

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, May 19, 2026**
1070 Faraday Street, Santa Ynez, CA - Conference Room

Trustee Burchardi will be attending the meeting via teleconference from the following location:
3769 Greenleaf Road Columbia, SC 29206
Members of the public may join Trustee Burchardi at that location.

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 **“May 19, 2026 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 APRIL 21, 2026**
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
 2. Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Preliminary Budget

3. Setting the Appropriation Limit for the 2026/2027 Fiscal Year - Article XIII B (Proposition 13)
 - a) California Department of Finance Calculations for 2026/2027 Appropriation Limits and Authorization to Post Notice and Make Public the 2026/2027 Appropriation Limits Calculation
 - b) Review of Draft Resolutions to be presented for adoption at the June 16, 2026 Board Meeting
 1. Draft Resolution: A Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 Establishing the Appropriation Limit for Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Pursuant to Article XIII B of the California Constitution
 2. Draft Resolution: A Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 Adopting the Final Budget for Fiscal Year 2026/2027 and Requesting an Assessment Levy Required to Collect \$875,000
 4. Draft Ordinance: An Ordinance of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 Establishing Regulations and Fines Relating to Water Theft.

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

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 **June 16, 2026 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 - 1 Case]

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

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 – Two Matters]

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 Notice and 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 Notice and 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.

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**SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT,
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO.1
APRIL 21, 2026 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, April 21, 2026, in-person at 1070 Faraday Street.

Trustees Present: Michael Burchardi
Jeff Clay
Brad Joos
Mark Moniot
Nick Urton

Trustees Absent: None

Others Present: Paeter Garcia Racel Cota Steven Anderson
Dan Drugan Kylie Kelleher

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:

President Clay called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m., he stated that this was a Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees. Ms. Cota conducted roll call and reported that all Trustees were present.

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 MARCH 17, 2026:

The Regular Meeting Minutes from March 17, 2026 were presented for consideration.

President Clay asked if there were any changes or additions to the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 17, 2026. There were no changes or additions requested.

It was **MOVED** by Trustee Joos, seconded by Trustee Urton, and carried by a unanimous 5-0-0 voice vote, to approve the March 17, 2026 Regular meeting minutes as presented.

7. **CONSENT AGENDA:**

The Consent Agenda Report was provided in the Board Packet.

Mr. Garcia reviewed the Consent Agenda materials for the month of March. Various topics were discussed among the Board and staff.

It was **MOVED** by Trustee Moniot, seconded by Trustee Urton, and carried by a unanimous 5-0-0 voice vote, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

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

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

Ms. Cota reviewed the Statement of Revenues and Expenses for the month of March. She highlighted various line-items related to revenue and expense transactions that occurred during the month and referred to the Fiscal-Year-to-Date Statement of Revenues and Expenses that provides a budget to actual snapshot for the nine months ending March 31, 2026. Ms. Cota stated that revenue exceeded expenses by \$244,302.25 and the year-to-date March 2026 net income was \$3,380,014.06, subject to ongoing financial obligations of the District.

b) Approval of Accounts Payable

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

The Board reviewed the Warrant List which covered warrants 27149 through 27208 in the amount of \$463,015.83.

It was **MOVED** by Trustee Burchardi, seconded by Trustee Urton, and carried by a unanimous 5-0-0 voice vote to approve the Warrant List for March 18, 2026 through April 21, 2026.

B. OPERATIONS

1. General Update

Mr. Drugan reported that staff have begun transitioning the distribution system from groundwater supplies to State Water Project supplies. He also reported that field staff recently removed three valves located at the intersection of Faraday Street and Manzana Street, and the intersection of Faraday Street and Tivola Street. In addition, the District is completing final preparations for installation of a variable frequency drive on one of the pumps at the Mesa Verde Pump Station. Annual maintenance was also completed on the District’s four mobile generators.

Mr. Garcia reported that District employee Saul Juarez recently passed his State Water Resources Control Board Distribution Grade 2 (D2) examination and that Kincaid

McGinnis, one of the District's new Operators-in-Training, recently obtained his Commercial Class A driver's license. Mr. Garcia congratulated these accomplishments and noted that both certifications provide valuable support to District operations

2. Madera Fence Replacement Project – Phase 2: Consideration and Possible Award

Mr. Drugan reported that the District re-advertised the Madera Fence Replacement Project – Phase 2. The District received four bids, three of which were determined to be responsive to the Request for Bids (RFB). Following review of the bids, staff determined that Allco Fence Industries was the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.

Mr. Garcia discussed the Office Building/Shop Improvement total budget and recommended two budget transfers within the Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) program budget to fully fund the Madera Fence Replacement - Phase 2 project. Following discussion, the Board approved the CIP budget transfers.

It was **MOVED** by Trustee Joos, seconded by Trustee Burchardi, and carried by a 5-0-0 voice to approve the budget transfer of \$50,000 from District Building (Account 90332) and \$37,000 from Infrastructure Security (Account 900379) to Office Building/Shop Improvements (Account 9000371) to increase the FY 2025/26 budget total for that account to \$177,000.

Mr. Garcia recommended acceptance of the bid from Allco Fence Industries and requested that the Board authorize him to sign the Notice of Award and contract documents.

It was **MOVED** by Trustee Joos, seconded by Trustee Burchardi, and carried by a 5-0-0 voice vote, to accept the lowest responsive and responsible bid from Allco Fence Industries in the amount of \$176,791, and authorize the General Manager to execute applicable contract documents with Allco Fence Industries.

3. Meadowlark Shaded Parking Area: Consideration and Possible Award

Mr. Drugan reported that the District recently issued a RFB to construct a shaded parking area at the Meadowlark Pump Station. The District received two bids, both of which were determined to be responsive. Following review of the bids, staff determined that Protective Weather Structures was the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.

Mr. Garcia recommended that the Board conditionally award the project, subject to the District obtaining any final land use approvals that may be needed. Following discussion, the Board authorized award of the Meadowlark Shaded Parking Area project to Protective Weather Structures, contingent upon obtaining any necessary land use approvals.

It was **MOVED** by Trustee Moniot, seconded by Trustee Clay, and carried by a 5-0-0 voice vote, to accept the lowest responsive and responsible bid from Protective Weather Structures in the amount of \$87,748, and authorize the General Manager to execute applicable contract documents with Protective Weather Structures contingent upon obtaining any final land use approvals that may be needed.

4. Mesa Verde Road Improvements

Mr. Garcia provided an overview of ongoing discussions with neighboring landowners regarding paving maintenance for a portion of Mesa Verde Road, a private road that provides access to the District's Mesa Verde Pump Station. He explained that the Central Coast Water Authority (CCWA) is currently conducting a road maintenance project that will improve an eastern portion of the roadway from Refugio Road to CCWA's Santa Ynez Pump Station. Heading west from that point, several landowners along Mesa Verde Road are evaluating cost share arrangements to complete similar paving improvements, where one or more of the landowners would hire the same contractor that is doing the work for CCWA. Noting that the District regularly uses that portion of Mesa Verde Road to access its pump station, Mr. Garcia recommended that the District contribute a proportionate cost share for the additional paving work, wherein the District's estimated share may range between approximately \$7,000 to \$11,000 depending on the final number of participants. Board discussion ensued and the Board agreed with staff's recommended approach.

9. REPORT, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE BOARD ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:

A. SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT ACT

1. Eastern Management Area (EMA) Update

The Board packet included the Notice and Agenda for the April 16, 2026 Citizen Advisory Group for the Eastern Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency.

Mr. Garcia summarized several topics that were discussed at the recent CAG meeting and noted that the next meeting date for the EMA GSA Board has not yet been announced.

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:

Mr. Garcia indicated that, similar to the last several years, the District is planning to host an informational booth at the Annual Santa Ynez Airport Day on May 16, 2026, and also at Old Santa Ynez Days on June 20, 2026.

Mr. Garcia also provided a staffing update to the Board to inform them that the District's current Office Administrator, Debbie Curtis, will be retiring at the end of the month, and the decision has been made to promote Regina Goold, who has been with the District for 10 years, to fill the position. The District will soon open recruitment for a new Administrative Assistant to join the front office team.

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

The Correspondence List was received by the Board.

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

There were no requests from the Board.

13. NEXT MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

President Clay stated that the next Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for May 19, 2026 at 3:00 p.m.

14. CLOSED SESSION:

The Board adjourned to closed session at 5:05 p.m.

A. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - EXISTING LITIGATION

[Subdivision (d)(1) of Section 54956.9 of the Government Code - 1 Case]

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

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 - Two Matters]

15. RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION:

[Sections 54957.1 and 54957.7 of the Government Code]

The Board reconvened to open session at approximately 5:57 p.m. Mr. Garcia announced that the Board met in closed session in accordance with Agenda Items 14.A through 14.B, and that there was no reportable action for any of the closed session Agenda Items.

16. ADJOURNMENT:

Being no further business, it was MOVED by Trustee Burchardi, seconded by Trustee Urton, and carried by a 5-0-0 voice vote to adjourn the meeting at approximately 5:57 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Racel Cota, Secretary to the Board

ATTEST:

Jeff Clay, President

MINUTES PREPARED BY:

Kylie Kelleher, Executive Administrative Assistant

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT,
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO.1
April 21, 2026

Consent Agenda Report

CA-1. Water Supply and Production Report. The District's total water production in **April 2026 (269 AF)** was 15 AF higher than total production in **March 2026 (254 AF)**, 66 AF higher than the most recent 3-year running average (2023-2025) for the month of **April (203 AF)**, and 7 AF higher than the most recent 10-year running average (2016-2025) for the month of **April (262 AF)**. **Notably, although April production was remarkably low in years 2023 and 2024 (bringing down the most recent 3-year average), this year's April production was much closer to the most recent 10-year running average for the month.** As noted in previous Consent Reports, the District's overall demands and production totals generally have been trending 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 **April 2026**, approximately **41 AF** was produced from the Santa Ynez Upland wells and approximately **135 AF** was produced from the 4.0 and 6.0 cfs well fields in the Santa Ynez River alluvium. As reflected in the Monthly Water Deliveries Report from CCWA, the District took delivery of **93 AF** of SWP supplies for the month. According to USBR, approximately **60 AF** of SWP deliveries were made to Cachuma for South Coast entities. Direct diversions to the County Park and USBR were **2.64 AF**.

The USBR Daily Operations Report for Cachuma Reservoir in **April** (ending April 30, 2026) recorded the end of month reservoir elevation at **752.03'** and end of month storage of **189,963 AF**. USBR recorded total precipitation at the reservoir of **1.13 inches** for the month. Reported reservoir evaporation in **April** was **1,242.48 AF**. Based on the updated maximum storage capacity of 192,978 AF (previously 193,305 AF), as of **May 11, 2026** Cachuma reservoir was reported at **97.6%** of capacity, with then-current storage of **188,301 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. **Based on prevailing reservoir conditions, the Cachuma Member Units requested a 100% Project allocation for WY 2025-2026, which USBR approved.** At the beginning of December 2025, ID No.1 held approximately 4,365 AF of contractual Project supplies in the reservoir, including approximately 1,878 AF of prior year carryover supplies and 2,487 AF from the current WY 2025-2026 allocation. Due to spill conditions that occurred again this year, all Cachuma Member Agencies lost their carryover supplies, such that the District currently holds approximately 2,375 AF of contractual Project supplies in Cachuma, comprised of this year's allocation less amounts exchanged thus far with the South Coast Member Units.

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 (“Table 1 Flows”).*

- *During Above Normal and Wet water years, the following minimum flow requirements must be maintained at Hwy 154 and Alisal Bridges (“Table 2 Flows”):*
 - *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 local rainfall conditions thus far in the new water year, inflows to Cachuma Reservoir have exceeded 33,707 AF and thus have triggered higher fishery release requirements from Bradbury Dam under “Table 2” of State Board Order 2019-0148 (see flow regime 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. In 2025, DWR again took a very conservative approach to the Table A allocation, as follows:

- December 2, 2024 – DWR issued an initial 2025 SWP Table A allocation of 5 percent (5%)
- December 23, 2024 – Allocation increased to 15 percent (15%)
- January 28, 2025 – Allocation increased to 20 percent (20%)
- February 25, 2025 – Allocation increased to 35 percent (35%)
- March 25, 2025 – Allocation increased to 40 percent (40%)
- April 29, 2025 – Final Allocation increased to 50 percent (50%)

For the 2026 Water Year, on December 1, 2025 DWR issued a Notice to the State Water Contractors establishing an initial 10 percent (10%) SWP Table A allocation. By Notice dated January 29, 2026 DWR increased the Table A allocation to thirty percent (30%). DWR’s January Notice explained the updated allocation as follows:

A series of atmospheric rivers that arrived mid-December and continued until early January provided for above average precipitation and high runoff, contributing to storage increases in California reservoirs. However, the series of storms were warm, snowpack accumulation has been below average, and continuing warm and dry weather in January has resulted in snowpack loss. ... Considering the recent dry and warm conditions and associated forecasts, we will be carefully assessing and evaluating future allocation increases as hydrologic conditions become clearer. ... To determine the available SWP water supplies, DWR considers various factors including SWP contractors’ 2026 carryover supplies and demands, existing storage in SWP conservation facilities, estimates of future runoff, near-term and seasonal climate forecasts, SWP operational, contractual, and regulatory requirements set forth in the Federal Endangered Species Act and California Endangered Species Act, and water rights obligations under the State Water Resources Control Board’s authority.

As of May 13, 2026 Lake Oroville storage levels were recorded at 99 percent of total capacity and 122 percent of its historic average for this time of year. Based on these reservoir conditions, DWR issued a Notice dated April 27, 2026 announcing that the allocation for “North of Delta” SWP Contractors is being increased to 45 percent, but remaining at 30 percent for all other Contractors in light of other factors previously stated (above). **On May 15, 2026 DWR announced an increase to the SWP Table A allocation to 45 percent.**

As reflected in meeting agendas for the April 23, 2026 meetings of the CCWA Board of Directors, CCWA remains focused on several important issues related to the SWP and SWP deliveries, including but not limited to: SWP operations and supply conditions; pending and proposed water transfers; land subsidence affecting the California Aqueduct; infrastructure improvements; CCWA strategic planning; and the CCWA FY 2026/27 Final Budget. Of particular note, CCWA hosted a well-deserved retirement gathering for Executive Director Ray Stokes, who is retiring after nearly 30 years of service with CCWA (see enclosed CCWA Resolution No. 26-07). Mr. Stokes will be missed by ID No.1 staff as an exceptional leader and zealous advocate for water supply resilience throughout Santa Barbara County, and one who always exemplified extraordinary integrity both personally and professionally on behalf of CCWA and its Member Agencies. The next regular meeting of the CCWA Board of Directors is currently scheduled for May 28, 2026.



BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Bradbury Dam Field Office
Lake Cachuma Daily Operations
 Run Date: April 30, 2026

April 2026

Day ¹ SHEF Tag ²	Lake Cachuma										Release					Computed Inflows ⁵	
	Elevation HL	Storage ² LS	Change in Storage LC	Surface Area LC	Rainfall PP PPAF		Evaporation ³ EV EVAF		CCWA Inflow QICWA	Park Use	Tunnel QUTEC	Hilton Creek QUHIL	WR 89-18 QUWATR	Outlet ⁴ QU	Spillway QS	Computed Inflows ⁵ QI	
ft	acre-feet	acre-feet	acres	inches	acre-feet	inches	acre-feet	acre-feet	acre-feet	acre-feet	acre-feet	acre-feet	acre-feet	acre-feet	acre-feet	acre-feet	
31	753.08	193,230															
1	753.06	193,167	(62.8)	3,127.1	0.07	18.2	0.050	10.42	-	44.82	14.37	-	164.00	-	152.63		
2	753.02	193,041	(125.7)	3,125.8	-	-	0.210	43.76	-	47.79	14.40	-	164.00	-	144.38		
3	753.01	193,010	(31.4)	3,125.5	-	-	0.200	41.67	-	41.13	14.39	-	164.00	-	229.85		
4	752.99	192,947	(62.5)	3,124.8	-	-	0.180	37.50	-	40.22	14.39	-	163.00	-	192.70		
5	752.97	192,885	(62.2)	3,124.1	-	-	0.270	56.23	-	38.06	14.23	-	165.00	-	211.44		
6	752.91	192,699	(186.5)	3,122.1	-	-	0.250	52.04	-	38.73	14.24	-	165.00	-	83.59		
7	752.87	192,574	(124.3)	3,120.8	-	-	0.200	41.61	-	47.84	14.67	-	162.00	-	141.87		
8	752.84	192,481	(93.3)	3,119.8	-	-	0.220	45.76	-	52.49	14.37	-	163.00	-	182.44		
9	752.81	192,388	(93.3)	3,118.8	-	-	0.230	47.82	-	51.91	14.36	-	163.00	-	183.93		
10	752.77	192,263	(124.3)	3,117.4	-	-	0.190	39.49	0.01	53.97	14.36	-	164.00	-	147.57		
11	752.75	192,201	(62.2)	3,116.8	0.13	33.8	0.130	27.01	11.71	29.57	14.35	-	163.00	-	126.38		
12	752.76	192,232	31.1	3,117.1	0.39	101.3	0.130	27.01	12.50	26.94	14.39	-	164.00	-	149.71		
13	752.73	192,139	(93.3)	3,116.1	0.01	2.6	0.200	41.55	12.48	29.67	14.35	-	164.00	-	141.32		
14	752.70	192,046	(93.3)	3,115.1	-	-	0.220	45.69	12.50	31.87	14.29	-	162.00	-	148.19		
15	752.67	191,953	(93.3)	3,114.1	-	-	0.210	43.60	10.80	37.72	14.34	-	163.00	-	154.70		
16	752.63	191,828	(124.3)	3,112.7	-	-	0.200	41.50	0.01	43.28	14.34	-	163.00	-	137.87		
17	752.60	191,735	(93.3)	3,111.7	-	-	0.190	39.42	-	49.28	14.33	-	163.00	-	172.86		
18	752.55	191,580	(155.4)	3,110.1	-	-	0.240	49.76	-	53.16	14.33	-	163.00	-	124.91		
19	752.49	191,393	(186.5)	3,108.0	-	-	0.260	53.87	-	54.69	14.37	-	164.00	-	100.52		
20	752.46	191,300	(93.3)	3,107.0	-	-	0.240	49.71	-	53.49	14.30	-	163.00	-	187.35		
21	752.42	191,175	(124.3)	3,105.7	0.05	12.9	0.210	43.48	-	53.16	14.28	-	162.00	-	135.73		
22	752.41	191,144	(31.1)	3,105.4	0.42	108.7	0.120	24.84	-	41.80	14.32	-	156.00	-	97.28		
23	752.35	190,958	(186.5)	3,103.4	0.01	2.6	0.250	51.72	-	41.65	14.31	-	154.00	-	72.68		
24	752.31	190,834	(124.3)	3,102.0	-	-	0.240	49.63	-	35.04	14.34	-	156.00	-	130.77		
25	752.26	190,678	(155.4)	3,100.3	-	-	0.220	45.47	-	35.85	14.28	-	143.00	-	83.27		
26	752.23	190,585	(93.3)	3,099.3	0.05	12.9	0.070	14.46	-	36.25	14.32	-	144.00	-	104.96		
27	752.19	190,461	(124.3)	3,098.0	-	-	0.160	33.05	-	24.45	14.28	-	142.00	-	89.53		
28	752.13	190,274	(186.5)	3,096.0	-	-	0.220	45.41	-	38.92	14.24	-	143.00	-	55.14		
29	752.08	190,119	(155.4)	3,094.3	-	-	0.240	49.51	-	45.87	14.32	-	143.00	-	97.37		
30	752.03	189,963	(155.4)	3,092.6	-	-	0.240	49.48	-	50.38	14.25	-	142.00	-	100.78		
Total			(3,266.45)		1.13	293.04	5.990	1,242.48	60.01	2.64	1,271.99	430.11	-	4,754.00	-	4,081.72	
Minimum	752.03	189,963	(186.50)	3,092.62	-	-	0.050	10.42	-	24.45	14.23	-	142.00	-	55.14		
Average	752.60	191,735	(108.88)	3,111.73	0.04	9.77	0.200	41.42	2.00	42.40	14.34	-	158.47	-	136.06		
Maximum	753.06	193,167	31.08	3,127.11	0.42	108.69	0.270	56.23	12.50	54.69	14.67	-	165.00	-	229.85		

Comments

- Data based on 24-hour period ending 0800
- Storage volume based on 2021 bathymetric survey.
- Evaporation in inches is the measured pan evaporation. Calculated evaporation in acre feet uses the April pan factor: 80%
- Indicated outlet release includes any leakage around gates.
- Computed inflow is the sum of change in storage, releases, and evaporation minus precip on the reservoir surface and CCWA inflow.



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: 5/11/2026

Water Year: 2026

Storm Number: NA

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 0day(s)	Month	Year*	% to Date	% of Year*	AI
Buellton (Fire Stn)	233	0.00	0.00	0.00	23.83	146%	144%	
Cachuma Dam (USBR)	332	0.00	0.00	0.00	33.13	169%	167%	
Carpinteria (Fire Stn)	208	0.00	0.00	0.00	21.21	126%	123%	
Cuyama (Fire Stn)	436	0.00	0.00	0.10	10.18	138%	133%	
Figueroa Mtn (USFS Stn)	421	0.00	0.00	0.06	28.71	137%	134%	7.3
Gibraltar Dam (City Facility)	230	0.00	0.00	0.00	37.89	145%	143%	7.7
Goleta (Fire Stn-Los Carneros)	440	0.00	0.00	0.00	23.91	132%	130%	
Lompoc (City Hall)	439	0.01	0.00	0.01	20.17	139%	137%	7.6
Los Alamos (Fire Stn)	204	0.00	0.00	0.00	19.89	132%	130%	
San Marcos Pass (USFS Stn)	212	0.00	0.00	0.10	51.10	150%	148%	
Santa Barbara (County Bldg)	234	0.00	0.00	0.00	26.02	144%	141%	
Santa Maria (City Pub.Works)	380	0.00	0.00	0.00	15.69	120%	118%	
Santa Ynez (Fire Stn /Airport)	218	0.00	0.00	0.00	21.81	140%	138%	
Sisquoc (Fire Stn)	256	0.00	0.00	0.00	16.28	111%	109%	

Countywide percentage of "Normal-to-Date" rainfall : 138%

Countywide percentage of "Normal Water-Year" rainfall : 135%

Countywide percentage of "Normal Water-Year" rainfall calculated assuming no more rain through Aug. 31, 2026 (End of WY2026).

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)

	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)
<u>Gibraltar Reservoir</u>	1,400.00	1,399.78	4,490	4,441	98.9%	-31	3,161
<u>Cachuma Reservoir</u>	753.**	751.49	192,978	188,301	97.6%	-1,507	35,134
<u>Jameson Reservoir</u>	2,224.00	2,223.70	4,587	4,553	99.3%	-13	333

[Twitchell Reservoir](#) Twitchell Reservoir level has dropped below the sensor, data no longer available.



