in on a pending California state regulatory decision with potential impacts to the Colorado River Basin and other regions of the West.

The California State Water Board's proposed water quality control plan for the Bay-Delta includes a staff recommendation that would impose a 55% unimpaired flow on the Sacramento River and other tributaries to the Bay-Delta.

"This would have a massive impact on contractors from Redding all the way to San Diego," said Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen. "This will also have an impact on Southern California's interest in the Colorado River, since their State Water Project (SWP) supplies out of the Delta would be significantly impacted. Additionally, the reoperation of California's reservoirs to accommodate minimum carryover storage targets has implications for West-wide power production."

So, there is a connection to the Colorado River and others served by the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) grid, and eighteen organizations from 4 Colorado River Basin states agreed to share their concerns with the State Board.

"This action in California has the potential to impact the Colorado River basin negotiations and WAPA power production in a substantial way," the coalition letter stated.

Restrictions on northern Sierra water supplies - what might otherwise appear as a non-connected water source - can increase southern California's reliance on the Colorado River and subsequently reduce water management options and flexibility in the Lower Basin, when the SWP and Colorado River are operating under drought or shortage conditions.

The coalition letter was completed and submitted before the deadline for the public comment period ended on January 10. The letter expresses support for amending the Bay Delta Plan by approving the Voluntary Agreements - also known as Healthy Rivers and Landscapes - proposed in March 2022 by a diverse group of stakeholders.

"We believe these stakeholders have specific expertise in managing and operating California's water systems, which includes numerous state agencies, the Bureau of Reclamation, and numerous public water agencies," the coalition letter stated. "This will require visionary leadership and a firm commitment to a balanced, workable policy."

Biden Admin. Exits, Announcing Millions for Western Water Projects

A stream of continuous federal infrastructure announcements came to an end as the Biden Administration headed out the door on January 20. Outgoing President Joe Biden delivered a Farewell Address to the nation on January 15 where he reflected on his legacy, including historic investments in energy and infrastructure and to fight climate change.

“Instead of losing their jobs to an economic crisis that we inherited, millions of Americans now have the dignity of work,” President Biden said in his farewell address. “And together, we have launched a new era of American possibilities: one of the greatest modernizations of infrastructure in our entire history, from new roads, bridges, clean water, affordable high-speed internet for every American.

A 2024 *POLITICO* review of President Biden's four signature laws found that out of \$1.1 trillion for direct investments in energy and infrastructure, less than 17% of the funds at that time had been spent.

Water users across the West in recent months were notified that they would benefit from once-in-a-generation levels of infrastructure funding that the Family Farm Alliance and other agricultural and water organizations fought to secure in 2021-2022.

Recent DOI and Reclamation Funding Announcements

The Alliance was part of a five-organization steering committee that led over 220 water and agriculture organizations who played a critical role in securing the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and 2022 Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding for Western water infrastructure and drought mitigation efforts.

In the past three years, the Bureau of Reclamation has announced more than \$5.8 billion from the IIJA for more than 674 projects. More than \$3.2 billion from the IRA has gone to 229 drought mitigation projects, 40 domestic water supply projects, seven emergency relief projects for Tribal communities and four canal improvement projects.

The IRA also includes \$550 million for Reclamation to implement domestic water supply projects and \$4 billion for water conservation and ecosystem projects in the Colorado River Basin and other basins experiencing similar levels of long-term drought.

Last month, Reclamation announced:

- \$223 million for water recycling and desalination projects aimed at addressing the impacts of drought. The funding from the IIJA and annual appropriations is being awarded to 18 projects in eight states through the Title XVI Programs.
- A \$514 million investment intended to bring clean, reliable drinking water to communities across the West through five water storage and conveyance projects.
- More than \$41 million investment from the IIJA for 21 projects to bolster water resources, advance ecosystem health, and support resilience in communities facing drought and other climate change impacts.

- A \$121 million investment from the Department of the Interior (DOI) to help Tribal communities prepare for the most severe climate-related environmental threats to their homelands.
- A \$50 million investment from the IRA for Reclamation and water users to fund drought resiliency projects in the Klamath Basin.

Family Farm Alliance members throughout the Western U.S. have benefited from the historic investments provided by the IIJA and IRA in recent years, including several projects that were further funded in the last month of the Biden-Harris Administration.