CENTRAL COAST WATER AUTHORITY

MEMORANDUM

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

May 5, 2026

According to the CCWA revenue meters at each turnout, the following deliveries were made during the month of April 2026:

<u>Project Participant</u>	<u>Delivery Amount (acre-feet)</u>
Chorro	119
Lopez.....	111
Shandon.....	0
Guadalupe.....	14
Santa Maria.....	389
Golden State Water Co.....	0
Vandenberg.....	254
Buellton	0
Solvang	31
Santa Ynez ID#1	92
Bradbury.....	<u>60</u>
TOTAL	1,070

In order to reconcile these deliveries with the DWR revenue meter, which read 1,083 acre-feet, the following delivery amounts should be used for billing purposes:

<u>Project Participant</u>	<u>Delivery Amount (acre-feet)</u>
Chorro	121
Lopez	113
Shandon.....	0
Guadalupe.....	14
Santa Maria.....	370*
Golden State Water Co.....	24*
Vandenberg	257
Buellton	0
Solvang	31
Santa Ynez ID#1	93
Bradbury	<u>60</u>
TOTAL	1,083

*Golden State Water Company delivered 24 acre-feet into its system through the Santa Maria turnout. This delivery is recorded by providing a credit of 24 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 93 acre-feet of exchange water.

The exchange water is allocated as follows

<u>Project Participant</u>	<u>Exchange Amount (acre-feet)</u>
Goleta	34
Santa Barbara	22
Montecito	22
Carpinteria	<u>15</u>
TOTAL	93

Bradbury Deliveries into Lake Cachuma are allocated as follows:

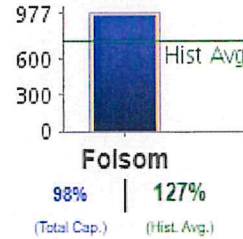
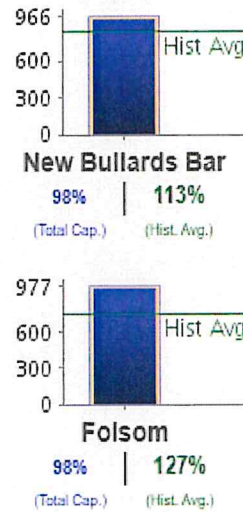
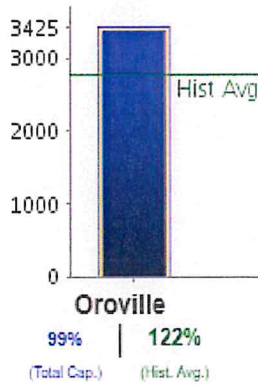
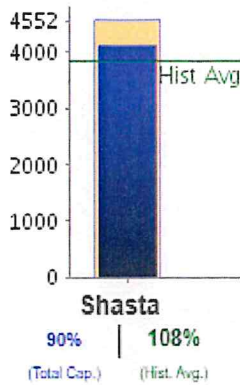
<u>Project Participant</u>	<u>Delivery Amount (acre-feet)</u>
Carpinteria	5
Goleta	11
La Cumbre	30
Montecito	7
Morehart	0
Santa Barbara	7
Raytheon	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	60

cc: Daniel Brooks, Goleta WD
Mike Babb, Golden State WC
Joshua Haggmark, City of Santa Barbara
Janet Gingras, COMB
Jeromy Caldera, San Luis Obispo County
Paeter Garcia, Santa Ynez RWCD ID#1
Shad Springer, City of Santa Maria
David Trujillo, City of Guadalupe
Kelley Dyer, 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

CURRENT CONDITIONS: MAJOR WATER SUPPLY RESERVOIRS: 13-MAY-2026

Data as of Midnight: 13-May-2026

Change Date:

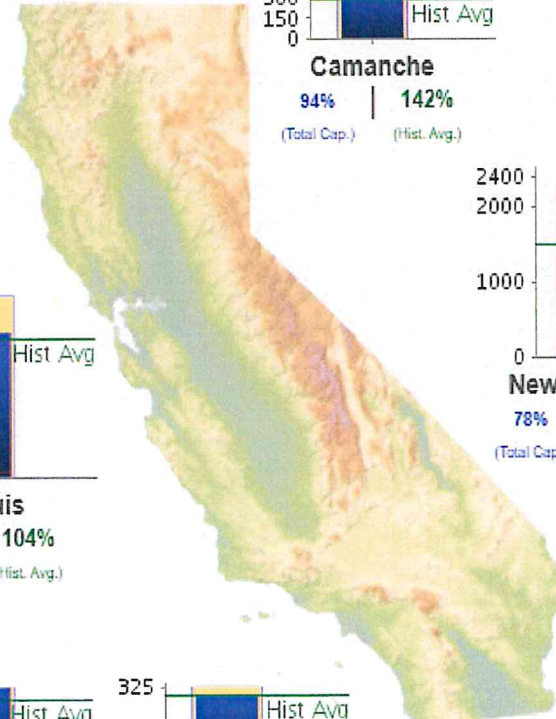
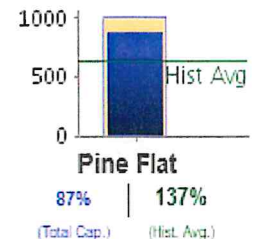
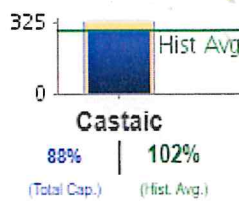
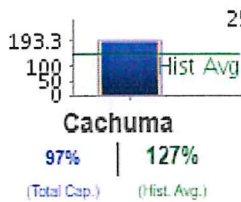
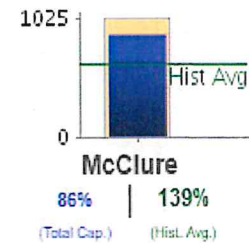
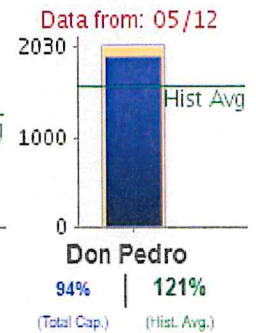
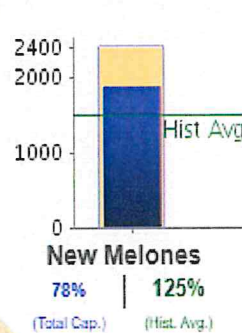
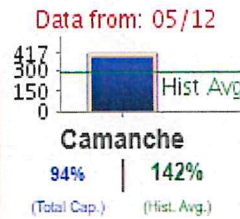
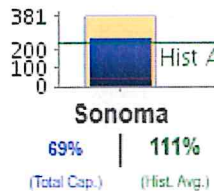
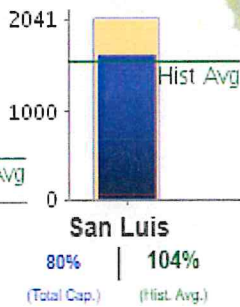
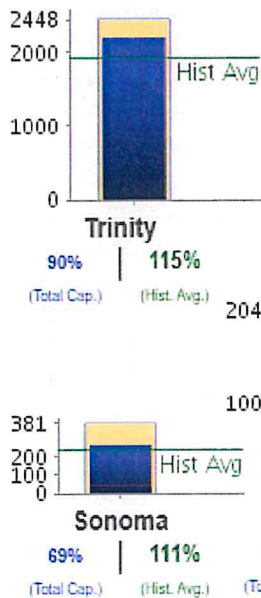


LEGEND

- Blue Bar: Storage level for date
- Gold Bar: Total reservoir capacity
- Green Line: Historic level for date.

Capacity (TAF) | Historical Avg Mark

% of Capacity | % Hist. Avg.
(Click res. 3 char. code for details)



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

Report Generated: 14-May-2026 12:56 PM

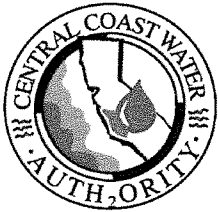
The CSI link has been disabled to zoom in, for the lack of historical data.

Paeter Garcia

From: Lisa F. Watkins <lfw@ccwa.com>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 11:49 AM
Cc: David R. Beard; Lacey S. Adam
Subject: DWR Maintaining State Water Project Allocation at 30 Percent and Increasing North of Delta Allocation to 45 Percent (NTC 26-04)
Attachments: NTC_26-04_2026_SWP_Alloc_30%_NODAlloc_45%_20260427.pdf

Via bcc: Water Operations Contacts

Attached is the Notice to State Water Project Contractors **No. 26-04 “DWR Maintaining State Water Project Allocation at 30 Percent and Increasing North of Delta Allocation to 45 Percent.”**



Lisa Watkins
Office Manager
Office: 805-697-5219
Email: LFW@ccwa.com
www.ccwa.com

WARNING: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

NOTICE TO STATE WATER PROJECT CONTRACTORS**Date:** April 27, 2026**Number:** 26-04**Subject:** DWR Maintaining State Water Project Allocation at 30 Percent and Increasing North of Delta Allocation to 45 Percent**From:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Yarbrough".

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

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) studies using the latest hydrologic data indicate a modest increase in water supply is available for those State Water Project (SWP) contractors that are located North of Delta (NOD) and have a contractual right to receive the NOD Allocation pursuant to their respective water supply contracts. Therefore, DWR is increasing the NOD Allocation from 40 percent to 45 percent while leaving the SWP allocation unchanged for all other SWP contractors. The approved allocated Annual Table A Amounts for 2026 are shown in Attachment A – 2026 SWP Allocation.

To determine the available SWP water supplies, DWR considers various factors including SWP contractors' 2026 carryover supplies and demands, existing storage in SWP conservation facilities, estimates of future runoff, near-term and seasonal climate forecasts, SWP operational, contractual, and regulatory requirements set forth in the Federal Endangered Species Act and California Endangered Species Act, and water rights obligations under the State Water Resources Control Board's authority.

DWR will develop updated water delivery schedules for this allocation by prorating schedules submitted by the SWP contractors with the NOD Allocation in October 2025 (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: 2026 State Water Project Allocation, updated April 27, 2026

Attachment A
2026 STATE WATER PROJECT ALLOCATION
 Updated
 April 27, 2026

SWP Contractors	Annual Table A Amount (Acre-Feet) (1)	Approved Table A Allocation (Acre-Feet) (2)	Approved Allocation as a Percentage of Annual Table A Amount (3) = (2)/(1)
<u>FEATHER RIVER</u>			
County of Butte	27,500	16,500	60%
Plumas County FC&WCD	2,700	810	30%
City of Yuba City	9,600	4,320	45%
Subtotal	39,800	21,630	
<u>NORTH BAY</u>			
Napa County FC&WCD	29,025	13,062	45%
Solano County WA	47,756	21,491	45%
Subtotal	76,781	34,553	
<u>SOUTH BAY</u>			
Alameda County FC&WCD, Zone 7	80,619	24,186	30%
Alameda County WD	42,000	12,600	30%
Santa Clara Valley WD	100,000	30,000	30%
Subtotal	222,619	66,786	
<u>SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY</u>			
Oak Flat WD	5,700	1,710	30%
County of Kings	9,305	2,792	30%
Dudley Ridge WD	41,350	12,405	30%
Empire West Side ID	3,617	1,086	30%
Kern County WA	982,730	294,819	30%
Tulare Lake Basin WSD	86,854	26,057	30%
Subtotal	1,129,556	338,869	
<u>CENTRAL COASTAL</u>			
San Luis Obispo County FC&WCD	25,000	7,500	30%
Central Coast Water Authority*	45,486	13,646	30%
Subtotal	70,486	21,146	
<u>SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA</u>			
Antelope Valley-East Kern WA	144,844	43,454	30%
Santa Clarita Valley WA	95,200	28,560	30%
Coachella Valley WD	138,350	41,505	30%
Crestline-Lake Arrowhead WA	5,800	1,740	30%
Desert WA	55,750	16,725	30%
Littlerock Creek ID	2,300	690	30%
Metropolitan WDSC	1,911,500	573,450	30%
Mojave WA	89,800	26,940	30%
Palmdale WD	21,300	6,390	30%
San Bernardino Valley MWD	102,600	30,780	30%
San Gabriel Valley MWD	28,800	8,640	30%
San Geronio Pass WA	17,300	5,190	30%
Ventura County WPD	20,000	6,000	30%
Subtotal	2,633,544	790,064	
TOTAL	4,172,786	1,273,048	~30%

*As of December 16, 2025; formerly Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District.



**CENTRAL COAST WATER AUTHORITY
SPECIAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING**

AGENDA

**Chairman – Eric Friedman
Vice Chairman – Jeff Clay**

Thursday, April 23, 2026
9:00 AM
at 255 Industrial Way, Buellton, California 93427

Members of the public may participate by video call or telephone via
Microsoft Teams Meeting ID: 262 485 757 931 279 Passcode: iL6wN2Jp
or by dialing +1 323-484-5095, and entering access Code/Meeting ID: 891 891 717#

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.

Public Comment on agenda items may occur via video call or telephonically, or by submission to the Board Secretary via email at lfw@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>.

★ indicates written report

- I. **Call to Order and Roll Call**
- II. **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.)**
- III. **Closed Session**
 - A. **CLOSED SESSION: CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION**
Initiation of litigation pursuant to Government Code section 54956.9(d) (4): 1 matter
- IV. **Return to Open Session**
 - A. Report on Closed Session Actions (if any)
- V. **Adjournment**



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

**Chairman – Eric Friedman
Vice Chairman – Jeff Clay**

Thursday, April 23, 2026
9:30 AM

at 255 Industrial Way, Buellton, California 93427

Members of the public may participate by video call or telephone via
Microsoft Teams Meeting ID: 215 906 703 781 32 Passcode: y8hZ9gs9
or by dialing +1 323-484-5095, and entering access Code/Meeting ID: 399 304 613#

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.

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★ indicates written report

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call**
- II. 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.)**
- III. Consent Calendar**
 - A. Minutes of the March 26, 2026 Regular Meeting ★
 - B. Bills ★
 - C. Controller’s Report ★
 - D. Operations Report ★
Staff Recommendation: Approve the Consent Calendar
- IV. Executive Directors Report**
 - A. Water Supply Situation Report
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.
 - B. Water Transfers Update
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.

Executive Directors Report (cont.)

- C. Furnishing and Delivering Bulk Treated Water Chemical Contracts ★
Staff Recommendation: Authorize the Executive Director to execute contracts with the following vendors to furnish and deliver bulk treated water chemicals:
- Chemtrade Chemicals US, LLC for aluminum sulfate at a cost of \$598.33/dry ton (DT)
 - Hill Brothers Chemical Co. for ammonium hydroxide at a cost of \$2,401.26/DT
 - JCI Jones Chemical, Inc. for liquid chlorine at a cost of \$1,910.00/ton
 - JCI Jones Chemical, Inc. for sodium bisulfite at a cost of \$3,225.00/DT
 - Univar Solutions USA, LLC for sodium hydroxide at a cost of \$865.00/DT
 - Univar Solutions USA, LLC for sodium hypochlorite at a cost of \$4.94/gallon (gal)
- D. FY 2025/26 Third Quarter Investment Report ★
Staff Recommendation: Accept report.
- E. Annual Review of the CCWA Investment Policy ★
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.
- F. CCWA FY 2026/27 Final Budget ★
Staff Recommendation: 1. Approve and adopt the Final FY 2026/27 Budget as outlined in the staff report; 2. Authorize staff to obtain bids for those projects included in the Final FY 2026/27 Budget which require formal bids; and 3. Find the projects included in the Final FY 2026/27 Budget except from the California Environmental Quality Act and direct staff to file the applicable Notices of Exemption.
- G. 2026 Review of Personnel Policy Manual ★
Personnel Committee Recommendation: Accept proposed changes to the Personnel Policy Manual as detailed in the staff report.
- H. 2027 Compensation and Benefit Survey ★
Personnel Committee Recommendation: Retain Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc. to perform a compensation and benefit study which will include conducting a comparator analysis as detailed in Option 1 of their March 11, 2026 proposal.
- I. State Water Contractors Report
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.
- J. Legislative Report ★
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.
- K. Resolution No. 26-07 Commending Ray A Stokes for His 29 years of Service to CCWA and the Central Coast
Staff Recommendation: Approve Resolution No. 26-07
- V. **Reports from Board Members for Information Only**
- VI. **Items for Next Regular Meeting Agenda**
- VII. **Date of Next Regular Meeting: May 28, 2026**
- VIII. **Adjournment**



RESOLUTION NO. 26-07

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CENTRAL COAST WATER AUTHORITY EXPRESSING THE BOARD'S APPRECIATION TO

RAY A. STOKES

**FOR HIS EXEMPLARY SERVICE TO THE AUTHORITY
AND THE CENTRAL COAST OF CALIFORNIA**

Recitals

WHEREAS, Ray A. Stokes devoted nearly thirty years of distinguished service to the Central Coast Water Authority, serving as Controller from 1995 to 2003, Deputy Director of Finance from 2003 to 2012, and Executive Director from 2013 until 2026; and

WHEREAS, in the early years of his service to the Authority, Ray A. Stokes played a central role in the refinancing of Authority revenue bonds in 1996, 2006, and 2016, generating substantial and lasting financial benefits for the Authority's project participants; and

WHEREAS, throughout his tenure, Ray A. Stokes applied his exceptional interpersonal skills and steady leadership to managing and mentoring the Authority's employees and to strengthening productive working relationships with numerous local, state, and federal agencies, including the County of Santa Barbara, the California Department of Water Resources, and the United States Bureau of Reclamation; and

WHEREAS, Ray A. Stokes brought a deep understanding of California water supply, infrastructure, and public finance to his service on behalf of the Authority through his work on the Board of Directors of the State Water Contractors, including his service for 28 years as Chair of the State Water Contractors' Audit and Finance Committee; and

WHEREAS, under the prudent fiscal management and financial leadership of Ray A. Stokes, the Authority has earned the Government Finance Officers Association's Distinguished Budget Award for 28 consecutive years and Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for every year since the Authority began its operations in 1997; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure as Executive Director, Ray A. Stokes dedicated his experience, sound judgment, and attention to detail to addressing complex and mission-critical issues facing the Authority; and

WHEREAS, under Ray A. Stokes' leadership as Executive Director, the Authority achieved numerous significant accomplishments, including: (i) the diligent monitoring and auditing of the California Department of Water Resources' annual statements of charges, resulting in the return of millions of dollars to the Authority for the direct benefit of its project participants and their customers; and (ii) securing approval for the full and final assignment of the State Water Contract for Santa Barbara County to the Authority, a truly momentous milestone in the Authority's history; and

WHEREAS, through his service, Ray A. Stokes has served the residents of Santa Barbara County with devotion, professional skill, good humor, and an unwavering commitment to the values of public service.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the Central Coast Water Authority hereby finds and declares as follows:

1. The Board of Directors recognizes that Ray A. Stokes, through his leadership as Executive Director and his many years of prior service, has made extraordinary and lasting contributions to the success, integrity, and financial stability of the Central Coast Water Authority and to the benefit of its project participants and the public they serve; and

2. The Board of Directors hereby acknowledges and honors Ray A. Stokes upon his retirement from the Central Coast Water Authority and extends to him its sincere best wishes in his future endeavors; and

3. On behalf of the citizens of the Central Coast, the Board of Directors conveys to Ray A. Stokes its deep appreciation for his exemplary public service and affirms its belief that the community in which he has lived and worked for so many years is, and will remain, in his debt.

Adopted: April 23, 2026

Eric Friedman, Chairman
Central Coast Water Authority



Central Coast Water Authority

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THIS ITEM APPEARS ON

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

MAY
28
2026

Board Meeting

Thursday, May 28, 2026

9:00 AM

at 255 Industrial Way, Buellton, California 93427 and

940 Rose Court, Grover Beach, CA 93433

Members of the public may participate by video call or telephone via

Microsoft Teams (<https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/269279934099384?p=dwBTTMVS1BohLkGUEv>) Meeting ID: 269 279 934 099 384 Passcode: HQgfGgWn

or by dialing [+1 323-484-5095](tel:+13234845095), (<tel:+13234845095.80623627>) and entering access Code/Meeting ID: 345 557 797#



BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Historical Archive and Reports Database

Lake Cachuma Daily Operations

Run Date: 05/14/2026

May 2026

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
	752.03	190,301											
1	751.98	190,147	-154	100.7	0.0	0.0	52.7	14.3	142.0	0.0	45.7	0.220	0.00
2	751.94	190,024	-123	115.9	0.0	0.0	49.2	14.3	136.0	0.0	39.4	0.190	0.00
3	751.88	189,839	-185	42.2	0.0	0.0	51.0	14.3	135.0	0.0	26.9	0.130	0.00
4	751.84	189,716	-123	105.4	0.0	0.0	50.2	14.3	137.0	0.0	26.9	0.130	0.00
5	751.79	189,562	-154	68.3	0.0	0.0	40.9	14.3	134.0	0.0	33.1	0.160	0.00
6	751.74	189,408	-154	83.0	0.0	0.0	48.4	14.3	135.0	0.0	39.3	0.190	0.00
7	751.68	189,223	-185	36.0	0.0	0.0	47.7	14.2	126.0	0.0	33.1	0.160	0.00
8	751.63	189,069	-154	99.9	0.0	0.0	51.6	14.2	124.0	0.0	64.1	0.310	0.00
9	751.59	188,946	-123	106.9	0.0	0.0	48.4	14.2	126.0	0.0	41.3	0.200	0.00
10	751.54	188,794	-152	85.2	0.0	0.0	47.3	14.3	126.0	0.0	49.6	0.240	0.00
11	751.50	188,672	-122	116.6	0.0	0.0	50.9	14.2	126.0	0.0	47.5	0.230	0.00
12	751.44	188,489	-183	52.9	0.0	0.0	46.9	14.2	115.0	0.0	59.8	0.290	0.00
13	751.37	188,276	-213	-8.6	0.0	0.0	49.5	14.2	116.0	0.0	24.7	0.120	0.00
TOTALS			-2,025	1,004.4	0.0	0.0	634.7	185.3	1,678.0	0.0	531.4	2.570	0.00
AVERAGE		189,243											

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

**FY 2026/2027
PRELIMINARY
BUDGET**





BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mark Moniot
Division 1

Jeff Clay, President
Division 2

Nick Urton
Division 3

Michael Burchardi, Vice President
Division 4

Brad Joos
Trustee-At-Large

This Budget was prepared under the direction of:

Paeter Garcia, General Manager

Racel Cota, Administrative and Financial Manager

STAFF CONTRIBUTORS

Dan Drugan, Water Resources Manager

Joe Come', Operations & Maintenance Superintendent

Danny Durbiano, Distribution & Operations Supervisor

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide the residential and agricultural customers in the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 service area with reasonably priced, reliable, high quality water supply, and efficient and economical public services.

DISTRICT OVERVIEW, STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

The Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 (District) was formed in 1959 under the Water Conservation District Law of 1931, Division 21, Section 74000 et seq. of the California Water Code (the Act) for the purpose of furnishing water and related water supply services within the District's boundaries. The District has operated continuously since 1959.

Located in the central portion of Santa Barbara County, the District serves the communities of Santa Ynez, Los Olivos, Ballard, the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, and the City of Solvang on a limited basis. With a service area population of approximately 7,022 (excluding the City of Solvang), the District currently provides water directly to approximately 2,756 municipal and industrial customers (including domestic/residential, commercial, institutional, rural residential, and fire service) and approximately 98 agricultural customers. The District encompasses an area of approximately 10,850 acres (including approximately 1,300 acres within Solvang).

The District obtains its water supplies from the Cachuma Project/State Water Exchange, direct diversions from the Cachuma Project (as needed), contractual deliveries from the State Water Project as a member agency of the Central Coast Water Authority, production from the Santa Ynez Uplands Groundwater Basin, and diversions from the Santa Ynez River alluvium. The District's major activities include acquisition, construction, operation, and maintenance of works and facilities for the development and use of water resources and water rights, including without limitation, works and facilities to divert, store, pump, treat, deliver, and sell water for reasonable and beneficial uses by the District's customers.

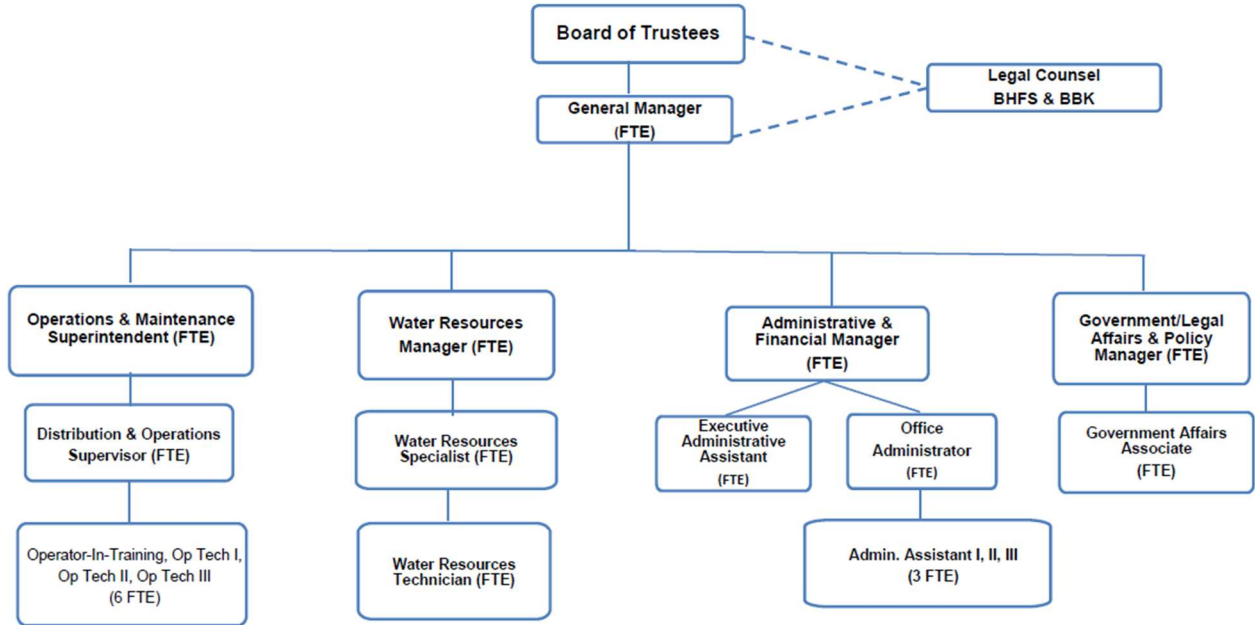
Operational Information

- District Pipelines (in miles) = 92
- Number of Booster Pump Stations = 4 with 11 pumps
- Number of Active Wells = 17
- SWP/ID No.1 Turnout = 5 pumps
- Number of water storage reservoirs/tanks = 4 with a total capacity of 16.7 million gallons
- Current number of approved, funded full-time equivalent (FTE) positions = 20

ORGANIZATION CHART

FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



TOTAL POSITIONS = 20
FULL TIME = 20
 Updated 01/2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FISCAL YEAR 2026/27

BUDGET PROCESS

The District's fiscal year budget is one of the most important documents prepared by management for the Board of Trustees. The financial accounts and line items reflected in this document and the FY 2026/27 Preliminary Budget describe the annual fiscal year budget beginning July 1, 2026 and ending on June 30, 2027.

The development and adoption of the District's annual budget is based on projected revenues and expenditures, as well as identified projects and programs which provide the financial foundation for District activities. The budget serves as a roadmap for ensuring reasonable costs and predictable customer rates and charges. The budget blends advanced revenue forecasting and effective expenditure management with the infrastructure investment needed to deliver safe, reliable, cost-effective, and sustainable water supplies to the communities served by the District.

Through the process of planning and preparing the budget, management compared the 2016 Water Rate Study results with the prior year financial conditions and year-end estimated outcomes, then forecasted the funding needs of the District in order to continue to provide high levels of water service, meet regulatory requirements, and comply with applicable financial obligations throughout the ensuing fiscal year and beyond.

To determine the annual operating budget and capital costs necessary to provide water service, the General Manager works with the Administrative & Financial Manager, Water Resources Manager, Operations & Maintenance Superintendent, and the Distribution & Operations Supervisor to identify and prioritize estimated operating expenditures and capital improvement projects. Once a Preliminary Budget is prepared, it is presented to the public and the Board of Trustees at a public meeting to provide an opportunity for questions, modifications, and directions to staff to finalize the budget for Board approval at a subsequent public meeting. The Preliminary Budget provides a necessary foundation for the District's general and administrative, operations, and maintenance programs, debt service obligations, and other financial commitments and service objectives for the coming fiscal year.

REPORTING BASIS

The District utilizes the accrual basis for budgeting purposes and for accounting and financial reporting. The accrual method recognizes revenues and expenses in the period in which they are earned and incurred. The accrual method is the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) practice for financial reporting.

The District reports its activities as an enterprise fund. This method of reporting is used to account for operations that are financed and administered in a manner similar to a private business enterprise. The costs of providing water and services to customers on a continuing basis (including the replacement of existing assets) should be financed or recovered primarily through user rates and charges and the costs are borne by the customers who are receiving the benefit of the assets.

The FY 2026/27 Preliminary Budget was developed from the Uniform System of Accounts for Water Utilities which includes a set of tables providing details for revenue and expenditure categories of the District. **The tables contained in this Report are intended to be reviewed in connection with the FY 2026/27 Preliminary Budget document.**

The accounting for the budget is supported by the QuickBooks accounting system which is verified annually by an independent audit performed by Bartlett, Pringle & Wolf, LLP. The budget tables show categories of the operating revenues as compared to operating expenditures along with debt service and special studies expenditures, including but not limited to compliance with various state and federal regulatory requirements applicable to fisheries protection in the Lower Santa Ynez River, compliance with water rights orders issued by the State Water Resources Control Board, and implementation of contractual requirements. Historically, the District's operating expenses and Capital Improvement Project program are to be fully funded by operating revenues, and as necessary and appropriate from reserve funds. The Capital Improvement Project expenditures can be funded by a combination of operating revenues and reserves.

BUDGET AND RESERVE FUND BACKGROUND

The District's 2016 Water Rate Study, inclusive of the approved Water Rate Schedule, was adopted by the District's Board of Trustees on December 13, 2016 and became effective on February 1, 2017. The Water Rate Study and Schedule provide the foundation for incrementally increased revenues over a five-year period. Rates were developed to meet operating expenses, debt service obligations, capital improvement projects (partially), and other planned expenditures. The Water Rate Study also includes a Reserves analysis and a plan for adding to the District's reserve funds over time to allow for recovery of reserve deficits that occurred over the previous six-year period. The last rate adjustment pursuant to the Water Rate Schedule went into effect on July 1, 2021 and remains in effect for the FY 2026/27 budget cycle. The FY 2026/27 Preliminary Budget proposes to fully fund all expense categories, including Operations and Maintenance (O&M), General and Administrative (G&A), Debt Service, Other Expenses and Special Studies, and a majority of Capital Improvement Project (CIP) program costs, leaving a projected budget shortfall of \$1,529,669 (resulting entirely from a proposed project to install a new groundwater production well at a cost of approximately \$3,000,000). To achieve a balanced budget, District management proposes a budget transfer from Unrestricted, Board Reserved Funds to Unrestricted Funds of \$1,529,669. Further explanation is provided in the CIP section below.

Below are the past fiscal year and the most current fiscal quarter-end Reserve balances based on actual accounting and audit information.

Table 1

RESERVE BALANCES

	June 30, 2025	March 31, 2026
<u>BOARD RESERVED</u>		
Debt Repayment Obligation	\$587,247	\$560,271 ¹
Repair & Replacement	\$8,507,435	\$10,026,021
Plant Expansion	\$10,458,199	\$12,739,079
Subtotal	\$19,552,881	\$23,325,371
<u>RESTRICTED RESERVE</u>		
Dev. Fee; SY Septic	\$109,212	\$109,212
State Water Project Reserve ²	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000

1. This amount represents a Debt Payment Obligation reserve balance for 9-months of current FY 2025-26. The year-end reserve amount in this category will change on June 30, 2026 to reflect payments for the SWP payment due on June 1st, and the USBR Safety of Dams Repayment Contract payment.
2. One year set aside payment established to guarantee ID No.1's contractual debt obligation in the event of a default by the City of Solvang.

BUDGET IN DETAIL

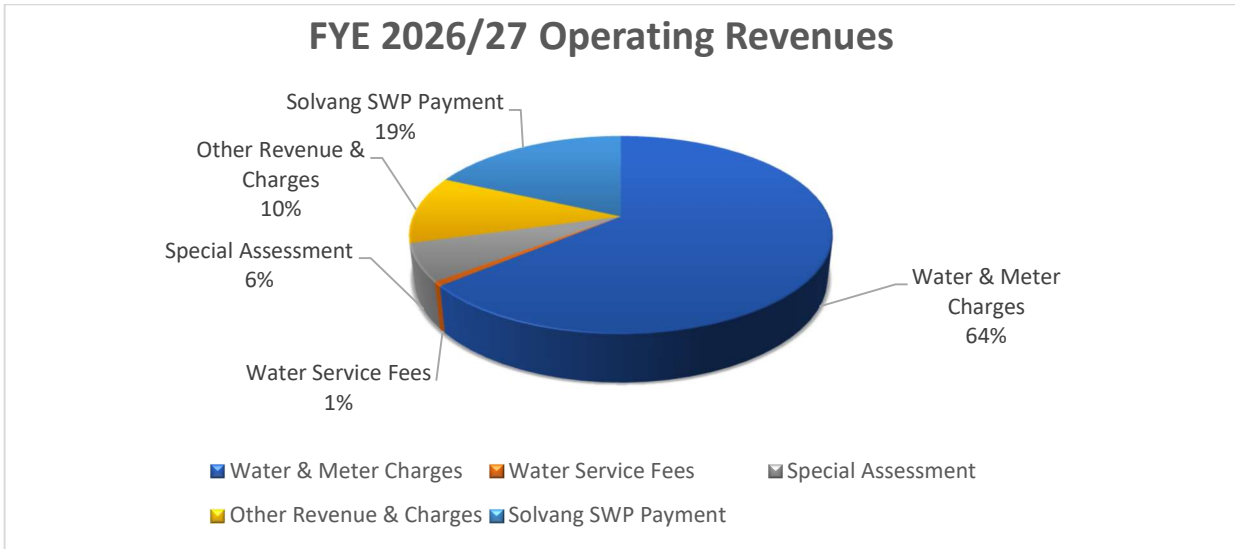
The specific revenue and expenditure categories of the budget account for the adopted water rates and revenues, prior year audit data, and financial account information. The categories are displayed using actual 9-month revenue and expenditure data from the current fiscal year and are also projected to show the fiscal year-end figures (June 30, 2026). This information is used as part of the evaluation to develop the FY 2026/27 Preliminary Budget.

The FY 2026/27 Preliminary Budget of \$14,243,915 reflects an overall 2.00% increase compared to the projected June 30, 2026 year-end results. As noted above, the FY 2026/27 Preliminary Budget assumes that water rates remain static based upon the last rate increase that went into effect on July 1, 2021. The water rates are applied to forecasted water sales and meter charges in FY 2026/27 based on actual sales and charges in the current and prior fiscal years. The budget also assumes no increase in the \$875,000 Special Assessment/Ad Valorem Tax, even though the authorized limit for FY 2026/27 is \$2,785,524. Other factors such as capital facilities charges and interest income are integral parts of the forecast. The information below shows that budgeted revenues will meet projected operating expenditures and debt service obligations and result in a projected net revenue balance of \$4,071,831. This revenue balance will fund the Other Expenses and Special Studies categories as further detailed in the Preliminary Budget, leaving a balance of \$2,504,831 in net operating revenues, which will fund the majority of the proposed \$4,034,500 Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) Program for FY 2026/27, leaving a projected budget shortfall of \$1,529,669. As discussed above District management proposes a budget transfer from Unrestricted, Board Reserve Funds to Unrestricted Funds of \$1,529,669 to fund a major capital project (new groundwater production well) to help bolster the District’s water supply resilience.

SUMMARY OF REVENUES

The District operates according to cost of service, with revenues derived primarily from water sales, fixed monthly service charges, other water services, and the special tax assessment. For the FY 2026/27 Preliminary Budget, the total operating revenues are projected at \$14,243,915 including the SWP revenue of \$2,588,182 from the City of Solvang. Projected total revenues are \$11,655,733 without the SWP pass-through payment. Table 2 below summarizes the distribution of the District’s projected revenue sources for FY 2026/27.

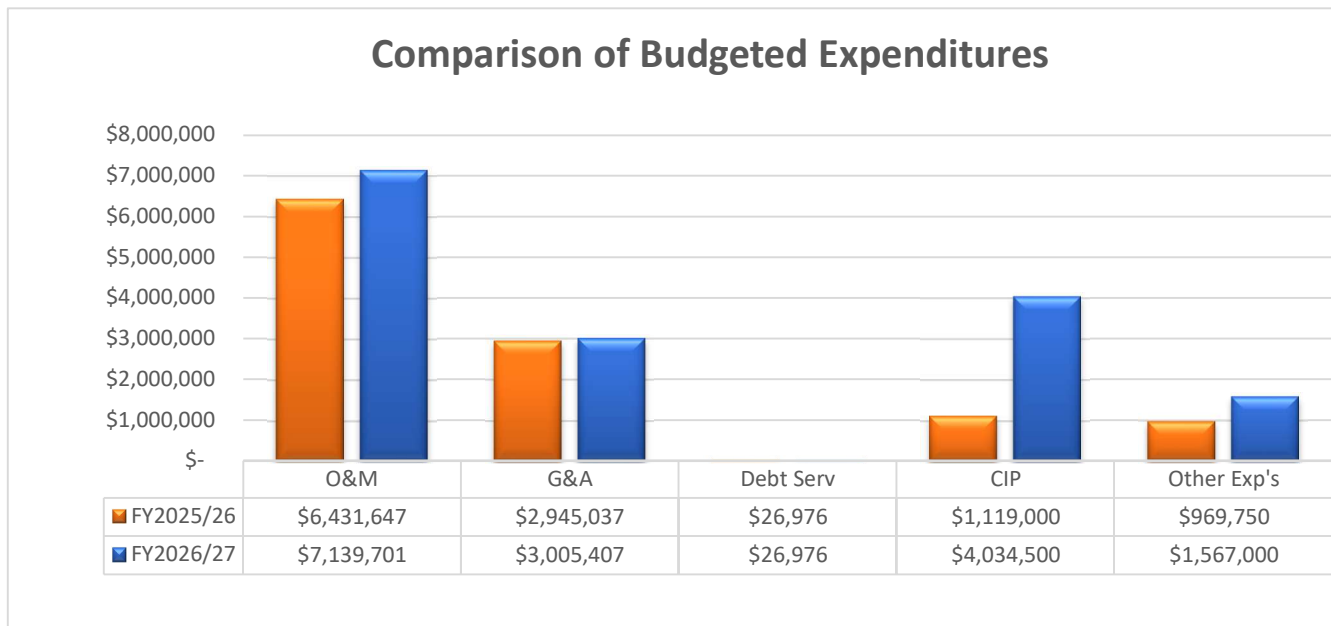
Table 2



SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES

Based on the FY 2026/27 Preliminary Budget, the District’s projected water sales and other operating revenues, including the proposed FY 2026/27 special tax assessment, will fully fund the overall operating expenditures, including all categories of Operation & Maintenance, General & Administrative, and Debt Service, and result in a net revenue balance of \$4,071,831. This net balance of operating revenues is proposed to fund the District’s Other Expenses and Special Studies categories as further detailed in the Preliminary Budget. Thereafter, a net revenue balance of \$2,504,831 is proposed to fund the majority of the District’s FY 2026/27 CIP program. Table 3 below shows all budgeted expenditure categories for FY 2026/27 in comparison to the previous fiscal year.

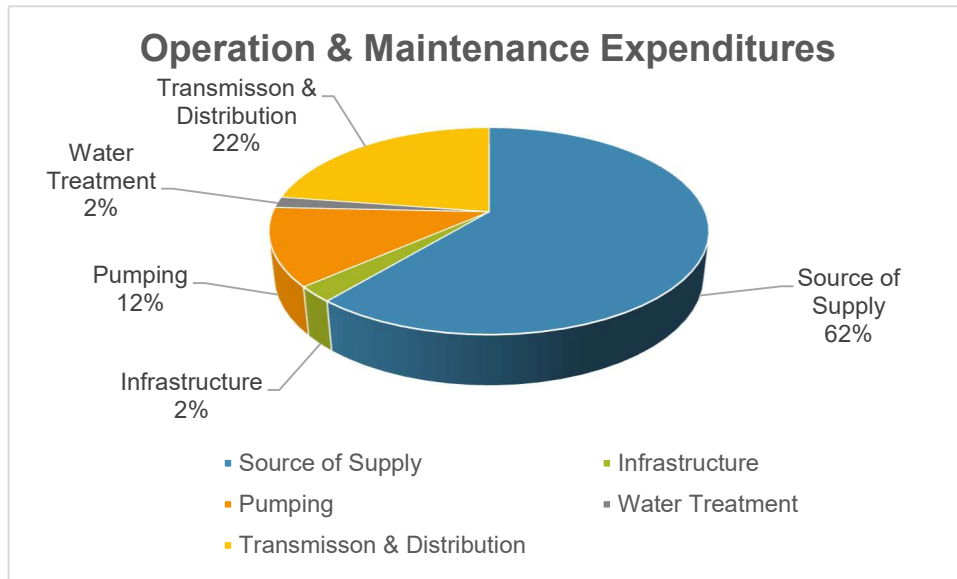
Table 3



EXPENDITURES - OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE (O&M)

The overall budget for O&M expenditures for FY 2026/27 is \$708,054, which is 11.01 percent higher than last year’s FY 2025/26 budget figure. The Source of Supply category shows the largest cost increase, which relates to increased charges by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) charges for State Water Project (SWP) deliveries to the District and the City of Solvang in the amounts of \$349,271 and \$190,813, respectively. The Infrastructure, Pumping, and Water Treatment costs are also projected to increase by \$112,500 as the result of increasing electrical utility rates. The Transmission & Distribution cost increase of \$40,222 in comparison to the FY 2025/26 budget is attributable to needed upgrades to the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system. Finally, ACWA JPIA premiums for health, dental, and vision coverage are anticipated to have an inflationary increase of 5 percent for each coverage plan.

Table 4



EXPENDITURES - GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATION (G&A)

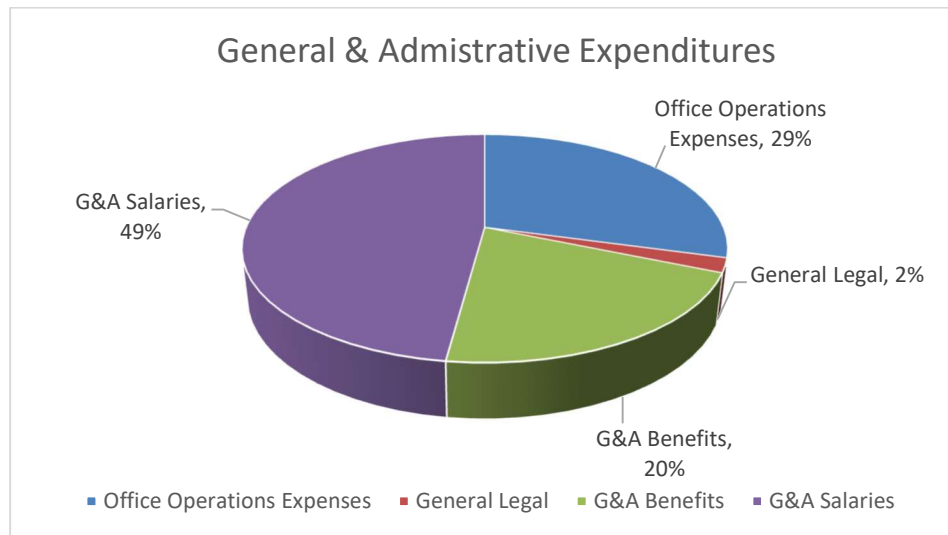
The overall budget for G&A expenditures for FY 2026/27 increased by \$60,370 (2.05%) compared to last year’s FY 2025/26 budget.

Administrative expenses, including dues and subscriptions, miscellaneous service contracts, various utilities, and liability insurance are projected to increase slightly due to inflationary and vendor cost increases related to the current economic climate.

Other increases to this expense category are tied to annual Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) and merit increases to employee salaries in accordance with the District’s adopted Personnel Policy Manual and Salary Schedule, which in turn affect retirement and payroll tax expenses. The District-wide COLA is being proposed at 3.9% for FY 2026/27. The COLA is consistent with industry standards and is based on the Consumer Price Index 12-month calculation data (May-April). The COLA factor is derived from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics through averaging the most recent 12-month indexes compared to the prior year for all urban wage earners and clerical workers for the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim area of California.

Table 5 below illustrates the distribution of costs for the G&A expense categories.