B.F. Fisk Dam Raise and Reservoir Expansion

Reclamation and the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority (SLDMWA) on January 17 signed a cost share agreement for the B.F. Sisk Dam Raise and Reservoir Expansion Project, advancing water supply reliability in California's Central Valley.

“This project advances our goal to improve our communities’ access to clean drinking water for residents, improve water reliability to continue to feed America, and to support the health of the habitat upon which our native species and migratory waterfowl on the Pacific Flyway depend,” said SLDMWA Board Chair Cannon Michael, who also serves on the Family Farm Alliance board of directors. “We value the funding contributions and working relationship with our federal partners in the Bureau of Reclamation and look forward to advancing this important water storage project.”

The joint project creates an additional 130,000 acre-feet of storage space in San Luis Reservoir, the nation's largest off-stream reservoir, producing additional water supply for two million people, over one million acres of farmland and 135,000 acres of Pacific Flyway wetlands and critical wildlife habitat. This water would meet existing contractual obligations and not serve any new demands.

A \$125 million investment in the project under the IIJA was announced earlier in January. The project thus far has received a total of \$295 million in federal contributions to date in construction costs.

Shoshone Water Rights Preservation Project

Reclamation last month announced \$388.3 million in funding awards including \$40 million for the Shoshone Water Rights Preservation project.

This investment supports efforts of the Colorado River District, the state of Colorado and a coalition of West Slope governments and water users to secure Western Colorado's top water priority: the permanent protection of the water rights associated with the Shoshone Power Plant in Glenwood Canyon.

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Millions for Western Water Projects (Cont'd from Page 7)

“Securing the Shoshone water rights has been a priority of West Slope water entities and local governments for over eighty years,” said Colorado River District Board President, Kathy Chandler-Henry. “This funding award is a huge step forward in what is a continuing effort, and we are thankful for the leadership shown by the Bureau of Reclamation in bringing these critical funds to West Slope communities.”

These funds, awarded through the IRA, are dedicated to projects which will mitigate the impacts of drought and support ecosystems throughout the Colorado River Basin. The federal DOI funding builds on more than \$56 million raised by state and local organizations.

Reclamation’s announcement also included significant awards for 15 other Western Slope water projects totaling almost \$95. These projects, along with Shoshone, are selected to move on to the next phase to execute a funding agreement and complete necessary reviews.

The Shoshone water rights, some of the largest and most senior non-consumptive water rights on the Colorado River, are vital to maintaining flows that support a wide range of interests across Western Colorado.

The River District in December 2023 reached a landmark \$99 million purchase and sale agreement with Public Service Company of Colorado, a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, to transfer ownership of those water rights. Representing a broad-based coalition, the Colorado River District is working to permanently secure these flows in partnership with the State of Colorado to ensure they remain in the Colorado River.

“Permanent protection of the Shoshone water rights is a multi-generational investment in our farms and ranches, and our thriving rural economies,” said Colorado State Senator Marc Catlin, a past member of the Alliance Advisory Committee. “Today’s announcement builds upon decades of work by our predecessors to protect the river as we have known it for more than a century.”

Klamath Basin Drought Programs

Reclamation on January 27 announced a \$50 million investment from the IRA in drought resiliency projects in the Klamath Basin.

“These historic investments through President Biden’s Investing in America agenda will help the Klamath River Basin support agricultural production and improve climate resiliency,” said former Reclamation Senior Counselor John Watts. “These projects will demonstrate the effectiveness of new tools for sustainable water management and benefit fish species.”

The Klamath Water User Association and Drought Response Agency (DRA) are to utilize the funding to deliver or manage water for fish and wildlife benefits and implement a voluntary program reducing water use or demonstrating innovative cropping patterns over multi-year periods.

Funding will also benefit anadromous and resident fish species by planning and implementing pro-

jects at Keno and Link River Dams and will implement a voluntary, competitive program in consultation with water users to eliminate water demand for irrigated land where it makes sense to do so.

“We expect the program will include three-to-five-year contracts with producers for voluntary land idling, but with the ability to rotate the idled land in an operation,” said DRA President Marc Staunton. “We will also offer incentives for modified practices like fall planting of grain, that would reduce and shift water demand.”

Arkansas Valley Conduit

Camille Calimlim Touton, Commissioner of Reclamation, traveled to Pueblo (COLORADO) on January 8 to announce an additional \$250 million for construction of the Arkansas Valley Conduit (AVC).



Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton greets several members of the Southeastern District Board, from left, Bill Long, Kevin Karney, Howard "Bub" Miller, Andy Colosimo and Justin DiSanti. The Commissioner traveled to Pueblo (COLORADO) to announce \$250 million for construction of the Arkansas Valley Conduit. (Photo courtesy of Southeastern District)

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Millions for Western Water Projects (Cont'd from Page 8)

"We are proud to see the work underway because of President Biden's Investing in America agenda," Commissioner Touton said. "But there's much more work to be done and we are again investing in this important project to bring safe drinking water to an estimated 50,000 people in 39 rural communities along the Arkansas River."

The \$250 million is funded through the IJA. The additional funding brings the total federal investment in the AVC to almost \$590 million since 2020, along with state funding guarantees of \$90 million in loans and \$30 million in grants.

The Southeastern Water Conservancy District is the sponsor for the AVC, which is part of the 1962 Fryingpan-Arkansas Project Act.

"After 25 years, I still almost can't believe it's happening, but I drive by and can see it with my own eyes," Southeastern Water Conservancy District President Bill Long told Commissioner Touton. "There are so many people who have worked

so hard who would be so proud to see it being built. This money will get us to the area that has seen the most problems."

Reflections at Hoover Dam

Commissioner Camille Touton – who helped steer implementation of billions of federal dollars towards water infrastructure and drought resilience projects over the past 3-plus years – spent a portion of her last days at Reclamation visiting Hoover Dam, just outside her hometown of Las Vegas, Nevada.

"I am grateful to have spent some of my final moments as Commissioner at the place that first inspired a little girl to dream BIG—the Hoover Dam," she posted on LinkedIn. "To the incredible team at Bureau of Reclamation, it has been an absolute honor to serve alongside each and every one of you. I leave with a thankful heart and boundless optimism for our shared future."

Trump v Newsom on CA Water (Cont'd from Page 3)

"maximize" the capture of water during winter storms that were forecast to hit the state over the following weekend.

The order also calls for state agencies to "identify any obstacles that would hinder efforts to maximize diversions" and to promptly report on any "statutory or regulatory barriers that should be considered for suspension."

Environmental and fishing groups ripped Governor Newsom's order, claiming his approach threatens to harm vulnerable fish species and the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta ecosystem.

"This order reads as though it was written by President Trump," said Barry Nelson, a policy representative for the fishing group Golden State Salmon Association.

From Strange to Stranger

Things went from strange to stranger as the week wore on.

The *Los Angeles Times* on January 31 reported that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — acting on President Trump's orders — released water from the Terminus Dam at Lake Kaweah and the Schafer Dam at Lake Success, which are both in Tulare County in the San Joaquin Valley.

In a post to his official X account, Trump tweeted a "photo of beautiful water flow that I just opened in California," writing: "Today, 1.6 billion gallons and, in 3 days, it will be 5.2 billion gallons. ... Everybody should be happy about this long-fought Victory!... I only wish they listened to me six years ago – There would have been no fire!"

An Army Corps spokesperson confirmed that the release of water from the dams was done "to ensure California has water available to respond to the wildfires." He added that the water release was "consistent with the direction" of the presi-

dent's January 24 EO announcing "emergency measures to provide water resources in California."

However, water managers in Tulare County told *SJV Water* — which covers water issues in the San Joaquin Valley — that there are multiple physical and legal barriers that prevent the valley's water from getting to Southern California.

"Every drop belongs to someone," Kaweah River Watermaster Victor Hernandez told *SJV Water*. "The reservoir may belong to the federal government, but the water is ours."

U.S. Senator Alex Padilla (D-CALIFORNIA), a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, wrote a letter that questioned Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth after the Army directed the unscheduled water releases.

"Unscheduled water releases require close coordination with local officials and safety personnel, as well as downstream agricultural water users, in order to reduce flood risks to communities and farms," wrote Senator Padilla. "Based on the urgent concerns I have heard from my constituents, as well as recent reporting, it appears that gravely insufficient notification was given, recklessly endangering residents downstream."

Meanwhile, the Golden State's two largest reservoirs, Lake Shasta and Lake Oroville, saw water level increases in the days that followed after an atmospheric river brought heavy rain to the region. Lake Oroville is currently above 2023 and 2024 levels at this time of year. Lake Shasta is above its 2023 levels but about 4 feet below its 2024 levels as of February 3.