Table 5



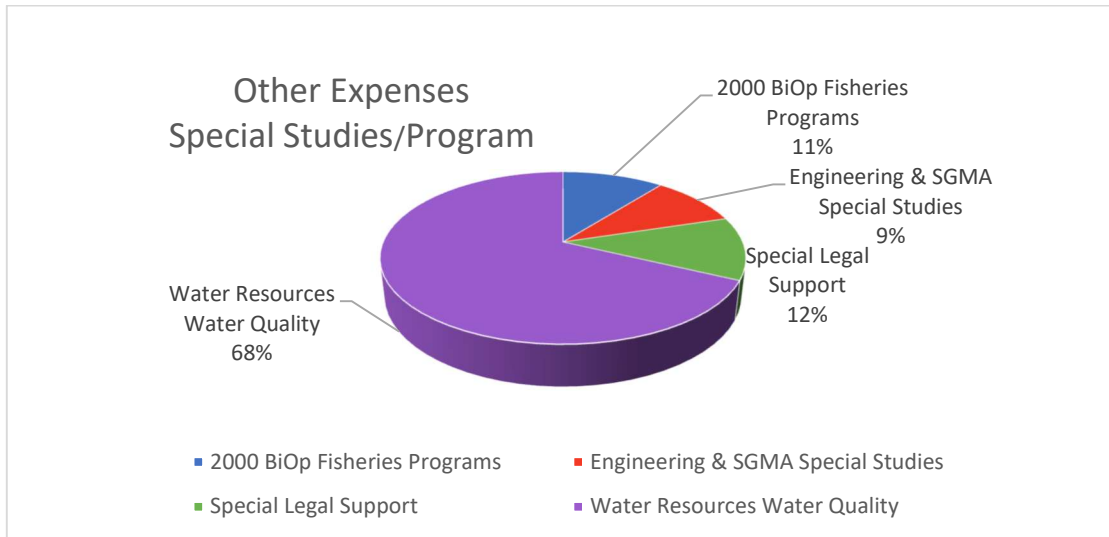
DEBT SERVICE

The District’s Debt Service category for FY 2026/27 includes the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) Safety of Dams repayment obligation (principal and interest) which remains constant for a 50-year term at \$26,976 per year, which term expires in 2052. As detailed above, the FY 2026/27 operating revenues, inclusive of the special tax assessment, are projected to fully fund the District’s operating expenses plus debt service.

OTHER EXPENSES AND SPECIAL STUDIES

For FY 2026/27, the budgeted amount of \$1,567,000 in the Other Expenses category will be funded by the net revenue balance of \$4,071,831. The FY 2026/27 budget for Other Expenses is \$597,250 more than what was budgeted in FY 2025/26, with the Cr6 Implementation Plan and Other Treatment & Supply Projects having the largest increase of \$665,000, which is partially offset by decreases in other cost components. Notably, the FY 2026/27 Preliminary Budget prominently includes funding for professional services needed to implement the District’s Cr6 Compliance Plan, treatment options and feasibility studies for wells that may be affected by the new MCL, additional well exploration and replacement capacity studies, and public outreach to District customers in relation to the Cr6 regulation and long-term water supply planning. Table 6 below illustrates the distribution of costs for the Other Expenses and Special Studies categories.

Table 6



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS (CIP)

Infrastructure planning and investment are critical to the ongoing reliability of the District’s water production and distribution system. In years past, the District’s CIP program was seriously compromised by shortfalls in operating revenues caused by outdated water rates and a multi-year suspension on the levy of a special tax assessment. Those shortfalls required incremental drawdowns of District reserves simply to meet annual operating expenses and debt service. Consequently, monies were not available to fund the CIP program, and needed capital improvements to the District’s aging water system were deferred.

However, following the 2016 Rate Study, operating revenues have been able to meet and exceed operating expenses, and net revenues have been available to fund the District’s Debt Service and Other Expenses (including Special Studies) and then contribute to building reserves and/or funding the CIP program. The CIP items include projects needed for replacements, betterments, upgrades, and repairs of the District water supply, production, and distribution system.

For FY 2026/27, a total of \$4,034,500 is budgeted for the CIP program. This amount is \$2,915,500 more than the \$1,119,000 CIP budget in FY 2025/26. Of particular note, the majority of the CIP program for FY 2026/27 will be funded from the District’s projected net revenues of \$2,504,831 (after funding Other Expenses and Special Studies). The funding balance of \$1,529,669 would require a transfer from the District’s Unrestricted, Board Reserves.

Account 900332 (\$50,000) – District Building (Rollforward Project) – Several years ago this account was budgeted as a higher amount to include the combination of a steel building to house a water treatment and control system for the District’s office wells, along with a garage bay for District equipment and needed expansion and upgrade of field crew quarters. The FY 2026/27 Preliminary Budget includes funding to finalize architectural and engineering design modifications for a new District building to provide a District-designated Board Room, conference rooms, and various administrative and employee workspace.

900372 (\$14,500) – Office Computers, Furniture & Equipment – The FY 2026/27 Preliminary Budget for this account includes \$2,000 for office workstations and \$4,500 for network switches reaching the end of their reliable lifespan. The remaining \$8,000 is budgeted to modernize the District’s back up and disaster recovery platform to a cloud-based solution from its current tape-based backup system for data protection and archival storage. Datto Backup and Disaster Recovery (BDR) is an automatic off-site replication of the District’s work files and programs. It is a comprehensive solution designed to protect and restore critical data. Datto BDR keeps systems running during failures, automatically backs up files and programs to an off-site server, and performs frequent backups to help mitigate data loss. The District’s backup system currently requires manual intervention and has slower speeds and higher risks than the cloud-based solution.

900376 (\$190,000) – Communications/Telemetry and SCADA (Rollforward Project) – The FY 2026/27 Preliminary Budget includes \$165,000 to conduct a comprehensive radio transmission survey and upgrade for the District’s entire service area. The District’s water distribution system, including reservoirs, wells, and booster pump stations, is operated by utilizing an electronically secure Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system, an indispensable feature of virtually all modern water systems. Generally speaking, the SCADA system electronically monitors, displays, and communicates critical water system data and parameters, such as reservoir levels and production velocities in wells and pump stations. SCADA also enables District personnel to remotely control operational changes to key infrastructure throughout the system. Because the SCADA system functions through radio communications, the effectiveness of those communications can be limited by the age and functionality of supporting radio equipment, signaling devices, signaling locations, surrounding topography, and other factors. The District’s existing radio and signaling equipment is significantly outdated and our overall radio transmission capabilities have not been evaluated for many years. Consequently, the District’s SCADA system is not performing at an optimal level. District staff have consulted with several industry professionals who advise that a comprehensive radio transmission survey for the entire service area can be used to identify equipment, location, and other technological upgrades to improve the functionality of the District’s telemetry and SCADA system.

This project includes \$25,000 for procurement and installation of a new secured backup server configured to host a virtualized environment. The District currently operates its SCADA system on a single server, with a separate workstation serving as a limited backup. This configuration is outdated and the existing hardware is approaching the end of its reliable lifespan. The virtual server will provide a redundant operating platform, allowing the District to maintain SCADA functionality during operating system patching, software upgrades, or in the event of a primary system failure.

900378 (\$10,000) – Major Tools, Shop & Garage Equipment – The FY 2026/27 Preliminary Budget of \$10,000 in this account is for the acquisition and replacement of major tools and shop equipment, including a shop compressor, industrial grade shelving, equipment racks, organizational bins, and storage improvements.

900350 (\$3,000,000) – Upland Wells - As part of the District’s Water Supply Portfolio and Treatment Alternatives strategy, including efforts to address the State’s recently adopted drinking water standard for hexavalent chromium (Cr6), this CIP project is budgeted to construct a new/replacement groundwater production well within the District, which plans are being closely coordinated with hydrogeologic and engineering studies to optimize production capacity within desired water quality parameters.

900200 (\$175,000) – Pump & Motor Replacement – Pumps and motors serve as indispensable components of the District’s infrastructure and are essential for water supply and operational reliability. Due to continuous usage and wear over time, these assets are subject to deterioration and eventual failure. Unforeseen breakdowns can disrupt operations, leading to downtime, increased maintenance costs, and decreased water supply reliability. Funds under this account will be utilized as situations arise that dictate the replacement of failed pumps and/or motors that occur during the fiscal year.

900106 (\$80,000) – Rehabilitation/Replacement of Mains/Laterals/Valves and Fire Hydrants – The FY 2026/27 Preliminary Budget for this account includes \$40,000 for the replacement of mainline valves that are found to be broken or rendered inoperable during the District’s ongoing valve maintenance and replacement program. Additionally, \$40,000 is budgeted to replace certain fire hydrants within the District’s system.

900379 (\$50,000) – Infrastructure Security – Over the last several years, the District has been upgrading and installing new features at various locations to enhance the security of District water supplies and water supply infrastructure. For FY 2026/27, the Preliminary Budget amount of \$50,000 will be used to acquire and install additional security measures at certain locations within the District’s service area, including but not limited to security fencing, camera devices, and alarm systems.

900373 (\$220,000) – Fleet Vehicle Replacement – This account includes funds for the purchase of one replacement fleet vehicle (valve truck). This vehicle will replace an existing 1998 model that is undersized, underequipped, and at the end of its reliable service life (125,750 miles) for valve maintenance and exercising activities that are critical to the District’s water supply activities and responsibilities. A new valve operating platform will enable the District to implement a more robust valve maintenance program (including systemwide data aggregation and integration for all District valves), while also ensuring adequate and reliable equipment for conducting routine and emergency shutdowns. Further, new and more modernized valve operating equipment results in lower risk of breaking or damaging valves during operating and exercising activities.

Truck mounted valve operating platforms are specialized units and not widely available. Staff research indicates that truck mounted platforms are currently available from only two manufacturers in the United States (Pres Tech and Wachs). The smallest platform produced by Wachs requires a 1.5-ton truck for the size and weight of its equipment, which is oversized for the District’s needs and comes at a higher price, starting at approximately \$275,000 or more. On the other hand, Pres Tech offers a more compact platform that can be installed on a 3/4-ton truck (which is better for accessing some locations in our rural area) with equipment that is more suitable for the District’s needs. Additionally, Pres Tech is a sole source vendor that sells a truck with all the related equipment as a single package, whereas

purchasing through Wachs would require the District to acquire and purchase the components separately. A new operating platform will also enhance field ergonomics and operational safety for our field technicians.

900171 (\$40,000) – 4.0 CFS Well Field – For FY 2026/27, the Preliminary Budget includes an updated pump and motor for Well 18 in the District’s 4.0 CFS wellfield. The lower Santa Ynez River alluvium remain a key component of the District’s water supply portfolio and these improvements are needed to ensure the ongoing sufficiency and reliability of public water supplies throughout the District’s service area.

900102 (\$205,000) – Zone 1, 2, 3 Reservoirs (Partial Rollforward Project) – For FY 2026/27, \$150,000 is budgeted for the installation of power service at the Zone 2 Reservoir including a \$35,000 rollover from FY 2025/26. Currently this site is not equipped with power, which requires all facilities (including the reservoir mixers and telemetry/SCADA equipment) to be run with solar devices. Installing a new electrical service for the Zone 2 Reservoir site will enable the District to utilize higher-power mixing devices and enhance the functionality of communication, security, and maintenance activities for this property. This category also includes \$50,400 for needed enhancements to the ventilation screens at the Zone 1 and Zone 2 reservoir sites. Each reservoir site contains 84 screens, for a total of 168 screens and wood frames to be retrofitted due to age and deferred maintenance.

If additional CIP expenditures are needed, proposed funding would come from the Repair and Replace and/or Plant Expansion Reserves. Alternatively, the projects could be deferred or re-prioritized.

FY 2026/27 PRELIMINARY BUDGET CONCLUSION

The FY 2026/27 Preliminary Budget revenues of **\$14,243,915** are projected to be sufficient to meet total O&M expenses, G&A expenses, and Debt Service obligations of **\$10,172,084** with a net revenue balance of **\$4,071,831**. This net revenue balance of \$4,071,831 will be used to fund the \$1,567,000 of Other Expenses for special studies, engineering, design, legal, and consulting work to maintain protection and preservation of the District’s water rights and to ensure compliance with various regulatory orders and requirements applicable to the District’s rights and water supply portfolio, including but not limited to state-mandated water quality standards and fishery protections applicable to the Cachuma Project in accordance with State Water Resources Control Board Orders and the state and federal Endangered Species Acts. The remaining net revenue balance of **\$2,504,831** will be used to fund the majority of the District’s FY 2026/27 CIP program of **\$4,034,500** as detailed above. To fund the remaining balance, District management proposes a budget transfer from Unrestricted, Board Reserved Funds to Unrestricted Funds in the amount of \$1,529,669 which would result in a balanced budget for the FY 2026/27 Preliminary Budget.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Trustees and public provide feedback and comments regarding the Fiscal Year 2026/27 Preliminary Budget and proposed collection of an assessment levy of \$875,000 for Fiscal Year 2026/27.



Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No. 1
PRELIMINARY BUDGET FY 2026-27

Account No.	Service & Sales	FY 25/26 Budget	FY 25/26 9-Month Revenues	Projected Yr-End 6/30/2026	Preliminary Budget FY26/27	Variance from 2025/26 Budget
601000	Agriculture Water Sales & Meter Charges	\$ 1,352,413	\$ 742,945	\$ 1,069,086	\$ 1,268,667	\$ (83,746)
602000	Domestic Water Sales & Meter Charges	\$ 4,809,941	\$ 3,777,183	\$ 5,165,005	\$ 5,063,363	\$ 253,422
602100	Rural Res/Lmt'd Ag Sales & Meter Charges	\$ 2,486,242	\$ 1,846,462	\$ 2,562,176	\$ 2,484,574	\$ (1,668)
602200	Cachuma Park Water Sales	\$ 19,575	\$ 13,678	\$ 19,204	\$ 19,575	\$ 0
606000	Water Sales to City of Solvang	\$ 77,553	\$ 145,639	\$ 161,219	\$ 77,553	\$ 0
608000	Water Sales - On-Demand	\$ 27,442	\$ 12,488	\$ 16,472	\$ 27,442	\$ 0
611500	Fire Service Charges	\$ 135,539	\$ 98,866	\$ 131,515	\$ 140,884	\$ 5,345
604000	Temporary Water Sales	\$ 20,175	\$ 2,613	\$ 5,675	\$ 20,175	\$ 0
	Subtotal Water Sales	\$ 8,928,880	\$ 6,639,874	\$ 9,130,352	\$ 9,102,233	\$ 173,353
611100	New Services Fees	\$ 60,000	\$ 46,233	\$ 46,233	\$ 60,000	\$ 0
611200	Activation/Reconnection Fees	\$ 15,000	\$ 7,125	\$ 10,413	\$ 15,000	\$ 0
611900	New Fire Service Fees	\$ 6,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 6,000	\$ 0
612400	Penalties	\$ 15,000	\$ 12,093	\$ 15,276	\$ 15,000	\$ 0
	Subtotal Service	\$ 96,000	\$ 65,451	\$ 71,922	\$ 96,000	\$ 0
	Assessments, Fees & Other Revenue					
627000-62720	Special Assessment	\$ 875,000	\$ 465,583	\$ 875,000	\$ 875,000	\$ 0
628000-63030	Interest Income	\$ 1,162,500	\$ 905,480	\$ 1,207,306	\$ 1,463,000	\$ 300,500
625200	Application Fees/Special Services	\$ 13,000	\$ 9,800	\$ 12,624	\$ 13,000	\$ 0
611600	Capital Facilities Charges	\$ 75,000	\$ 93,856	\$ 93,856	\$ 75,000	\$ 0
620006	Reimbursed Field Labor	\$ 5,000	\$ 1,133	\$ 1,416	\$ 5,000	\$ 0
620008	Reimbursed Admin. Labor	\$ 500	\$ 0	\$ 200	\$ 500	\$ 0
624000	Other Misc Revenues	\$ 37,000	\$ 12,925	\$ 17,547	\$ 24,000	\$ (13,000)
634100	Insurance Claims	\$ 2,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 2,000	\$ 0
890100	Solvang SWP Payment	\$ 2,397,369	\$ 2,166,049	\$ 2,554,839	\$ 2,588,182	\$ 190,813
	Subtotal Assessment & Fees	\$ 4,567,369	\$ 3,654,826	\$ 4,762,788	\$ 5,045,682	\$ 478,313
	TOTAL	\$ 13,592,249	\$ 10,360,151	\$ 13,965,062	\$ 14,243,915	\$ 651,666

EXPENDITURES OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

Account No.	Source of Supply	FY 25/26 Budget			FY 26/27 9-Month Expenditures			Projected Yr-End 6/30/2026			Preliminary Budget FY26/27			Variance from 2025/26 Budget		
703000	Cachuma Project (USBR) Water Purchase	\$	235,200	\$	127,544	\$	220,474	\$	255,820	\$	20,620	\$	255,820	\$	20,620	
703200	Cachuma Project Renewal/Environmental Fund	\$	25,181	\$	16,754	\$	23,049	\$	24,809	\$	(372)	\$	24,809	\$	(372)	
704000	State Water Charge- District Payment	\$	1,079,117	\$	228,243	\$	885,475	\$	1,428,388	\$	349,271	\$	1,428,388	\$	349,271	
860000	State Water Project - City of Solvang pymt	\$	2,397,369	\$	2,166,049	\$	2,554,839	\$	2,588,182	\$	190,813	\$	2,588,182	\$	190,813	
705000	Ground Water Charges - SYRWCD	\$	40,000	\$	20,823	\$	20,823	\$	40,000	\$	0	\$	40,000	\$	0	
705500	Ground Water Charges - EMA GSA - SGMA	\$	50,000	\$	26,277	\$	35,037	\$	50,000	\$	0	\$	50,000	\$	0	
706000	Cloudseeding Program	\$	12,500	\$	0	\$	0	\$	12,500	\$	0	\$	12,500	\$	0	
707000	River Well Field Licenses (4.0cfs, 6.0cfs, Gallery)	\$	27,000	\$	18,344	\$	23,887	\$	27,000	\$	0	\$	27,000	\$	0	
	Subtotal Source of Supply	\$	3,866,367	\$	2,604,034	\$	3,763,584	\$	4,426,699	\$	560,332	\$	4,426,699	\$	560,332	
	Infrastructure															
711000	Maintenance of Wells	\$	50,000	\$	29,547	\$	35,442	\$	50,000	\$	0	\$	50,000	\$	0	
712000	Maintenance of Mains	\$	85,000	\$	76,716	\$	80,452	\$	85,000	\$	0	\$	85,000	\$	0	
713000	Maintenance of Reservoirs	\$	15,000	\$	10,650	\$	13,650	\$	15,000	\$	0	\$	15,000	\$	0	
714000	Maintenance of Structures	\$	5,000	\$	1,395	\$	1,695	\$	5,000	\$	15,000	\$	20,000	\$	15,000	
	Subtotal Infrastructure	\$	155,000	\$	118,308	\$	131,239	\$	170,000	\$	15,000	\$	170,000	\$	15,000	
	Pumping															
726000	Pumping Expense - Power	\$	750,000	\$	675,483	\$	874,788	\$	862,500	\$	112,500	\$	862,500	\$	112,500	
730000	Maintenance of Pump Structures/Stations/Equip	\$	20,000	\$	33,224	\$	34,055	\$	20,000	\$	0	\$	20,000	\$	0	
732000	Maintenance of Equipment	\$	0	\$	0	\$	0	\$	0	\$	0	\$	0	\$	0	
	Subtotal Pumping	\$	770,000	\$	708,707	\$	908,843	\$	882,500	\$	112,500	\$	882,500	\$	112,500	
	Water Treatment															
744000	Chemicals	\$	85,000	\$	42,499	\$	58,499	\$	75,000	\$	(10,000)	\$	75,000	\$	(10,000)	
748000	Maintenance of Treatment Structures/Equipment	\$	3,000	\$	1,274	\$	1,774	\$	3,000	\$	0	\$	3,000	\$	0	
748100	Water Treatment/Sampling/Monitoring Equipment	\$	5,000	\$	7,100	\$	7,200	\$	10,000	\$	5,000	\$	10,000	\$	5,000	
749000	Water Analysis	\$	15,000	\$	12,352	\$	14,019	\$	15,000	\$	(15,000)	\$	15,000	\$	(15,000)	
	Subtotal Water Treatment	\$	108,000	\$	63,225	\$	81,492	\$	88,000	\$	(20,000)	\$	88,000	\$	(20,000)	
	Transmission & Distribution															
751000	Field Service Labor	\$	806,426	\$	543,256	\$	706,233	\$	790,863	\$	(15,563)	\$	790,863	\$	(15,563)	
775000	PERS - Retirement	\$	228,158	\$	193,844	\$	214,650	\$	279,726	\$	51,568	\$	279,726	\$	51,568	
775401	ACWA - Health Benefits	\$	280,930	\$	179,331	\$	253,314	\$	278,258	\$	(2,672)	\$	278,258	\$	(2,672)	
775201	ACWA - Delta Dental	\$	15,053	\$	8,331	\$	12,201	\$	10,983	\$	(4,070)	\$	10,983	\$	(4,070)	
775301	ACWA - Vision	\$	1,735	\$	908	\$	1,373	\$	1,482	\$	(253)	\$	1,482	\$	(253)	
775501	ACWA - Standard Life	\$	2,553	\$	1,802	\$	2,355	\$	2,265	\$	(288)	\$	2,265	\$	(288)	
799500	Uniforms	\$	22,000	\$	14,116	\$	17,645	\$	22,000	\$	0	\$	22,000	\$	0	
752000	Work Materials & Supplies	\$	10,000	\$	7,034	\$	8,792	\$	10,000	\$	0	\$	10,000	\$	0	
752100	Safety Equipment	\$	9,000	\$	2,286	\$	4,286	\$	6,000	\$	(3,000)	\$	6,000	\$	(3,000)	
753000	SCADA Maintenance	\$	20,000	\$	29,851	\$	31,344	\$	35,000	\$	15,000	\$	35,000	\$	15,000	
754000	Small Tools	\$	5,000	\$	3,767	\$	4,767	\$	5,000	\$	0	\$	5,000	\$	0	
754100	Small Tool Repair	\$	2,000	\$	629	\$	645	\$	2,000	\$	0	\$	2,000	\$	0	
755000	Transportation (Vehicle Maintenance/Fuel)	\$	70,000	\$	38,259	\$	51,650	\$	70,000	\$	0	\$	70,000	\$	0	
756000	Meter Service (New)	\$	15,000	\$	13,064	\$	13,229	\$	15,000	\$	0	\$	15,000	\$	0	
756100	Meter and Service Repair	\$	12,000	\$	8,413	\$	9,254	\$	12,000	\$	0	\$	12,000	\$	0	
757000	Road Contracts	\$	2,800	\$	64	\$	64	\$	2,800	\$	0	\$	2,800	\$	0	
758100	Meter Reading System (Sensus) (Neptune)	\$	10,000	\$	10,001	\$	12,488	\$	12,000	\$	2,000	\$	12,000	\$	2,000	
759000	Maintenance of Structures and Improvements	\$	2,500	\$	0	\$	0	\$	0	\$	(2,500)	\$	0	\$	(2,500)	
760000	Fire Hydrants Maintenance	\$	2,000	\$	384	\$	1,384	\$	2,000	\$	0	\$	2,000	\$	0	
761000	Back Flow Devices Testing	\$	125	\$	0	\$	125	\$	125	\$	0	\$	125	\$	0	
762000	Backhoe/Generators Maintenance	\$	15,000	\$	7,100	\$	7,455	\$	15,000	\$	0	\$	15,000	\$	0	
	Subtotal Transmission & Distribution	\$	1,532,280	\$	1,062,440	\$	1,353,254	\$	1,572,502	\$	40,222	\$	1,572,502	\$	40,222	
	TOTAL	\$	6,431,647	\$	4,556,714	\$	6,238,412	\$	7,139,701	\$	708,054	\$	7,139,701	\$	708,054	

EXPENDITURES G&A		FY 25/26 Budget	FY 25/26 9-Month Expenditures	Projected Yr-End 6/30/2026	Preliminary Budget FY26/27	Variance from 2025/26 Budget
Account No.	General & Administrative					
773000	Elections	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
6560	Payroll/Accounting Expenses	\$ 4,000	\$ 0	\$ 3,512	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
774000	ACWA Workers Comp Ins	\$ 29,595	\$ 19,607	\$ 24,508	\$ 29,595	\$ 0
775000	PERS - Retirement G & A	\$ 268,683	\$ 201,420	\$ 222,226	\$ 234,593	\$ (34,090)
775400	ACWA - Health Benefits	\$ 324,123	\$ 223,825	\$ 299,948	\$ 351,404	\$ 27,281
775200	ACWA - Delta Dental	\$ 16,008	\$ 10,403	\$ 13,303	\$ 18,606	\$ 2,598
775300	ACWA - Vision	\$ 2,117	\$ 1,488	\$ 1,918	\$ 1,905	\$ (212)
775500	ACWA - Standard Life	\$ 2,999	\$ 2,158	\$ 2,768	\$ 2,422	\$ (577)
777100	Management & Administrative Salaries	\$ 1,409,839	\$ 930,259	\$ 1,209,337	\$ 1,474,982	\$ 65,143
778000	Education, Training & Travel	\$ 20,000	\$ 13,412	\$ 17,436	\$ 20,000	\$ 0
779000	Dues & Subscription	\$ 39,200	\$ 28,298	\$ 36,831	\$ 39,200	\$ 0
780000	Office Maintenance	\$ 8,000	\$ 5,684	\$ 6,812	\$ 8,000	\$ 0
799525	Gardening Service	\$ 3,000	\$ 2,100	\$ 2,800	\$ 3,000	\$ 0
781000	Office Supplies	\$ 15,500	\$ 7,708	\$ 11,562	\$ 15,500	\$ 0
781100	Computer Supplies, Software, Training	\$ 6,000	\$ 5,640	\$ 7,341	\$ 7,500	\$ 1,500
782000	Postage & Printing	\$ 57,000	\$ 43,686	\$ 57,113	\$ 57,000	\$ 0
783000	Utilities	\$ 21,000	\$ 17,068	\$ 17,068	\$ 21,000	\$ 0
784000	Telephone	\$ 20,000	\$ 13,075	\$ 17,425	\$ 23,000	\$ 3,000
785000	Services(USA, Website, Security, Answering Services)	\$ 19,000	\$ 13,129	\$ 17,479	\$ 21,000	\$ 0
785100	Government Fees (County, State, Local)	\$ 21,000	\$ 19,413	\$ 20,244	\$ 20,500	\$ 1,500
786000	ACWA Liability Insurance	\$ 168,879	\$ 110,027	\$ 145,658	\$ 140,000	\$ (28,879)
787000	Payroll Taxes - Federal and State	\$ 169,544	\$ 103,769	\$ 134,899	\$ 159,000	\$ (10,544)
788000	Audit & Accounting	\$ 40,000	\$ 27,951	\$ 37,268	\$ 40,000	\$ 0
789000	Legal - General					
	BHFS	\$ 50,000	\$ 13,574	\$ 18,099	\$ 50,000	\$ 0
	Stradling	\$ 10,000	\$ 3,200	\$ 4,266	\$ 10,000	\$ 0
790000	Consulting - General/Professional	\$ 20,000	\$ 287	\$ 1,674	\$ 15,000	\$ (5,000)
791000	Consulting - Planning/Research	\$ 55,000	\$ 25,332	\$ 33,422	\$ 55,000	\$ 0
792000	Customer Debt - Write Offs	\$ 1,700	\$ 6	\$ 1,693	\$ 1,700	\$ 0
793000	Office Equipment/Computer Service Contracts	\$ 67,350	\$ 50,143	\$ 62,134	\$ 77,000	\$ 9,650
797000	Trustee Fees	\$ 29,000	\$ 27,100	\$ 32,800	\$ 33,000	\$ 4,000
799000	Processing Fees, Admin. Expenses, Medical Costs	\$ 45,000	\$ 37,269	\$ 0	\$ 45,000	\$ 0
799600	Customer Refunds	\$ 1,500	\$ 0	\$ 200	\$ 1,500	\$ 0
	Subtotal General & Administrative	\$ 2,945,037	\$ 1,957,031	\$ 2,461,744	\$ 3,005,407	\$ 60,370
	TOTAL	\$ 2,945,037	\$ 1,957,031	\$ 2,461,744	\$ 3,005,407	\$ 60,370

SUBTOTAL EXPENDITURES		FY 25/26 Budget	FY 25/26 9-Month Expenditures	Projected Yr-End 6/30/2026	Preliminary Budget FY26/27	Variance from 2025/26 Budget
G&A/O&M	TOTAL	\$ 9,376,684	\$ 6,513,745	\$ 8,700,156	\$ 10,145,108	\$ 768,424

DEBT SERVICE		FY 25/26 Budget	FY 25/26 9-Month Expenditures	Projected Yr-End 6/30/2026	Preliminary Budget FY26/27	Variance from 2025/26 Budget
Account No.	Debt Service					
717000	USBR SOD Repayment (Principal & Interest)	\$ 26,976	\$ 17,984	\$ 26,976	\$ 26,976	\$ 0
	Subtotal Debt Service	\$ 26,976	\$ 17,984	\$ 26,976	\$ 26,976	\$ 0
	TOTAL	\$ 26,976	\$ 17,984	\$ 26,976	\$ 26,976	\$ 0

TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES		FY 25/26 Budget	FY 25/26 9-Month Expenditures	Projected Yr-End 6/30/2026	Preliminary Budget FY26/27	Variance from 2025/26 Budget
	G&A/O&M/DEBT SERVICE TOTAL	\$ 9,403,660	\$ 6,531,729	\$ 8,727,132	\$ 10,172,084	\$ 768,424

SUBTOTAL REVENUE BALANCE		FY 25/26 Budget	FY 25/26 9-Month Expenditures	Projected Yr-End 6/30/2026	Preliminary Budget FY26/27	Variance from 2025/26 Budget
	OPERATING REVENUES LESS OPERATING EXPENDITURES	\$ 4,188,589	\$ 3,828,422	\$ 5,237,930	\$ 4,071,831	\$ (116,758)

OTHER EXPENSES

Account No.	Special Studies/Programs	FY 25/26 Budget	FY 25/26 9-Month Expenditures	Projected Yr-End 6/30/2026	Preliminary Budget FY26/27	Variance from 2025/26 Budget
Fisheries Program						
825800	BiOp Implementation	\$ 60,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000	\$ 0
825401	BiOp Studies/Consultation (Stetson/Hanson)	\$ 50,000	\$ 7,434	\$ 16,767	\$ 50,000	\$ 0
800201	BiOp/Reconsultation/ESA (BBK)	\$ 40,000	\$ 19,858	\$ 19,858	\$ 40,000	\$ 0
826101	SWRCB Order/Studies (Stetson/Hanson)	\$ 10,000	\$ 11,940	\$ 19,840	\$ 10,000	\$ 0
826201	SWRCB Order/Studies (BBK)	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,593	\$ 7,593	\$ 7,500	\$ 0
825402	SWRCB Hearings Support (Stetson/Hanson)	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
800101	SWRCB Hearings Support (BBK)	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Special Programs						
825500	Hydrology SYR; Cachuma Water, RiverWare (Stetson)	\$ 1,500	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 1,500	\$ 0
825601	Integrated Regional Water Management Plan	\$ 750	\$ 189	\$ 189	\$ 1,000	\$ 250
825600	Water Conservation Program/RWEP	\$ 5,000	\$ 4,494	\$ 4,494	\$ 7,000	\$ 2,000
	Subtotal Studies/Programs	\$ 174,750	\$ 96,508	\$ 128,741	\$ 177,000	\$ 2,250
Legal & Engineering Services						
800202	Interagency Involvement	\$ 5,000	\$ 511	\$ 511	\$ 25,000	\$ 20,000
800205	SWP Water Management Case	\$ 110,000	\$ 34,504	\$ 39,504	\$ 0	\$ (110,000)
800500	Unanticipated or Extraordinary Special Legal BHFS BBK	\$ 50,000	\$ 8,424	\$ 9,424	\$ 50,000	\$ 0
800301	Downstream Water Rights & Studies	\$ 50,000	\$ 5,494	\$ 6,494	\$ 50,000	\$ 0
800300	Easements, Survey & Water Projects	\$ 25,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 10,000	\$ (15,000)
800102	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act	\$ 65,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 110,000	\$ 45,000
	Subtotal Legal/Engineering	\$ 330,000	\$ 15,471	\$ 16,471	\$ 20,000	\$ (5,000)
Non Recurring Expenses/Projects						
826000	CR6 Implementation Plan/Other Treatment & Supply Projects	\$ 300,000	\$ 3,488	\$ 3,488	\$ 965,000	\$ 665,000
825700	Water Rate Study	\$ 75,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 75,000	\$ 0
850500	USBR Cachuma Project Contract/Studies	\$ 5,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 5,000	\$ 0
800203	River Water Right Proceedings (BHFS)	\$ 25,000	\$ 387	\$ 387	\$ 40,000	\$ 15,000
800204	River Water Right Proceedings (Stetson/Hanson)	\$ 10,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 20,000	\$ 10,000
825900	Water System Study (Stetson)	\$ 50,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 20,000	\$ (30,000)
	Subtotal Non-Annual	\$ 485,000	\$ 3,875	\$ 3,875	\$ 1,125,000	\$ 660,000
	TOTAL	\$ 969,750	\$ 164,787	\$ 205,020	\$ 1,567,000	\$ 597,250

TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES

Account No.	Special Studies/Programs	FY 25/26 Budget	FY 25/26 9-Month Expenditures	Projected Yr-End 6/30/2026	Preliminary Budget FY26/27	Variance from 2025/26 Budget
	TOTAL	\$ 969,750	\$ 164,787	\$ 205,020	\$ 1,567,000	\$ 597,250

BUDGET BALANCE						
	FY 25/26 Budget	FY 25/26 9-Month Expenditures	Projected Yr-End 6/30/2026	Preliminary Budget FY26/27	Variance from 2025/26 Budget	
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 13,592,249	\$ 10,360,151	\$ 13,965,062	\$ 14,243,915	\$ 651,666	
TOTAL O&M EXPENDITURES	\$ (6,431,647)	\$ (4,556,714)	\$ (6,238,412)	\$ (7,139,701)	\$ 708,054	
TOTAL G&A EXPENDITURES	\$ (2,945,037)	\$ (1,957,031)	\$ (2,461,744)	\$ (3,005,407)	\$ 60,370	
TOTAL DEBT SERVICE	\$ (26,976)	\$ (17,984)	\$ (26,976)	\$ (26,976)	\$ 0	
Subtotal Net Revenue	\$ 4,188,589	\$ 3,828,422	\$ 5,237,930	\$ 4,071,831	\$ (116,758)	
TOTAL Other Expenses (Spec Study/Legal/Eng/NARES)	\$ (969,750)	\$ (164,787)	\$ (205,020)	\$ (1,567,000)	\$ 597,250	
Subtotal	\$ 3,218,839	\$ 3,663,635	\$ 5,032,910	\$ 2,504,831	\$ (714,008)	
Budget Balance	\$ 3,218,839	\$ 3,663,635	\$ 5,032,910	\$ 2,504,831	\$ (714,008)	

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Account No.	FY 25/26 Budget	FY 25/26 9-Month Expenditures	Projected Yr-End 6/30/2026	Preliminary Budget FY26/27	Variance from 2025/26 Budget
900332	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
900333	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
900372	\$ 20,000	\$ 8,110	\$ 13,610	\$ 14,500	\$ (5,500)
900318	\$ 5,000	\$ 3,260	\$ 3,260	\$ 0	\$ (5,000)
900371	\$ 177,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ (177,000)
900376	\$ 165,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 190,000	\$ 25,000
900181	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
900378	\$ 10,000	\$ 1,310	\$ 9,310	\$ 10,000	\$ 0
900350	\$ 15,000	\$ 4,500	\$ 0	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 2,985,000
	\$ 392,000	\$ 17,180	\$ 26,180	\$ 3,264,500	\$ 2,872,500
Account No.	Repair & Replace				
900200	\$ 175,000	\$ 1,201	\$ 0	\$ 175,000	\$ 0
900106	\$ 115,000	\$ 0	\$ 55,522	\$ 80,000	\$ (35,000)
900170	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
900335	\$ 22,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ (22,000)
900379	\$ 13,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 50,000	\$ 37,000
900373	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 220,000	\$ 220,000
900171	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000
900195	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
900196	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
900197	\$ 195,000	\$ 221,250	\$ 221,250	\$ 0	\$ (195,000)
900198	\$ 167,000	\$ 39,023	\$ 39,023	\$ 0	\$ (167,000)
900102	\$ 40,000	\$ 4,970	\$ 4,970	\$ 205,000	\$ 165,000
	\$ 727,000	\$ 266,444	\$ 320,765	\$ 770,000	\$ 43,000
	Subtotal Repair & Replace Projects	\$ 1,119,000	\$ 346,945	\$ 4,034,500	\$ 2,915,500
	Grand Total Capital Improvement Projects	\$ 1,119,000	\$ 346,945	\$ 4,034,500	\$ 2,915,500

TOTAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Account No.	FY 25/26 Budget	FY 25/26 9-Month Expenditures	Projected Yr-End 6/30/2026	Preliminary Budget FY26/27	Variance from 2025/26 Budget
	\$ 1,119,000	\$ 283,624	\$ 346,945	\$ 4,034,500	\$ 2,915,500
	TOTAL	\$ 1,119,000	\$ 346,945	\$ 4,034,500	\$ 2,915,500

RESERVE BALANCE		FY 25/26 Budget		FY 25/26 9-Month Expenditures		Projected Yr-End 6/30/2026		Preliminary Budget FY26/27		Variance from 2025/26 Budget	
Account No.											
DISBURSEMENT OF REMAINING BUDGET BALANCE											
271800	Repair & Replace Reserve	\$	3,218,839	\$	3,663,635	\$	5,032,910	\$	2,504,831	\$	(714,008)
272000	Plant Expansion Reserve	\$	(727,000)	\$	(266,444)	\$	(320,765)	\$	(770,000)	\$	43,000
3900	Board Reserve Unrestricted Funds Transfer to Unrestricted Funds	\$	(392,000)	\$	(17,180)	\$	(26,180)	\$	(3,264,500)	\$	2,872,500
		\$	0	\$	0	\$	0	\$	1,529,669	\$	(1,529,669)
	Subtotal CIP Reserves	\$	(1,119,000)	\$	(283,624)	\$	(346,945)	\$	(2,504,831)	\$	1,385,831
	Funding from Reserves	\$	2,099,839	\$	3,380,011	\$	4,685,965	\$	0	\$	0
	Funding to Reserves	\$		\$		\$		\$		\$	

TOTAL BUDGET		FY 25/26 Budget		FY 25/26 9-Month Expenditures		Projected Yr-End 6/30/2026		Preliminary Budget FY26/27		Variance from 2025/26 Budget	
	TOTAL	\$	13,592,249	\$	10,360,151	\$	13,965,062	\$	14,243,915	\$	651,666



Gavin Newsom ■ Governor

1021 O Street, Suite 3110 ■ Sacramento CA 95814 ■ www.dof.ca.gov

May 1, 2026

Dear Fiscal Officer:

Price Factor and Population Information**Appropriations Limit**

California Revenue and Taxation Code section 2227 requires the Department of Finance to transmit an estimate of the percentage change in population to local governments. Each local jurisdiction must use their percentage change in population factor for January 1, 2026, in conjunction with a change in the cost of living, or price factor, to calculate their appropriations limit for fiscal year 2026–27. Attachment A provides the change in California's per capita personal income and an example for utilizing the factors to calculate the 2026–27 appropriations limit. Attachment B provides the city and unincorporated county population percentage change. Attachment C provides the population percentage change for counties and their summed incorporated areas. The population percentage change data excludes federal and state institutionalized populations and military populations.

Population Percent Change for Special Districts

Some special districts must establish an annual appropriations limit. California Revenue and Taxation Code section 2228 provides additional information regarding the appropriations limit. Article XIII B, section 9(C) of the California Constitution exempts certain special districts from the appropriations limit calculation mandate. Special districts required by law to calculate their appropriations limit must present the calculation as part of their annual audit. Any questions special districts have on this requirement should be directed to their county, district legal counsel, or the law itself. No state agency reviews the local appropriations limits.

Population Certification

The population certification program applies only to cities and counties. California Revenue and Taxation Code section 11005.6 mandates Finance to automatically certify any population estimate that exceeds the current certified population with the State Controller's Office. **Finance will certify the higher estimate to the State Controller by June 1, 2026.** Please note: The prior year's city population estimates may be revised. The per capita personal income change is based on historical data.

If you have any questions regarding this data, please contact the Demographic Research Unit at (916) 323-4086.

/s Erika Li
Attachment

- A. **Price Factor:** Article XIII B specifies that local jurisdictions select their cost of living factor to compute their appropriation limit by a vote of their governing body. The cost of living factor provided here is per capita personal income. If the percentage change in per capita personal income is selected, the percentage change to be used in setting the fiscal year 2026–27 appropriation limit is:

Per Capita Personal Income	
Fiscal Year (FY)	Percentage change over prior year
2026-27	4.95

- B. Following is an example using sample population change and the change in California per capita personal income as growth factors in computing a 2026–27 appropriation limit.

2026–27:

Per Capita Cost of Living Change = 4.95 percent
Population Change = -0.14 percent

Per Capita Cost of Living converted to a ratio: $\frac{4.95 + 100}{100} = 1.0495$

Population converted to a ratio: $\frac{-0.14 + 100}{100} = 0.9986$

Calculation of factor for FY 2026–27: $1.0495 \times 0.9986 = 1.0480$

FISCAL YEAR 2026-27

Attachment B

Annual Percent Change in Population Minus Exclusions*

January 1, 2025 to January 1, 2026 and Total Population January 1, 2026

County City	Percent Change 25-26	Population Minus Exclusions 1-1-25	Population Minus Exclusions 1-1-26	Total Population 1-1-26
Santa Barbara				
Buellton	5.44	5,077	5,353	5,353
Carpinteria	-1.02	12,742	12,612	12,612
Goleta	-0.97	32,725	32,409	32,409
Guadalupe	-0.83	8,721	8,649	8,649
Lompoc	-1.06	40,416	39,987	43,073
Santa Barbara	-0.78	85,723	85,055	85,083
Santa Maria	1.51	111,356	113,041	113,041
Solvang	-1.04	5,680	5,621	5,621
Unincorporated	-0.64	137,059	136,175	139,133
Incorporated	0.09	302,440	302,727	305,841
County Total	-0.14	439,499	438,902	444,974

*Exclusions include residents on federal military installations and group quarters residents in state mental instituti1

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

2026/2027 FISCAL YEAR APPROPRIATION LIMITATION CALCULATION

Santa Barbara County population change and California per capita personal income change data published by the State of California Department of Finance (May 2026) are used in computing the 2026/2027 Appropriation Limitation Calculation as follows:

2025/26 Appropriation Limit	\$2,657,934
Per Capita Personal Income Percentage Change over Prior Year	4.95 percent
Population Change over Prior Year Santa Barbara County	-0.14 percent
Per Capita converted to a ratio:	$\frac{4.95 + 100}{100} = 1.0495$
Population converted to a ratio:	$\frac{-0.14 + 100}{100} = 0.9986$
CPI Factor	1.0495
Population Factor	0.9986
CPI Factor X Population Factor	1.0480
1.0480 x \$2,657,934 =	<u>\$2,785,514.83</u>

A Resolution will be presented to the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1, for adoption of the 2026/2027 Appropriation Limit at a Regular Meeting on June 16, 2026.

Racel Cota - Secretary to the Board of Trustees

Posted: Wednesday, May 20, 2026 at the District Office and on the District Website www.syrwd.org.
Newspaper Publication Dates: Thursday, June 4, 2026 and Thursday, June 11, 2026.

SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO.1
3622 SAGUNTO STREET - P.O. BOX 157
SANTA YNEZ, CA 93460
(805) 688-6015

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 will consider adopting a Resolution setting the limit of appropriations pursuant to Article XIII B of the Constitution of the State of California for fiscal year 2026/2027 at a Regular Meeting to be held on Tuesday, June 16, 2026, at 3:00 p.m at 1070 Faraday Street, Santa Ynez, California 93460.

Documentation used in determining said limit is available to the public at the District office located at 3622 Sagunto Street, Santa Ynez, and on the District's website as of the posted date set forth below.

Racel Cota, Secretary to the Board of Trustees

Dated: May 19, 2026

Posted: Wednesday, May 20, 2026 at the District Office and on the District website at www.syrwd.org.

Newspaper Publication Dates:
Thursday, June 4, 2026
Thursday, June 11, 2026

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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
ESTABLISHING THE APPROPRIATION LIMIT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027
PURSUANT TO ARTICLE XIII B OF THE CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION**

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, by the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 (“District”), Santa Barbara County, California, that:

WHEREAS, the District is required pursuant to Government Code Section 7910 to establish by Resolution its appropriation limit for the 2026/2027 fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, the documentation used in the determination of said limit has been available to the public at the District office and on the District website for at least fifteen (15) days prior to the date of this Resolution and was published in a newspaper of general circulation within the District on June 4, 2026 and on June 11, 2026.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that, in accordance with information published by the California Department of Finance, the appropriation limit of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1, for the 2026/2027 fiscal year is established at \$2,785,514.83.