Reclamation is currently increasing water releases into rivers from some Central Valley Project reservoirs for flood control management.

Appointments at USDA (Continued from Page 4)

said Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen.

President Trump has also named his picks for senior posts at USDA as he moves to fill out his incoming administration.

Richard Fordyce has been nominated as USDA Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation. He was formerly the Administrator of the Farm Service Agency during the first Trump administration and currently serves as Director of Ag Business for Osborn Barr Paramore.

"This position oversees the NRCS and is one that the Alliance works closely with," said Mr. Keppen.

Mr. Trump last month also appointed Michael Boren, the founder of Boise (IDAHO)-based company Clearwater Analytics, to serve as the Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment at the Department, another important post which oversees the U.S. Forest Service.

"Mike is the kind of innovator we need back in Washington promoting Idaho values and management practices," said Idaho Governor Brad Little. "In Idaho, we manage our lands effectively and efficiently. I am looking forward to watching Mike bring that same mentality to the Forest Service."

Two other officials were announced for appointments as undersecretaries at USDA, both of whom served during the first Trump administration: Dudley Hoskins as undersecretary for marketing and regulator programs and Luke Lindberg as undersecretary for trade and foreign agriculture affairs.

President Trump announced two new wildfire prevention appointments to USDA to lead the administration's "focus on forest management."

Kristin Sleeper will be deputy undersecretary for natural resources and environment. She previously worked as professional staff for the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the House Ag Committee. She also directed policy for the National Alliance of Forest Owners, which represents companies that own private forests.

Tom Schultz will be chief of staff at USDA for natural resources and environment. He previously was vice president of resources and government affairs, leading timber procurement, for the Idaho Forest Group.

"Our Idaho members have nothing but good things to say about Tom Schultz," said Mr. Keppen.

USDA recently announced the names of the following individuals who will hold senior staff positions in Washington, D.C. Kailee Tkacz Buller (USDA Chief of Staff), Preston Parry (USDA Deputy Chief of Staff), Jennifer Tiller (Chief of Staff to the Deputy Secretary and Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services), Ralph Linden (Principal Deputy General Counsel), Audra Weeks (Deputy Director of Communications) and Dominic Restuccia (White House Liaison) were all appointed.

"Many of these appointees served in the Trump 45 administration, as well," said Mr. Keppen.

Department of Energy

Chris Wright, the Denver-based fracking CEO tapped by President Trump to lead the Department of Energy (DOE), was confirmed to the role by the Senate on February 3.

DOE oversees U.S. national energy policy and energy production, the research and development of nuclear power, the military's nuclear weapons program, nuclear reactor production for the United States Navy, energy-related research, and energy conservation.

Senators voted 59-38 to confirm Mr. Wright, including support from some Democrats, despite opposition to his nomination from environmental groups and Democrats in the Senate who criticized his comments downplaying climate change and his ties to the oil and gas industry.

"We can't afford to have a fossil fuel CEO like Chris Wright help the industry capture our federal agencies further for oil profits," Senator Ed Markey (D-Mass.) said in a statement.

Senators Markey and Jeff Merkley (D-OREGON) introduced the "Banning In Government Oil Industry Lobbyists (BIG OIL) from the Cabinet Act" to prohibit fossil fuel executives and lobbyists from serving in Cabinet-level positions.

Mr. Wright has pledged to pursue an all-of-the-above energy strategy at DOE.

"There isn't dirty energy and clean energy — all energies are different, and they have different tradeoffs," Mr. Wright told the ENR Committee.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Lee Zeldin, the former Republican congress member, was confirmed by the Senate to be the 17th administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency by a 56-42 vote.

"We must ensure we are protecting the environment while also protecting our economy," Mr. Zeldin said at his January 16 confirmation hearing before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

At the hearing, Senator John Barrasso (R-WYOMING) introduced Mr. Zeldin.

"He knows firsthand how important it is for the federal government to be a partner to states, rather than an out-of-touch regulator," said Senator Barrasso. "This is the dedication and understanding he will bring to the EPA."

EPA under President Biden drove a vigorous effort to rewrite U.S. environmental policy through administrative rule-making efforts, some of which hold potentially harmful implications for Western farmers and ranchers.

Mr. Zeldin has a mandate from President Trump to carry out an aggressive deregulatory agenda aimed at boosting domestic energy production and bolstering the increasingly power-hungry data center and artificial intelligence sectors (*POLITICO*).