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, being the duly qualified President and Secretary, respectively, 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 June 16, 2026 by the following roll call vote:

AYES, and in favor thereof, Trustees:

NOES, Trustees:

ABSTAIN, Trustees:

ABSENT, Trustees:

Jeff Clay, President

ATTEST:

Racel Cota, Secretary to the Board of Trustees

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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
ADOPTING THE FINAL BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027
AND REQUESTING AN ASSESSMENT LEVY REQUIRED TO COLLECT \$875,000**

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, by the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 (“District”), Santa Barbara County, California, that:

WHEREAS, on January 5, 1960 a Special Election was held and voters approved a contract with the United States Bureau of Reclamation, Contract No. 14-06-200-8253 (“Contract”), for the purpose of providing an adequate system of water supply, storage and distribution facilities, mains and appurtenances, and lands and easements necessary presently and prospectively for the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1, and its inhabitants; and

WHEREAS, Article 18(b) of the Contract requires the District to cause to be levied ad valorem taxes and assessments to fulfill its obligations; and

WHEREAS, the District continues to incur and pay the costs of the continuing operations, maintenance, repair, replacement, and betterment of the project works; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1, is required to forward to the Board of Supervisors and the County Auditor of the County of Santa Barbara an estimate, in writing, of the amount of ad valorem tax assessment money needed for the purposes of the District for the ensuing fiscal year July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027, and any reserve funds; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with information published by the California Department of Finance, the appropriation limit of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 for fiscal year 2026/2027 is established at \$2,785,514.83 and the District adopted Resolution No. XXX on June 16, 2026 establishing said appropriation limit for fiscal year 2026/2027 pursuant to Government Code Section 7910; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the District’s fiscal year 2026/2027 appropriation limit of \$2,785,524.26, and notwithstanding the financial projections from the District’s 2016 Water Rate Study that the District would collect an assessment levy in the amount of \$875,000 in fiscal year 2017/2018, and \$1,000,000 in fiscal year 2018/2019, and \$1,125,000 in fiscal year 2019/2020, and \$1,250,000 in fiscal year 2020/2021, and \$1,250,000 in fiscal year 2021/2022, and \$1,250,000 in fiscal year 2022/2023, and \$1,250,000 in fiscal year 2023/2024, and \$1,250,000 in fiscal year 2024/2025, and \$1,250,000 in fiscal year 2025/2026, and \$1,250,000 in fiscal year 2026/2027, the District has limited its assessment amount to \$875,000 for fiscal years 2017/2018 through 2025/2026, and it has been determined that an assessment levy of \$875,000 for fiscal year 2026/2027 will provide sufficient funds to meet the needs of the District as stated above; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees has considered a budget for the fiscal year 2026/2027.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, by the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1, that the Secretary to the Board is hereby authorized and directed to forward to the Board of Supervisors and the County Auditor of the County of Santa Barbara, in writing, a request for an assessment levy of \$875,000 for the fiscal year 2026/2027; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Final Budget as set forth in Exhibit "A" attached hereto and incorporated by this reference is hereby approved and adopted for the fiscal year 2026/2027.

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, being the duly qualified and acting President and Secretary, respectively, 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 the 16th day of June 2026, by the following roll call vote:

AYES, and in favor thereof, Trustees:

NOES, Trustees:

ABSENT, Trustees:

Jeff Clay, President

ATTEST:

Racel Cota, Secretary to the Board of Trustees

ORDINANCE NO. XXX

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SANTA YNEZ RIVER
WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO.1
ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS AND FINES RELATING TO WATER THEFT**

WHEREAS, the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, ID No.1 (“District”) is responsible for providing safe, sufficient, reliable, and affordable water service to its customers and for managing and protecting the District’s public water system infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, water is one of California’s most important resources, especially as the state continues to face the challenges of recurring drought conditions

WHEREAS, unfortunately, the unauthorized use and diversion of District water supplies, and the unauthorized use of and tampering with District meters, fire hydrants, and other forms of water theft is a growing problem which jeopardizes the fairness, affordability, and financial integrity of the District’s water system, undermines water conservation, causes revenue losses to the District, damages District facilities, and endangers public health and safety; and

WHEREAS, water theft from fire hydrants can present particularized public health and safety hazards, including reduced water pressure for firefighting, potential contamination of potable water supplies, and physical damage to hydrants, pipelines, and other critical water supply infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, California Government Code Sections 53069.45 and 53069.46 authorize local agencies that provide water service to adopt ordinances prohibiting water theft and unauthorized use of water agency facilities, and imposing administrative fines or penalties for violations of such ordinances; and

WHEREAS, California Penal Code Section 498 authorizes criminal prosecution for the unauthorized use of, diversion from, connection to, or tampering with District water supplies or water supply facilities, in addition to other unauthorized acts; and

WHEREAS, the District’s Board of Directors finds that adoption of this Ordinance is necessary to deter and penalize unauthorized use of the District public water supplies and water supply facilities, protect District assets, and help protect an equitable distribution of costs among those lawful and authorized users of District water supplies and services.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Directors of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 does hereby ordain as follows:

SECTION 1. Title and Purpose

This Ordinance shall be known as the “Water Theft Ordinance of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1.”

The purpose of this Ordinance is to further enable the District to preserve and protect District water supplies and water supply infrastructure from theft, unauthorized use, tampering, potential contamination, damage, and unnecessary costs, and to establish administrative procedures for the imposition, enforcement, collection, and administrative review of fines established by this Ordinance in accordance with applicable provisions of California law.

SECTION 2. Authority

This Ordinance is adopted pursuant to California Government Code Sections 53069.45 and 53069.46; California Civil Code Sections 1882.1, 1882.2, and 1882.3; California Penal Code Section 498; and the District’s Rules and Regulations and enabling act.

SECTION 3. Prohibited Acts Constituting Water Theft

It shall be unlawful and shall constitute water theft for any person to do any of the following:

- (a) Divert, or cause to be diverted, water from any component of the District’s water system without specific prior authorization from the District and without paying all applicable charges for District water and services.
- (b) Make, or cause to be made, any connection or reconnection to any component of the District’s water system, including but not limited to any District water meter, pipeline, fire hydrant, or other appurtenance without specific authorization from the District and without paying all applicable charges for District water and services.
- (c) Prevent any District water meter or other device used in determining the amount of water provided by the District from accurately performing its measuring function by tampering, interference, damage, bypass, alteration or other means.
- (d) Connect to, divert water from, cause water to be diverted from, tamper or interfere with, damage, bypass, or alter any District fire hydrant, hydrant meter, or fire detector check without specific prior authorization from the District and without paying all applicable charges for District water and services. Any such activity shall constitute an unauthorized connection to a District fire hydrant.
 - a. Notwithstanding the generality of Section 3(d) above, a public agency having firefighting or emergency response responsibilities *during a fire*, with approval from incident command or the authority having jurisdiction over the active fire incident, shall be considered to have authorization from the District to use District fire hydrants *during an active fire incident*.

- b. In furtherance of Section 3(d) above, and notwithstanding the specificity of Section 3(d)(a) above, *in the absence of an active fire incident*, a public agency having firefighting or emergency response responsibilities or any other person, entity, or agency shall not be considered to have authorization from the District to use any District fire hydrant without specific prior authorization from the District.

- (e) Commit, authorize, solicit, aid, abet, assist, permit, cause, or attempt any of the above acts to occur.

SECTION 4. Administrative Penalties

Pursuant to Government Code Sections 53069.45 and 53069.46, the following administrative fines may be imposed by the District for violations of this Ordinance:

Violation Type	First Violation	Second Violation	Third or Subsequent Violation
Water Theft By Meter Tampering	Up to \$130	Up to \$700	Up to \$1,300
Water Theft By Other Means – Not Including Fire Hydrants	Up to \$1,000	Up to \$2,000	Up to \$3,000
Water Theft By Unauthorized Connection To A Fire Hydrant	Up to \$2,500	Up to \$5,000	Up to \$10,000

Each day that a violation occurs or continues shall constitute a separate violation subject to a separate administrative fine. The District’s General Manager shall determine applicable fines imposed under this Ordinance in accordance with the terms set forth herein.

SECTION 5. Additional Recovery by the District

In addition to administrative fines established by this Ordinance, the District may impose additional costs, fines, penalties, and charges in connection with water theft violations, including but not limited to those set forth in the District’s Rules and Regulations, as follows:

- (a) Charges for water taken or diverted in violation of this Ordinance; and

- (b) All District costs to repair or replace damaged meters, valves, fire hydrants, or other water system facilities, including but not limited to all applicable labor, materials, administrative, consulting, expert, and legal costs; and

- (c) All investigation, enforcement, administrative, consulting, expert, and legal costs incurred by the District to implement and enforce terms of this Ordinance.

SECTION 6. Service Termination and Restoration

The District may in its sole and absolute discretion immediately discontinue water service to any person, entity, agency, premises, or property involved in a violation of this Ordinance, where water service shall not be restored unless and until, as determined by the District's General Manager, the following conditions are satisfied:

- (a) All violations are corrected; and
- (b) All costs, fines, penalties, and charges are paid in full or in accordance with terms and conditions accepted by the District; and
- (c) Adequate safeguards are in place to protect public health and safety, the District's water supplies, and its water supply system, and to prevent further violation(s) of this Ordinance.

SECTION 7. Hardship Waiver Requests

Any person, entity, or agency upon whom a fine described in Government Code Section 53069.45 is imposed under this Ordinance may, within fifteen (15) calendar days a written notice of violation and imposition of fine by the District, submit a written request to the District for a hardship waiver, which request may include supporting documentation and must demonstrate that payment of the full amount of the fine would impose an undue financial burden on the responsible party. Written requests for a hardship waiver shall not apply to and are not available for fines described in Government Code Section 53069.45 and Section 3(d) and Section 4 of this Ordinance relating to water theft from an unauthorized connection to a District fire hydrant. Timely requests for a hardship waiver will be reviewed and determined by the District's General Manager, who will provide written notification of the determination to the requesting party.

SECTION 8. Appeal Procedure

A written appeal of any determination, fine, or decision issued by the District's General Manager pursuant to this Ordinance may be submitted to the District's Board of Trustees within fifteen (15) calendar days of the issuance of such determination, fine, or decision being appealed. For purposes of this Section 8, the determination, fine, or decision being appealed shall be deemed received by the appealing party five (5) calendar days after being issued by the District, and an appealing party's written appeal shall be deemed submitted by said party 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 written 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 party. The decision of the Board shall be final and conclusive, subject to judicial review under Code of Civil Procedure Section 1094.5.

SECTION 9. Additional Remedies

This Ordinance supplements, and does not limit, any civil or criminal remedies available to the District under applicable law. Violations may be referred to local authorities for prosecution under Penal Code Section 498 or pursued for civil enforcement to recover damages and penalties. In accordance with Civil Code Section 1882.2, in any civil action brought by the District to recover damages in connection with any violation of this Ordinance, the District may recover as damages three times the amount of actual damages plus the cost of suit and reasonable attorney’s fees.

SECTION 10. Public Reporting

Members of the public are encouraged to report suspected water theft to the District by contacting the District office in person, by calling the District office/hotline day or night at (805) 688-6015, or via electronic mail at general@syrwd.org. All reports shall be treated as confidential to the extent permitted by law.

SECTION 11. Severability

If any provision of this Ordinance or its application is held invalid, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 12. Effective Date

This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon adoption by the District’s Board of Trustees.

AYES, and in favor thereof, Trustees:

NOES, Trustees:

ABSENT, Trustees:

Jeff Clay, President

ATTEST:

Racel Cota, Secretary to the Board of Trustees

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(<https://www.ema-santaynezwater.org/>)



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

Santa Ynez Basin
(<http://santaynezwater.org>)

**Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin
Eastern Management Area
Groundwater Sustainability Agency**

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[EMA GSA JPA BOARD MEETINGS \(/EMA-GSA-JPA-BOARD-MEETINGS\)](/EMA-GSA-JPA-BOARD-MEETINGS)

MAR
26
2026

EMA GSA JPA Board Regular Meeting, 4:00 PM - CANCELED

The regularly scheduled Board Meeting on Thursday, March 26, 2026 at 4:00 PM is **CANCELED**.

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P.O. BOX 7098, LOS OSOS CA 93412

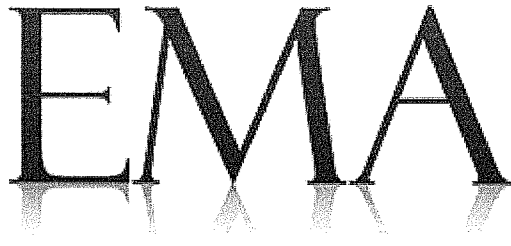
[PRIVACY POLICY \(/PRIVACY-POLICY\)](/PRIVACY-POLICY)

[DISTRICT TRANSPARENCY \(TRANSPARENCY.HTML\)](TRANSPARENCY.HTML)

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**Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin
Eastern Management Area
Groundwater Sustainability Agency**

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[EMA GSA JPA BOARD MEETINGS \(/EMA-GSA-JPA-BOARD-MEETINGS\)](/EMA-GSA-JPA-BOARD-MEETINGS)

**MAY
28**
2026

EMA GSA JPA Board Regular Meeting, 4:00 PM

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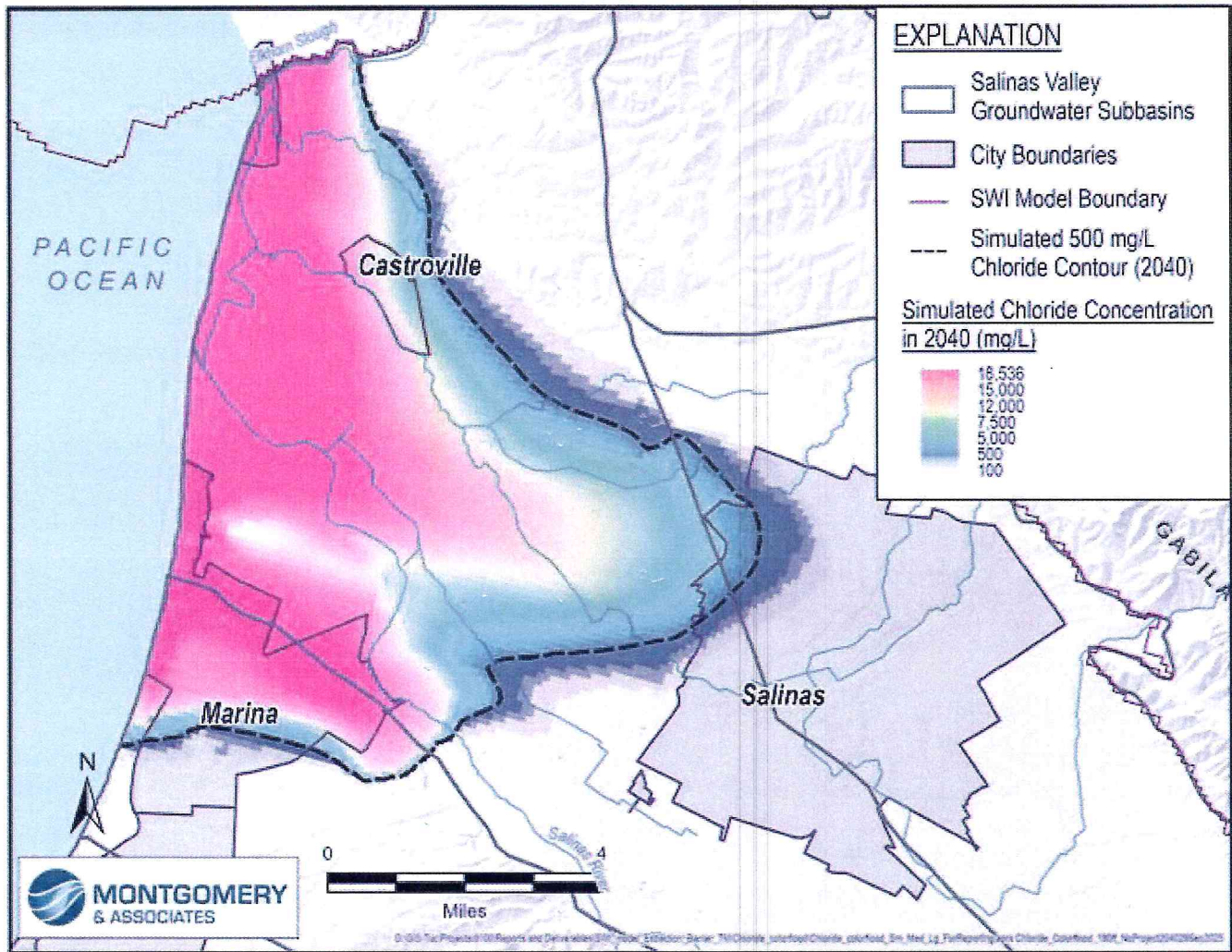
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https://www.montereycountynow.com/news/local_news/the-clock-is-ticking-on-water-projects-to-bring-local-groundwater-basins-into-compliance/article_5ece7854-eee4-4935-a35c-82609c0ce32a.html

The clock is ticking on water projects to bring local groundwater basins into compliance.

Katie Rodriguez

Apr 23, 2026



Projections of seawater intrusion into the 180-foot aquifer by 2040 under a “no project” scenario show a worsening problem extending further from the coast.

SALINAS VALLEY BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

With a short window to tackle a high-stakes problem – water – things are getting serious, fast.

Members of the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency’s (SVBGSA) advisory committee met on Thursday, April 16 to talk about potential solutions, and the consequences if deadlines are missed.

The goal, under California’s Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, is to develop projects and management actions to bring basins to sustainability by 2040 or 2042. If local groundwater sustainability agencies cannot come up with effective solutions, control could shift to the State Water Resources Control Board, which has the authority to impose pumping restrictions. That could result in fallowing farmland, impacting the county’s top economic driver.

“We are asking you to develop a recommendation to the board,” SVBGSA Executive Director Piret Harmon told committee members. She said potential projects would need to be finalized by early fall. “We need a suite, a portfolio of projects. Not any single one, because it doesn’t get us there. It really comes together to be the most optimal.”

The timeline came as a surprise. “That was a yikes,” Committee Chair Curtis Weeks said.

The 180/400-foot aquifer, underlying areas from Castroville to Gonzales, was deemed critically overdrafted by the state in 2014 due to decades of overpumping, and is at risk of being contaminated by seawater intrusion.

In 2022, the state Department of Water Resources determined that the plans submitted by SVBGSA for this critically overdrafted basin were incomplete, requiring stronger evidence to show how sustainability would be achieved. In December, the state asked for more refinement to the plan for this basin; local agencies have until April 30 to respond, showing how their groundwater plans relating to seawater intrusion in the 180/400 subbasin will actually work.

For the whole region, several projects are on the table, and will continue to be discussed at the next advisory committee meeting on Wednesday, April 29. The largest is a brackish groundwater restoration project, which would extract salty groundwater before it spreads inland, then treat it before delivering that treated water back to farms or back into the aquifer. That project – the highest-cost option – is estimated to cost around \$1 billion.

One feasibility study discussed at the April 16 meeting was for aquifer storage and recovery, which would involve capturing excess surface water from the Salinas River and diverting that water to be stored in the aquifer for later use. The estimated capital cost would be \$278 million-\$383 million.

Another concept includes upgrading the existing Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project to reduce groundwater pumping. That project would cost an estimated \$60 million.

Weeks stressed the need to come together to find a solution and maintain local control.

“There’s no way today to know who is going to face these cuts,” he said. “ And there’s no way to say that [the state] won’t go into certain areas. We don’t want to have the fight, so let’s figure it out.”

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SATURDAY, MAY 16 10^{am} - 2^{pm} Agenda Item 10

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY



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LOCAL WATER DISTRICT'S FEDERAL ADVOCACY EARNS STATEWIDE RECOGNITION

BY UNITED WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT APR 29, 2026

MEMBER SUBMITTED NEWS

OXNARD — National water policy debates are increasingly shaped by local expertise, and United Water Conservation District (United Water) is being honored for helping lead that conversation. The Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) has named the district its Most Effective Agency on a Federal Issue.

“Water agencies have a responsibility to speak up when federal decisions affect the communities we serve,” said Mauricio Guardado, General Manager of United Water. “Our goal is simple: policies grounded in sound science, transparency, and real-world water management. This recognition reflects the persistence of our staff and partners who are willing to do the work and engage.”

The award, presented at ACWA’s Washington, D.C. Conference on February 26, 2026, highlights agencies that play a leading role in federal issues important to California water providers.

“United Water Conservation District has demonstrated what strong federal engagement looks like,” said Marwan Khalifa, Interim Executive Director of ACWA. “Their leadership helped elevate critical water management challenges and push forward thoughtful solutions that support both environmental stewardship and water reliability.”

Over the past year, United Water has taken Ventura County water issues to the national stage through congressional testimony, legislative collaboration, regulatory advocacy, and precedent-setting legal action.

United Water engaged at the federal level to support legislation improving clarity, accountability, and coordination for water agencies, including direct engagement with congressional staff to ensure operational realities were reflected in the legislative process, resulting in meaningful progress on key measures.

Through its work in Washington and beyond, United Water continues to elevate the role of local water agencies in shaping federal policy that affects communities, agriculture, and long-term water reliability.

###

About United Water Conservation District

Since 1927, United Water Conservation District (District) has served as a leader among water agencies by managing, protecting, enhancing and securing the water resources of the Santa Clara River and Oxnard Coastal Plain. United Water works to protect the environment's natural attributes and conserves runoff from all major tributaries of the Santa Clara River, including Piru, Hopper, Sespe, and Santa Paula Creeks. Committed to managing the area's water supplies through groundwater replenishment and the construction and operation of efficient water supply and delivery systems, United Water serves as the conservator of groundwater resources that are utilized by the cities of Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ventura, Santa Paula, and Fillmore, as well as Naval Base Ventura County and several mutual water districts, farms, and individual pumpers. United Water also provides surface water for agricultural irrigation and treated drinking water to the cities of Oxnard and Port Hueneme. www.unitedwater.org

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Paeter Garcia

From: ACWA <acwabox@acwa.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 6, 2026 2:11 PM
To: Paeter Garcia
Subject: ACWA Advisory: ACWA Announces Statewide Water Leader as New Executive Director

ACWA  **ADVISORY**

MAY 6, 2026

ACWA Announces Statewide Water Leader as New Executive Director



Nemeth Named ED

California Department of Water Resources Director Karla Nemeth has been selected to lead ACWA as its sixth Executive Director, President Ernie Avila announced today during ACWA's Spring Conference.

Nemeth brings an unprecedented breadth of experience, list of accomplishments and high-profile statewide recognition to overseeing the largest association of its kind in the nation. She is the first woman to hold the position in its 116-year history.

Nemeth's appointment followed overwhelming support by the association's Board of Directors after a nationwide recruitment process. She will assume responsibilities as ACWA Executive Director effective Sept. 1. Current Interim Executive Director Marwan Khalifa will remain at ACWA through a transition period.

"Bringing in Karla to lead the ACWA team is a phenomenal win for our members," said ACWA President Ernie Avila. "She brings deep expertise and a proven track record navigating California's most complex water challenges. Her leadership will strengthen ACWA's role as a leading voice and advocate for water agencies across the state."

Nemeth is among the most instantly recognizable and accomplished decision makers within the California water space, having served as DWR Director since 2018, originally appointed by Gov. Jerry Brown and re-appointed by Gov. Gavin Newsom. Throughout that time, Nemeth has participated in numerous ACWA conferences as a panelist and keynote speaker, sharing her perspectives on a wide range of critical issues.

"On behalf of our member agencies, I also want to extend my deep appreciation to Marwan for his leadership during the past 15 months and through a transition period," Avila said. "His contributions have been invaluable in supporting the association, especially in successfully implementing the 2025-'29 Strategic Plan and launching ACWA's Vision for Our Water Future initiative."