Reclamation Finalizes Revisions to NEPA Categorical Exclusions

The Bureau of Reclamation has finalized revisions to seven categorical exclusions (CEs) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to help streamline environmental reviews for certain water-related projects.

A CE is a category of actions that a federal agency has determined does not significantly impact the human environment. CEs are a type of review under NEPA.

“CEs can reduce paperwork and save time and resources,” said Family Farm Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen.

The White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) in 2016 directed all federal agencies to begin regular reviews of the use of CEs, with the intent of making the NEPA process easier. The latest effort initiated by the Biden Administration marks the third time in three administrations that this effort has been undertaken.

According to Reclamation, this modernization effort updates CEs that have been in place for over 40 years, ensuring

alignment with current regulations and policies while supporting priority water infrastructure needs across the West.

Reclamation’s CE updates aim to enhance efficiency for contracting, use authorizations, financial assistance (including WaterSMART grants), loans, and funding activities. The revisions, published for public comment in June 2024, incorporated feedback from state governments, Tribal Nations, and various water organizations.

Alliance representatives met virtually with senior level Reclamation leaders from the Commissioner’s office last June, raised some questions and concerns, and suggested that a public webinar be scheduled to provide an opportunity for Reclamation water and power customers and other stakeholders to raise additional concerns in an open forum.

“Reclamation hosted a July 24 webinar on this topic,” said Mr. Keppen. “Reclamation took public comments, many of them from our organization, and it appears they incorporated many of them.”

Colorado River....On a “Path to Success”?

Reclamation last month released the next step in a “responsible path” to guide post-2026 operations for the Colorado River, which provides critical water resources for 40 million people across 7 states and 30 Tribes across the West.

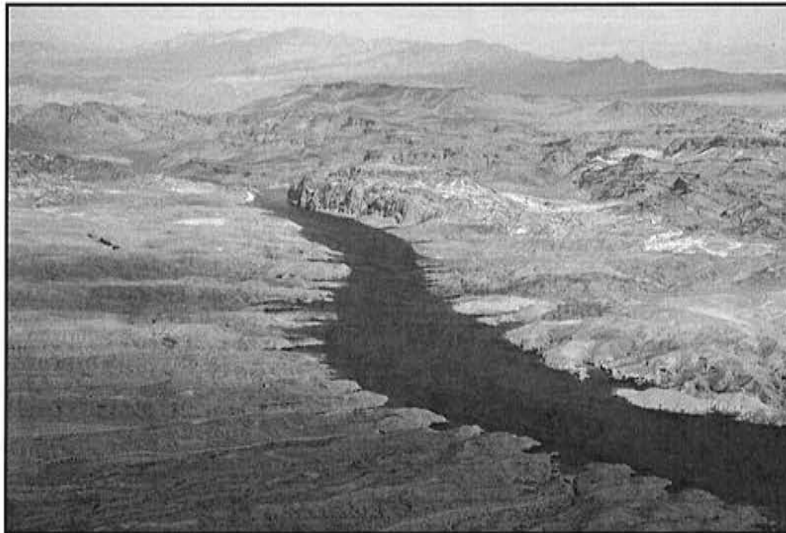
“The alternatives laid out in today’s report represent a responsible range from which to build the best and most robust path forward,” said former Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton. “I have confidence in our partners and the Reclamation team in continuing this work to meet the needs of the river for the future.”

The alternatives for consideration, previewed in November, represent a range of actions. The report provides additional detail on the alternatives from modeling and analysis performed by Reclamation, which they claim reflects ongoing conversations with all Basin stakeholders.

Reclamation will now proceed with full analysis of these alternatives to develop a draft Environmental Impact Statement.

The Biden administration also emphasized its efforts over

the past 2 years – bolstered by over \$4 billion in IRA funding – to work with Lower Basin water users to stave off a crisis in the short-term. Now, Lake Mead is up nearly 20 feet from two years ago, and Lake Powell has rebounded 50 feet.



Lake Mead on the Colorado River.
(Photo courtesy of Bureau of Reclamation)

The lower Basin states and the Country of Mexico saved 1.6 million acre-feet by the end of 2024, an “unprecedented level of conservation” for the Colorado River Basin, supported by an unprecedented level of federal funding provided by Congress.