Bringing Water Together



Newsom persists with Delta water tunnel project

‘We’ve got to get that done,’ governor says of contested plan as end of his term looms.



COURTLAND, in Sacramento County, is one spot where an inlet for the Delta Conveyance Project is planned. (Josh Edelson For The Times)

BY TARYN LUNA AND IAN JAMES

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Gavin Newsom said his administration is “moving forward aggressively” to continue laying the groundwork for a giant tunnel beneath the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to replumb the state’s water system.

“We got to move faster. Move faster,” Newsom said to regulators during a speech Thursday at a conference held by the Assn. of California Water Agencies. “We all have to be held to a higher level of accountability.”

California’s 40th governor provided a chronological look back at his water policies since taking office in 2019 and asserted the need to continue his effort to modernize state infrastructure to provide for cities and farms into the future.

Newsom cast the tunnel as a “climate adaptation project,” noting that climate change is projected to shrink the amount of water the state can deliver with its current infrastructure.

With his term expiring at the end of the year, Newsom acknowledged that he will soon “pass the baton” on water policy to the next governor. Democrat or Republican, that person could decide the fate of his signature water project.

“The Delta Conveyance, if we had it last year alone, would have provided enough water, in terms of what we could have captured with an updated system, enough water for 9.8 million Californians’ needs for over a year,” Newsom said. “We’ve got to get that done.”

Water has been a focus of the Newsom administration since his first day in office, when the governor took his cabinet to Monterey Park Tract, a rural Central Valley community that lacked access to safe drinking water.

Described by Newsom as “the forever problem” in California, water policy is also among the most politically contentious issues in the state.

The tunnel would create a second route to transport water from new intakes on the Sacramento River to the south side of the Delta, where pumps send water into the aqueducts of the State Water Project.

The project is particularly acrimonious, drawing out geographical battles between north and south and thorny fights between officials who want to build the tunnel and environmentalists and Delta residents seeking to protect the local ecosystem and their way of life.

Newsom and other supporters have said the tunnel would protect the state’s water system as climate change intensifies severe droughts and deluges. Opponents call the project a costly boondoggle, arguing it’s not necessary and would destroy the Delta.

It’s been mired with regulatory hurdles and other challenges for years.

The State Water Resources Control Board is considering a petition by the Newsom administration to amend permits so water could be tapped where the tunnel intakes would be built.

There have also been other complications. A state appeals court in December rejected the state’s plan for financing the project, and the California Supreme Court in April declined to take up the case. The state Department of Water Resources said it still plans to issue bonds to finance the project.

Other court challenges by Delta-area counties and environmental groups are also pending.

Whether the project is ultimately built may hinge on whether large water agencies, including the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, decide to participate and pay for its building.

State officials have said that the tunnel, called the Delta Conveyance Project, ultimately would be paid for by participating water agencies.

The state estimated in 2024 that the tunnel would cost \$20.1 billion, while opponents say it could cost three to five times more than that.

In the last seven years, California has invested \$11 billion in water infrastructure, Newsom said.

The Democratic governor reflected on other parts of his water policies, saying he has prioritized securing funds to provide clean drinking water to more communities where Californians live with contaminated tap water.

He said while there has been progress in bringing safe drinking water to more communities, there is still “a lot more work to be done.”

Newsom touted his administration’s investment in replenishing groundwater in the Central Valley and its efforts supporting plans to build the Sites Reservoir near Sacramento.

Newsom said the Sites Reservoir is critical for the state’s future, and he indicated some frustration about the pace at which it’s advancing.

“We’ve got to do the groundbreaking at Sites,” he said. “If you can’t agree to an off-stream investment in this world of weather whiplash, we’re as dumb as we want to be.”

He said his administration has also made progress on environmental projects including restoring wetlands around the shrinking Salton Sea, removing dams on the Klamath River and developing a strategy to help salmon, which have suffered major declines in recent years.

Touching on issues that generate heated debate, Newsom talked about a controversial plan for new water rules in the Delta that relies on so-called voluntary agreements in which water agencies would contribute funding for wetland habitat restoration projects and other measures.

Newsom described the approach, called the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes program, as a solution to break away from the traditional conflict-ridden regulatory approach and improve the Delta’s ecological health.

“Got to maintain the vigilance on these voluntary agreements. At peril, we go back to our old ways,” he said.

Environmental advocates argue that the proposed approach, which is widely supported by water agencies, would take too much water out of the Delta and threaten native fish that are already in severe decline.

Newsom said climate change is increasingly driving “weather whiplash” in California and that the state must prepare. He noted that his tenure included the extreme drought from 2020-22, followed by extremely wet conditions in 2023, which revived Tulare Lake on thousands of acres of farmland.

He said the state needs to manage water differently because the effects of climate change have been apparent over the last several years: “The hots were getting a lot hotter, the dries were getting a lot drier, and the wets were getting a lot wetter.”

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INSIDE CLIMATE NEWS: California will soon have more than 100 data centers. Where will they get their water?

<https://mavensnotebook.com/inside-climate-news/> April 28, 2026

Afternoon sun shines on a data center facility in Vernon, California.

A 330-megawatt data center proposed in the Imperial Valley would need 750,000 gallons of water a day. Satisfying the thirst of 24 more facilities expected to open in the state by 2030 will be challenging, experts and officials say.

By Steven Rodas, Inside Climate News

For patrons of the deli on West Aten Road, it was the white “Not In My Backyard” signs jutting out of lawns.

For local irrigation district workers, it was something called an “electric service application.”

For Margie Padilla, it was a rant on Facebook.

The 43-year-old mom came across a post online while she had a few minutes to scan social media last spring after a day spent tending her garden and taking care of her two boys.

“Somebody was complaining about this center,” Padilla said. “I was like, ‘Whoa, what’s going on here?’”

What’s going on is the second-largest new data center being considered statewide, which would be less than half a mile from Padilla’s stucco home in the center of Imperial Valley. If finished by 2028, as the developer expects, the at least 950,000-square-foot, two-story data center could be the largest operating (<https://cleanview.co/public/data-centers/california>) statewide, taking up 17 football fields’ worth of land.

The roughly \$10 billion, 330-megawatt data center would require 750,000 gallons of water a day to operate, said developer Sebastian Rucci, who insists electricity and water costs won’t rise due to the data center.

“We have studies on the air. We have studies on the water. The electricity could be handled,” Rucci said. “We did our homework.”

Imperial officials haven’t quelled local concerns, only noting that the project is facing litigation and that the center’s long-term impacts on utilities haven’t been determined.

On top of the financial burden of maintaining her family’s health, gas and grocery expenses strain Padilla’s budget and she’s worried a new data center will only increase water and power costs. Padilla, who first heard of the data center a year ago, has only grown more concerned and she’s not alone.

Some residents would see it from their backyards.

“I can only imagine the rates going up once that data center is up and running,” she said, shading her eyes from the beaming sun.

This is one of two dozen data centers expected to open in California in the next few years.



GROWING CONCERN AND REGULATORY GAPS

A majority of respondents to a nationwide [poll by the US Water Alliance](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/67dd711d1a117219a03e4f7a/t/69dd3d58511e7f1cdf979cad/1776106840605/VOW+Index+Poll.pdf) (<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/67dd711d1a117219a03e4f7a/t/69dd3d58511e7f1cdf979cad/1776106840605/VOW+Index+Poll.pdf>) share Padilla's worries, with 54 percent extremely or very concerned about the effect data centers will have on water quality, water supply and costs in their area.

In its first question about data centers since the poll began in 2016, two-thirds of voters said it was important for their state to have a plan for the effects of data centers on water in the coming years.

"I suspect that as data centers continue to be part of the broad conversation, then these numbers will probably continue to go up as people are more concerned about the impacts they have on the things that affect them and their communities, like supply, quality and cost," said Scott Berry, the senior advisor on policy and external affairs at the US Water Alliance, from Water Week in Washington D.C. this month.

More than 90 percent of data centers in the U.S. get most of the water they need for cooling from municipal systems, estimated Shaolei Ren, an [associate professor](https://profiles.ucr.edu/app/home/profile/shaolei) (<https://profiles.ucr.edu/app/home/profile/shaolei>) of electrical and computer engineering at the University of California, Riverside.

During the hottest summer days, a large 100-megawatt facility can use about 1 million gallons of water for evaporative cooling. That amount is the same as about 10,000 people's daily water use at home, Ren said.

But those centers require "zero water for many days of the year when it's cool outside," he said.

Some data centers are exploring alternatives [like treated wastewater or graywater](https://datacentremagazine.com/news/how-closed-loop-cooling-is-reshaping-data-centre-design) (<https://datacentremagazine.com/news/how-closed-loop-cooling-is-reshaping-data-centre-design>) for cooling instead of drinkable water, providing residents and officials with options that could reduce strain on local water supplies.

California doesn't require AI data centers to report water usage, and the state's Water Resources Control Board does not maintain a specific list of water rights held by data centers. Although residents are working to require more transparency about water use from data centers, recent efforts to require the facilities' owners [to report how much](https://calmatters.digitaldemocracy.org/bills/ca_202520260ab93) (https://calmatters.digitaldemocracy.org/bills/ca_202520260ab93) water they use to the state have faltered.

On top of the data center boom in California, the hundreds of water districts, a deepening Southwestern megadrought and the [diminishing of the Colorado River](https://www.latimes.com/environment/story/2026-04-17/colorado-river-trump-administration-dams) (<https://www.latimes.com/environment/story/2026-04-17/colorado-river-trump-administration-dams>) increasingly complicate water issues.

“Water is not purely an environmental issue. In many places, it is fundamentally an infrastructure challenge.”

– Shaolei Ren, University of California, Riverside

Also, while data centers can take as little as two to three years to build, developing new water sources can take as long as 20 years, said Ren.

Plans for the steep increase in water demand from California data centers inevitably focus on infrastructure, experts said.

“Water is not purely an environmental issue,” Ren noted. “In many places, it is fundamentally an infrastructure challenge.”

Across the country, water infrastructure upgrades are estimated to cost between \$10 billion to \$58 billion, Ren's research team found. (<https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/data-center-water-spikes-could-cost-billions>) How many more facilities are built and where will be a big factor in future infrastructure costs.

The amount of electricity a data center uses, to some degree, determines how much heat it produces, and consequently how much cooling it requires and, in turn, how much water it needs.

The Imperial County data center is one of 24 planned for completion across California by 2030, according to the latest information gathered by analysts at Cleanview, a market intelligence platform.

Based on the about 1.7 GW of electricity the proposed data centers would use, with at least two projects for which there aren't energy consumption figures, water infrastructure upgrade costs just for the demands of the centers in the state could run from about \$200 million to \$800 million, Ren said.

“This number assumes that California data centers' water use intensity is the same as the national average,” he explained.

There is no central permitting authority for data centers in California, and most are overseen by city and county governments, according to the California Public Utilities Commission. [Data Center Map](https://www.datacentermap.com/usa/california/) (<https://www.datacentermap.com/usa/california/>) shows 286 of the facilities currently operating in California.

While California's size and tech focus lead some to expect many more data centers here, the cost and availability of power and land, as well as the general tax and regulatory climate, have been hurdles to building them out, according to the Data Center Coalition, which represents big corporations like Amazon, Meta, Google and Microsoft.

Nonetheless, California trails only Virginia and Texas in the number of individual data center locations (<https://www.datacentermap.com/usa/>), but its centers have much lower total new electricity capacity, which may also indicate lower water demand.

A research team at the University of California, Riverside, recently found that data centers could collectively require 697 to 1,451 million gallons per day (MGD) of new water capacity nationally through 2030. New York City's average daily supply is about 1,000 MGD.

Currently, data centers are estimated to use about 39 billion gallons of water nationally each year, Khara Boender, the senior manager for state policy at the Data Center Coalition, said, citing market research from Bluefield (<https://www.bluefieldresearch.com/research/u-s-water-for-data-centers-market-trends-opportunities-and-forecasts-2025-2030/>).

California Slated to Surpass 300 Data Centers

Two dozen new data centers are planned throughout California between now and 2030, according to the latest estimates. As the state surpasses 300 data centers for the first time, residents have grown increasingly concerned about how the server-filled facilities' thirst for water and electricity will increase utility rates.

EXISTING CALIFORNIA DATA CENTERS

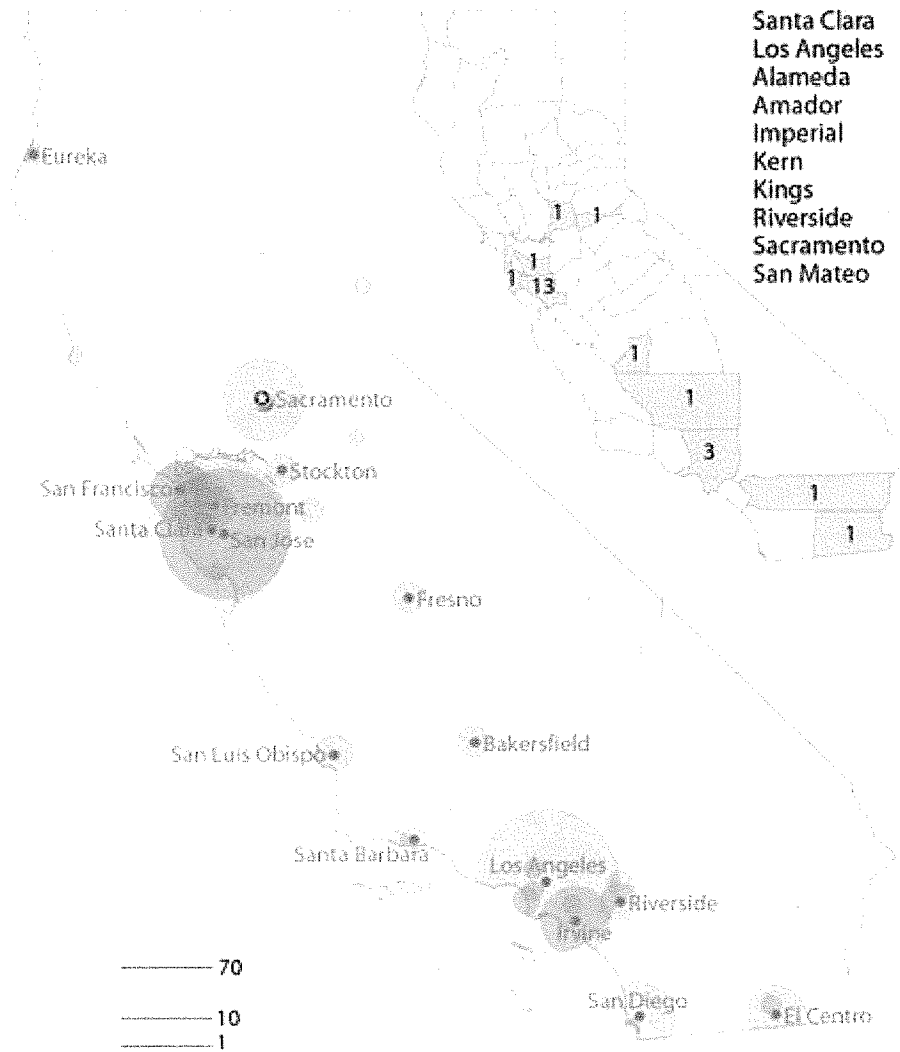
Market and number of centers, 2026

Santa Clara	67
Los Angeles	57
San Jose	46
Sacramento	19
San Diego	14
Irvine	13
El Centro	10
San Francisco	10
Fremont	5
Riverside	4
San Luis Obispo	4
Bakersfield	3
Fresno	3
Hayward	3
Palo Alto	3
Stockton	3
El Segundo	2
Emeryville	2
Modesto	2
San Bernardino	2
Santa Barbara	2
Burbank	1
Eureka	1
Goleta	1
Hawthorne	1
Imperial	1
Jackson	1
Loyalton	1
Manchester	1
Mountain View	1
Oakland	1
Santa Cruz	1
Tustin	1
TOTAL	286

PLANNED CALIFORNIA DATA CENTERS

County and number of centers, 2026

Santa Clara	13
Los Angeles	3
Alameda	1
Amador	1
Imperial	1
Kern	1
Kings	1
Riverside	1
Sacramento	1
San Mateo	1



SOURCES: Cleanview; datacentermap.com

PAUL HORN / Inside Climate News

"I know when we start to talk about billions of gallons of water in a year, that sounds absolutely crazy," Boender said. "Looking at how that falls into context with some of these other large water users, I think that that kind of contextualization could be surprising to folks."

Alfalfa irrigation in California's Imperial Valley alone uses more than 800 billion gallons a year, [an April essay in Outside highlighted](https://www.outsideonline.com/outdoor-adventure/environment/ai-water-use-colorado-river-footprint/). (<https://www.outsideonline.com/outdoor-adventure/environment/ai-water-use-colorado-river-footprint/>)

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[EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2026_04_09_08_41&utm_term=0_-969297aaf2-84322226&scope=initial](#)) The beverage industry uses 533 billion gallons of water a year and the semiconductor industry uses 59 billion gallons, Boender noted.

But spikes in water needs for data centers can lead to bottlenecks in small community water systems, Ren, at the [University of California, Riverside](#), noted.

(<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7434782014286987264/>) “Only comparing the annual totals can obscure the real water challenge,” he said.

There is no single fix for the pressure data centers are placing on water supplies across the state, which will be different depending on the location and water systems where each facility is built, said Shivaji Deshmukh, the general manager of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California—the largest supplier of treated water in the U.S. The district serves 19 million people in six California counties.

“Every community—even within our service area—is different in terms of costs, what type of supply they have. Some regions have access to groundwater. Some have access to treated wastewater or [recycled water](#) (<https://mavensnotebook.com/tag/recycled-water/>) somewhere along the coast,” Deshmukh said.

So industries, most of which require water for cooling, will look to satisfy that thirst from different sources, depending on their location.

“Imperial Irrigation District is one where I know they’re discussing ... installation of data centers in their area,” Deshmukh said.

THE IMPERIAL DILEMMA

The plot of dirt on West Aton Road betrays nothing of the colossal data center that could one day sit on the land. Owner Sebastian Rucci hopes to have the facility up and running by the summer of 2028, he said.

Rucci, who is also a lawyer, has purchased 235 acres for his data center so far. He says the data center will allow Google to train its Gemini artificial intelligence, although Google denies any involvement “in a data center project in Imperial County.”

Before he can begin building on the site, a judge will weigh in on the city of Imperial’s [lawsuit against the project](#) (<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/27968402-city-of-imperial-v-imperial-county-amended-petition-2/>), which demands that it clear higher environmental hurdles, including the California Environmental Quality Act—which often draws ire from developers who claim it can needlessly stall proposals. The local water district also has to complete its review of the project.

Rucci is determined, though, citing a series of studies conducted by survey and consulting groups, and by the district itself, which manages water and provides power. He posted those [reports online to show](https://www.imperialdatacenter.com/studies) (<https://www.imperialdatacenter.com/studies>) the data center made sense—in part because water and power could be effectively provided to the data center and the land was permitted for industrial use.

The debate between supporters and opponents of the facility has escalated, with the next court date set for the end of April.

With that date in mind, Padilla, the Imperial mother, set out to work in her garden on a balmy Thursday morning.

Donning a green, short-sleeved shirt and flip-flops, she checked on her squash, poked at her cherry tomatoes and dug in her spade to move periwinkle to a better spot for watering. And through it all, she wondered what the thirst of the proposed data center would do to her garden. And her monthly water bill.

Her payment for water, sewer and trash services currently ranges from \$90 to \$130 a month—more than double what she paid six years ago.

“I’m also afraid they’re going to put [water] restrictions for us, for the residents,” said Padilla, who estimates her family of four uses about 300 gallons of water a day. “That’s going to be harsh on me, particularly, because of my garden. I grow my own food, my own vegetables.”

Worries over power and water price surges are misguided, Rucci said. He has been considering power and water needs for the 18 months he has worked on the project, he said, and outlined how it would bring various economic benefits to the region, including about 100 permanent jobs post-construction.

Still, Padilla is thinking about other things. She says her two sons were anemic when they were younger, requiring them to eat fresh produce to supplement the iron their bodies needed. Even after treating the condition, the Imperial mom keeps her sons’ diet filled with veggies and fruits. She needs her garden for that.

The Imperial Irrigation District declined to be interviewed for this story but, in a written statement, noted that it has yet to receive a formal request for water for the project.

The District, which provides water and power to all of Imperial County as well as parts of Riverside and San Diego counties, did not have specific estimates of how demand from the data center could impact its costs.

“Water was very concerning to us from the beginning,” Rucci said.

He’s spoken with city officials in Imperial and El Centro to arrange a water deal for the facility, he said, and proposed getting 6 million gallons per day of reclaimed water from both cities.

“Our plan was we would do all the municipal upgrades at our cost, and then we would take the excess water and run it clean to the [Salton Sea](https://mavensnotebook.com/tag/salton-sea/) (<https://mavensnotebook.com/tag/salton-sea/>),” he said.

Those conversations have not paid off, although Rucci said he remains hopeful municipal officials will help him get water for his facility.

“We first tried to do reclaimed water. I still prefer that but that seems to be taking months and I don’t know if that ... will happen,” Rucci said. “Probably we’ll just get it from the (Imperial Irrigation District)” by purchasing it for industrial use.

How the center obtains its water may change as its plans are updated, he added.

Through it all, he remains confident the data center will be built in Imperial County and be good for the area.

Carolina Paez disagrees.

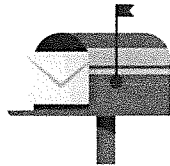
The 46-year-old mother’s backyard abuts the data center site. She says she’d be able to hit it with a rock from her property.

Both she and her son have asthma, and she’s worried about the construction dust, potential pollution and noise from the data center. And higher bills.

“I’m not just thinking about the expenses that are going to increase, but also about the things that are going to lose value—for instance, my house,” Paez said in Spanish.

“What am I going to do with this property? Who would even want to live here?”

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STPUD advances 2026 Infrastructure Investments and Proposed Rate Adjustments

NewsNews | May 12, 2026

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, Calif. – South Tahoe Public Utility District is launching an ambitious summer construction season focused on critical upgrades to the community’s water and wastewater systems. The District’s 2026 projects include major investments to replace aging infrastructure, improve reliability, enhance fire protection, and safeguard public health and the environment.

This year, the District is investing approximately \$20 million in water system improvements throughout South Lake Tahoe. Planned projects include installing a new water transmission main on Pioneer Trail, rehabilitating two of the District’s eleven drinking water wells, drilling two new drinking water wells, recoating the District’s two largest water storage tanks, and installing the final ~100 residential water meters.

To help fund summer projects and reduce costs to ratepayers, the District has secured \$5.3 million in grant funding through the US Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation, California Office of Emergency Services, US Environmental Protection Agency, and California Tahoe Conservancy, along with \$4.9 million in low-interest loans through California State Water Resources Control Board. The District also just installed a solar array at the wastewater treatment plant, that is expected to save \$190,000 in electricity costs this year.