Reclamation last month announced initial selections under the Upper Colorado River Basin Environmental Program for a \$388.3 million investment from the IRA to improve wildlife and aquatic habitats, ecological stability and resilience against drought. Additionally, Reclamation announced approximately \$100 Million funding opportunity for the companion program in the

Lower Basin, which seeks to fund projects that provide environmental benefits in Arizona, Nevada, and California.

Continued on Page 12

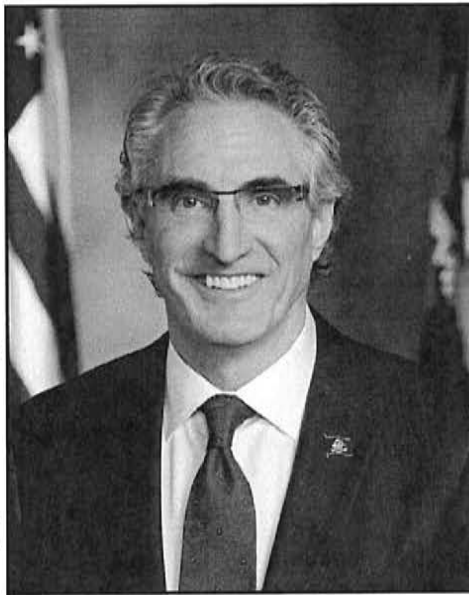
Colorado River (Continued from Page 11)

While all of this funding certainly has provided a short-term band-aid to the “bleeding” of Lakes Mead and Powell, it remains to be seen how the long-term solutions will be developed, given the harsh tension exhibited between Upper Basin and Lower Basin interests at last month’s Colorado Water Users Association Annual Conference in Las Vegas.

The seven states that rely on the Colorado River for water have avoided court battles, but there’s work to do. Federal leadership on managing the river changed on January 20 when President Donald Trump returned to the White House.

Recently confirmed Interior Secretary Doug Burgum addressed his Colorado River intentions before his confirmation hearing on January 16.

“We’re going to look for a collaborative solution that serves everyone,” Mr. Burgum said about that process.



Doug Burgum
(Photo courtesy of NDDOT)

“We’re going to have to look for innovation on ways on the conservation side because we can’t make more water, but if we can use what we have wisely, that’s going to look for the best solutions for all.”

Western senators are pushing state officials in the Colorado River Basin to reach agreement on a new long-term operating plan for the drought-stricken waterway.

The lawmakers are also seeking a formal briefing on their progress.

“We recognize that development of a consensus agreement will require substantial effort and may require legislation for implementation,” states the letter, a copy of which was obtained by POLITICO’s E&E News. “We invite you to provide a joint briefing in the months to come to describe what a seven-state agreement could look like and to discuss any legislative action that may be necessary to put that consensus plan into action.”

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If you have questions, please call our fundraising coordinator, Jane Townsend, at (916)206-7186 OR EMAIL jane@familyfarmalliance.org

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2025 Annual Meeting and Conference

October 30-31, 2025 Reno, NV



CORRESPONDENCE LIST**FEBRUARY 2025**

1. January 17, 2025 – Notice and Agenda received for the Central Coast Water Authority for the January 23, 2025 meeting
2. January 22, 2025 – Letters from district sent to two customers regarding Delinquent Payment
3. January 23, 2025 – Notice and Agenda received for the Cachua Operation and Maintenance Board for the January 27, 2025 meeting
4. January 23, 2025 – Notice and Agenda received for the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin Eastern Management Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the meeting on January 23, 2025
5. January 27, 2025 – Notice and Agenda received for the Santa Ynez Community Services District for the Finance Committee Meeting on January 30, 2025
6. January 27, 2025 – Notice and Agenda received for the Santa Ynez Community Services District for the Wastewater Committee Meeting on January 30, 2025
7. January 29, 2025 – Can and Will Serve Letter sent for APN 139-040-004
8. January 31, 2025 – Notice and Agenda received for the Santa Ynez Community Services District for the February 6, 2025 Personnel Committee Meeting
9. February 4, 2025 – Can and Will Serve Letter sent for APN 143-312-010
10. February 10, 2025 - Notice and Agenda received for the Los Olivos Community Services District for the February 12, 2025 Regular Meeting
11. February 11, 2025 – 15-Day Backflow Final Notice Letter sent to one customer
12. February 13, 2025 – 15 Day Backflow Final Notice Letters sent to 16 customers