A major highlight of this year’s water improvements is the Pioneer Trail Waterline Project, which will install almost 9,000 linear feet of new water line and add fire hydrants along Pioneer Trail from Marshall Trail to Susquehana Drive. This project will connect portions of the District’s water system, improve water pressure, water quality, and system reliability while significantly enhancing fire flow capacity and hydrant coverage in a critical wildland urban interface area.

Funding for the Pioneer Trail project includes \$1.3 million from the United States Forest Service, \$1 million from the Environmental Protection Agency, and \$4.9 million in low-interest financing through the California State Revolving Fund Program.

On the wastewater side, the District is investing approximately \$8 million in sewer collection, treatment, and export system improvements this year. Key projects include sewer main lining in the Tahoe Keys neighborhood, upgrades to a critical sewer pump station, rehabilitation of holding ponds at the wastewater treatment plant, and hazardous fuels reduction work at critical District facilities. These investments are designed to extend the life of the wastewater collection and treatment system, reduce the risk of sewer spills, and protect the clarity of Lake Tahoe.

“We continue to work hard and we are making progress, but at the end of the day, there’s still a lot to do,” said Paul Hughes, General Manager. “We need to continually invest in our water and sewer system to ensure reliable operations and keep up with inflation.”

To support these essential infrastructure improvements, the District’s Board of Directors is considering adjustments to water and sewer rates. Two years ago, through the Proposition 218 process, the Board adopted a five-year rate schedule to increase rates up to 9.5% per year. After evaluating project needs and staff capacity, this year the Board is considering a 6.5% rate change. For a typical residential customer, the proposed increase would be approximately \$4.24 per month for sewer service and \$5.14 per month for water service. If approved, the new rates would take effect on July 1, 2026.

“The Board does not approach rate adjustments lightly,” said Shane Romsos, Board President. “Like most in our community, the District is facing increased costs associated with goods and services needed to maintain our water and sewer systems. We actively work to maximize available funding through investment in energy efficiency, grants, low-interest financing, and strategic project planning and partnerships. These efforts help reduce the burden on our ratepayers while allowing the District to continue investing in reliable infrastructure, and long-term system resilience. Even with proposed rate adjustments, STPUD’s water and sewer rates remain the lowest in the Tahoe Basin.”

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MONTHLY BRIEFING

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

APRIL 2026 Issue #285

Board Member Quote of the Month



“Out here in California, we’re used to adapting—but what we’re facing now isn’t just another dry year, it’s a long-term shift. Even in places where we have some water this season, the uncertainty is real, and the margin for error keeps getting smaller. Farmers are already doing more with less—we’ve invested in efficiency, technology, and better management—but we can’t solve a supply problem with conservation alone. We need to be thinking bigger, investing in new water, modernizing the systems we depend on, and making it easier to actually get projects built. At the end of the day, this isn’t just about agriculture—it’s about food security, communities, and the future of the West. We’re ready to be part of the solution, but it’s going to take all of us—farmers, communities, policymakers, and water managers—working together to make sure we get it right.”

— **William Bourdeau, California**

<i>A Tightening Water Supply Across the West</i>	2
<i>Growing the Pie Investing in Water Supply Augmentation</i>	3
<i>Funding the Future: Big Ideas, Tight Budgets, and What Comes Next</i>	5
<i>Colorado River at a Crossroads Crisis, Collaboration, and the Path Forward</i>	6
<i>Learning Through the Colorado River Water Leaders Program</i>	8
<i>Permitting Reform Gains Momentum Clearing the Path for Water Solutions</i>	10
<i>Reclamation Realignment Empowering Local Water Leaders</i>	11
<i>Congress Holds the Pen Why Engagement Matters More Than Ever</i>	12

A Tightening Water Supply Across the West



Irrigated agriculture in the Coachella Valley: one of the most productive regions in the world, and entirely dependent on Colorado River water.

As the West enters the 2026 irrigation season, the water supply picture is becoming increasingly strained—and in many places, alarming. Across nearly every major basin, conditions are trending downward, driven by a convergence of historically low snowpack, unseasonably warm winter and early spring temperatures, and an early runoff that has already peaked in several regions.



According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, drought conditions have expanded rapidly in recent months, with many arid and semi-arid states slipping back into moderate to severe drought classifications. In practical terms, this means reduced allocations, tighter restrictions, and heightened uncertainty for agricultural producers who rely on predictable water deliveries to plan their seasons.

Major systems are already showing stress. Lake Powell continues to decline, and projections for the Rio Grande suggest flows may fall short of both irrigation and ecological demands well before the end of the growing season. Across the Pacific Northwest, California, and the interior West, snowpack levels—often described as the region’s “natural reservoir”—are among the lowest on record, with some basins reporting less than one-third of average conditions.

Even where reservoirs appear relatively stable for now, the absence of sustained snowmelt is expected to catch up quickly. Water managers are already adjusting operations, delivering supplies earlier than usual and holding back limited reserves.

Compounding the issue is what researchers are now calling the “drought paradox.” New findings suggest that vegetation in places like the Colorado River Basin is drawing more heavily on groundwater during hot, dry periods than previously understood. Rather than slowing water use during drought,

plants may actually increase their consumption—pulling water that would otherwise contribute to streamflows and further reducing available surface supplies.

At the same time, worsening drought conditions are fueling an early and aggressive wildfire season. In New Mexico alone, hundreds of fires have already ignited this year, while states like Nebraska have seen hundreds of thousands of acres of rangeland burned—placing additional strain on already limited water and forage resources.

Federal and state agencies, including the Bureau of Reclamation, are actively responding with drought task forces, contingency planning, and operational adjustments. But even with these efforts underway, the broader outlook remains one of tightening supply and high uncertainty.

“The reality is, this year is going to test systems and people alike. We have to be thinking about how we get through this season—but just as importantly, how we build the kind of water infrastructure and policy framework that ensures we’re not having this same conversation year after year.”

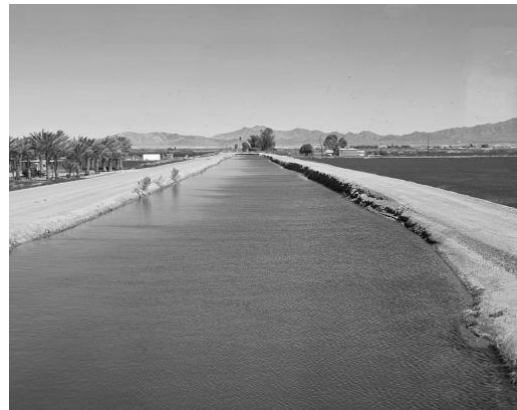
— Samantha Barncastle, Executive Director

The message is clear: while the challenges of 2026 are immediate, the solutions must extend well beyond a single season.

Growing the Pie Investing in Water Supply Augmentation

For too long, the water conversation in the West has centered on dividing a shrinking resource—who gets less, when, and how much. But across the region, a different mindset is beginning to take hold: one focused not just on conservation, but on augmentation—creating new water, stretching existing supplies further, and thinking bigger about what’s possible.

From seawater desalination to cloud seeding, water reuse, and emerging technologies, states and water managers are increasingly investing in tools designed to “grow the pie,” not just fight over it.



Desalination, in particular, is gaining renewed attention. Once dismissed as too expensive or energy-intensive, advancements in treatment technology and increasing pressure on traditional supplies have brought it back into serious consideration in places like Southern California and Nevada. While it remains a long-term investment, desal offers something increasingly valuable in the West: reliability that is not dependent on snowpack or precipitation.

At the same time, cloud seeding—also referred to as rain or snow enhancement—is quietly expanding across the region. Programs now operate in at least nine Western states, with studies suggesting they can increase snowpack by an estimated 5–15% under the right conditions. Compared to large infrastructure projects, these programs are relatively low-cost and can be deployed quickly, making them an attractive complement to other water strategies.

“We’re not going to conserve our way out of this. Conservation will always be part of the equation, but it cannot be the only tool. If we’re serious about long-term water security, we have to be just as serious about investing in technologies and strategies that actually increase supply. That means thinking bigger than we have in a long time.”

— Samantha Barncastle, Executive Director

Other approaches are also gaining traction. Water reuse and recycling—particularly in urban areas—are helping stretch limited supplies, while innovations like atmospheric water generation and more energy-efficient treatment systems are beginning to move from concept to application. Even in agriculture, innovation is expanding beyond efficiency into entirely new approaches. Researchers across the Colorado River Basin are exploring alternative crops that require less water, while a new federally funded study led by the University of Nevada, Reno is testing drought-resilient cactus pear as a potential biofuel crop across multiple Western states. The goal is to produce energy with significantly less water.

The broader trend is clear: as scarcity intensifies, so does the willingness to innovate.

“We’re seeing real momentum around augmentation right now, and that’s encouraging. But we need to match that momentum with commitment—especially at the federal level. These are not small ideas, and they require dedicated, long-term funding if they’re going to make a meaningful difference.”

— Samantha Barncastle, Executive Director

At its core, augmentation is about shifting the narrative—from limits to possibilities. The same kind of big thinking that once built the water infrastructure of the West is once again on the table. And in a region where the gap between water supply and demand continues to widen, that kind of thinking is no longer optional—it’s essential.



Date farm in Yuma

Funding the Future: Big Ideas, Tight Budgets, and What Comes Next

As water challenges intensify across the West, so too does the conversation around how to pay for solutions. This year, that conversation is unfolding against a complicated federal funding backdrop—one that presents both real concerns and unexpected opportunities.

On April 3, the Administration released its proposed fiscal year 2027 budget, formally kicking off the congressional appropriations process. For Western water users, the proposal sends a clear signal: programmatic funding for water, agriculture, and conservation efforts is likely to face continued pressure.

Most notably, the budget proposes a 24% reduction to the core Water and Related Resources account at the Bureau of Reclamation, along with significant cuts to related programs across the Department of the Interior, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Key initiatives—such as WaterSMART grants, water recycling programs, and ecosystem restoration efforts—are either reduced or proposed for elimination.

At the same time, the federal workforce that supports these programs is shrinking and shifting. Reductions in staffing at land and water management agencies could mean fewer resources available to design, implement, and oversee projects on the ground.

“This is a moment where we need to be very clear about what’s at stake. When you reduce programmatic funding and staffing, you’re not just trimming budgets—you’re limiting the capacity to deliver real, on-the-ground solutions for water users across the West.”

— Samantha Barncastle, Executive Director

And yet, the story doesn’t end there. Even as the Administration proposes cuts to smaller, distributed programs, it is signaling strong support for large-scale infrastructure investment. Through the reconciliation process last year that produced the One Big Beautiful Bill, nearly \$1 billion has been committed to Western water infrastructure projects—targeting storage, conveyance, and system modernization efforts that are critical to long-term water reliability.



There is also still significant funding in the pipeline. Approximately \$1 billion in remaining Inflation Reduction Act resources administered by the Bureau of Reclamation must be obligated by the end of fiscal year 2026. These funds—focused on the Colorado River Basin—represent a near-term opportunity to support drought response, system improvements, and water supply reliability efforts across the region.

In the meantime, existing programs are still moving forward. The Bureau of Reclamation has opened several funding opportunities under its WaterSMART umbrella, including grants for small-scale water efficiency projects, applied science initiatives, and drought response planning. While the long-term future of these programs remains uncertain, they continue to provide important support for communities working to improve water management today.

“We’ve always said this isn’t an either-or conversation. Programmatic funding is essential—it’s what helps farmers, irrigation districts, and communities make incremental improvements that add up over time. But we also recognize and appreciate that this Administration is willing to think big.”

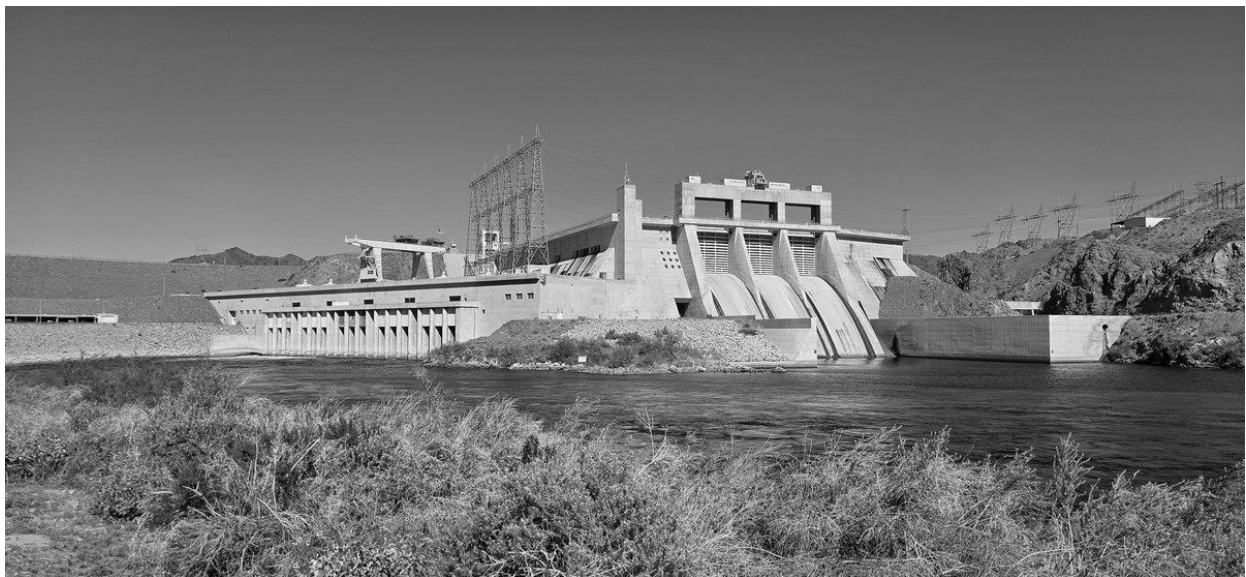
— Samantha Barncastle, Executive Director

As Congress begins the work of shaping the final FY2027 budget, history suggests that many proposed cuts may be softened or reversed. But the broader trend is clear: the federal role in water funding is evolving. For Western agriculture, that means staying engaged, making the case for investment, and ensuring that both near-term needs and long-term solutions remain part of the national conversation. Because in a year defined by scarcity, how—and where—we invest may matter just as much as how much water we have.

“At the end of the day, we need both. We need the tools that help producers operate more efficiently right now, and we need the kind of transformational investments that actually expand supply and secure our water future. One without the other simply isn’t going to get us where we need to be.”

— Samantha Barncastle, Executive Director

Colorado River at a Crossroads Crisis, Collaboration, and the Path Forward



Davis Dam on the Colorado River — one of the critical infrastructure facilities visited during the Water Leaders tour in March.

The Colorado River Basin is entering one of the most consequential moments in its history. Following months of deteriorating conditions, the Bureau of Reclamation took emergency action late last week to stabilize the system, underscoring just how serious the situation has become. With long-term drought, record-low snowpack, and extreme early-season heat converging, total system storage has dropped to roughly 36% of capacity—placing critical water and energy infrastructure at risk.



CAP Intake off the Colorado River

At the center of the crisis is Lake Powell, where inflows are projected to reach just a fraction of average this year. Without intervention, reservoir elevations could fall below the critical “minimum power pool” threshold—jeopardizing hydropower generation at Glen Canyon Dam and creating cascading impacts across the basin.

To prevent that outcome, Reclamation is moving forward with a series of aggressive actions, including reducing releases downstream to Lake Mead and sending additional water from upstream storage at Flaming Gorge Reservoir. Together, these measures are intended to stabilize Powell’s elevation and preserve operational flexibility in the months ahead. But these decisions come with tradeoffs.

“This is what managing scarcity looks like in real time. There are no easy decisions left on the Colorado River—only hard ones, and all of them have real consequences for communities, agriculture, and the broader economy.”
 — Samantha Barncastle, Executive Director



Tina Shields, IID Manager and AC Member, addressing a Colorado River educational tour.

The emergency actions also come at a moment of institutional uncertainty. The current operating guidelines that have governed the river for nearly two decades are set to expire at the end of this year, and the seven basin states have yet to reach agreement on a path forward. In the absence of consensus, the federal government has already started to step in and make unilateral decisions on post-2026 operations.

Tensions are rising accordingly. Upper Basin states continue to emphasize the limits of what they can contribute, pointing out that they cannot reduce water they do not have. Meanwhile, Lower Basin states warn that deeper cuts could have devastating impacts on agriculture, urban supply, and regional economies. Legal positioning is already underway, with states and water users increasingly preparing for the possibility of litigation under the complex framework known as the “Law of the River.”

At the same time, new tools are entering the conversation. Advanced modeling—combining traditional hydrology with satellite data and machine learning—is giving water managers a clearer picture of how different decisions could play out across the system. These tools are not making decisions, but they are sharpening the understanding of just how narrow the margin for error has become.

And yet, even in the midst of crisis, there are reminders of what collaboration can look like.

Learning Through the Colorado River Water Leaders Program

Earlier this month, Barncastle traveled to Colorado to participate in the 60th anniversary of the Colorado Water Center at its “Currents of Change” event—bringing together leaders from across the basin, including negotiators, policymakers, and water managers deeply involved in shaping the river’s future.

At a hosted discussion table alongside leaders such as Becky Mitchell, Tanya Trujillo, and Brenda Burman, Barncastle posed a simple but powerful question to participants: As an Upper Basin resident and water user, what is one thing you wish the Lower Basin understood about your water use?



Bart Fisher, Palo Verde Irrigation District Board President, on the Colorado River tour.

The answers revealed a fundamental disconnect. Participants emphasized that, unlike many Lower Basin systems with significant reservoir storage, Upper Basin agriculture often relies on soil as its primary form of water storage. Practices like precision irrigation—while highly

efficient—can reduce that soil moisture buffer, leaving systems more vulnerable during dry years.

For Barncastle, the conversation reinforced a core belief about the path forward on the Colorado River—one shaped by her direct experience on this very infrastructure during the Water Leaders tour.

“One of the most insightful comments came from a Colorado State University extension expert. He described soil as the largest ‘aquifer’ in the Upper Basin. When you change how water moves through that system, you’re not just improving efficiency—you’re fundamentally changing the basin’s ability to absorb and withstand drought.”

— Samantha Barncastle, Executive Director

The tour—which included a first-hand look at Hoover Dam and key facilities across the Lower Basin—offered a visceral reminder of what is at stake. Standing at the Arizona–Nevada state line on the floor of Hoover Dam, it was impossible not to feel the weight of the river’s history, and the urgency of its future.



“If there’s one thing that’s clear right now, it’s that we are not going to solve the Colorado River’s challenges by fighting each other. The only way forward is by coming together and truly understanding the realities each part of the basin is facing.”

— Samantha Barncastle, Executive Director



The Colorado River as seen on the Water Leaders tour; a lifeline for seven states and tens of millions of people.

“We need real solutions, and we need to work on them together at the basin scale. Every community will need to plan for a drier future, and every water user will have to be part of the solution. But if we approach this as a zero-sum fight, we all lose. Protecting this system is going to take collaboration, trust, and a willingness to think bigger than we ever have before.”

— Samantha Barncastle, Executive Director

Permitting Reform Gains Momentum Clearing the Path for Water Solutions

While funding debates continue in Washington, another equally important shift is underway—one that could have immediate, on-the-ground impacts for water users across the West: permitting reform.

After months of uncertainty, bipartisan discussions in Congress are cautiously resuming, signaling renewed interest in streamlining the approval process for critical infrastructure and resource projects. At the same time, the Administration is advancing an aggressive agenda aimed at accelerating project delivery by reforming longstanding regulatory frameworks under laws like the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act.

For years, these processes—while important for environmental protection—have also been cited as major barriers to timely project implementation. Lengthy reviews, overlapping agency requirements, and litigation risks have delayed or derailed projects ranging from water storage and conveyance to habitat restoration and energy development.

“This is a critical moment for how we deliver water solutions in this country. We can have the best ideas in the world, but if it takes a decade to permit and build them, we’re already behind. Streamlining these processes—while still maintaining accountability—is essential if we’re going to respond to the challenges we’re facing.”

— Samantha Barncastle, Executive Director

The Administration is also placing a strong emphasis on operational efficiency within federal agencies. Broader efforts to reorganize departments, reduce staffing, and consolidate programs are intended to create a leaner federal footprint—one that focuses on core functions while relying more heavily on state, local, and project-level leadership. For water users, that could mean faster decisions, fewer bureaucratic hurdles, and more direct pathways to implementation.

At the same time, the renewed use of tools like the Endangered Species Committee—often referred to as the “God Squad”—highlights just how far the Administration is willing to go to move projects forward in high-stakes situations. While controversial and rarely used, its recent convening underscores a willingness to prioritize project delivery in cases where regulatory conflicts have stalled progress.

“For our members, this is about more than process—it’s about results. We need to be able to build, modernize, and adapt our systems in real time. The longer it takes to act, the harder these challenges become.”

— Samantha Barncastle, Executive Director

As water scarcity intensifies, the ability to move quickly—from planning to implementation—may prove just as important as funding itself.

Reclamation Realignment Empowering Local Water Leaders



On the Colorado River — the infrastructure and landscapes that local water managers know best.

Alongside broader federal reform efforts, the Family Farm Alliance continues to advance one of its core initiatives: Reclamation realignment.

Working closely with the Bureau of Reclamation, the Alliance has helped drive meaningful progress in reshaping how Reclamation delivers services to its irrigation and power

contractors—most notably through recent actions at the Department of the Interior to begin streamlining operations and reevaluating the federal role in project management.

These efforts are rooted in a simple principle: the people closest to the projects are often best equipped to manage them.

“We’ve made real progress in shifting the conversation toward local control. Our members understand their systems, their landscapes, and their challenges better than anyone. Empowering them to take on a greater role is not just efficient—it’s the right approach.”

— Samantha Barncastle, Executive Director

With new direction emerging from Interior, the focus is now turning to implementation. The Alliance is encouraging members—particularly those operating within Reclamation irrigation districts—to engage directly and explore opportunities to assume additional responsibilities related to operations, maintenance, and project delivery where appropriate.

“We’re at a point where engagement matters more than ever. If there are opportunities to take on more responsibility and streamline how work gets done, we want to hear from our members.”

— Samantha Barncastle, Executive Director

At its core, the initiative reflects a broader shift in philosophy—one that prioritizes efficiency, accountability, and local expertise over centralized, one-size-fits-all decision-making. Because in a time of increasing water challenges, success will depend not just on what is done—but on how, and by whom, it gets done.

Congress Holds the Pen

Why Engagement Matters More Than Ever

As the West faces one of the most challenging water years in recent memory, one thing remains clear: while administrations propose, Congress still disposes—and that reality matters now more than ever.

Across each of the issues outlined in this month’s report—tightening water supplies, the urgent need for augmentation, evolving federal funding priorities, and efforts to streamline permitting—Congress plays a central role in determining what ultimately moves forward and what does not.

In recent weeks, the Family Farm Alliance took that message directly to Capitol Hill. During a series of meetings with committee and congressional staff, Alliance leadership emphasized a consistent and urgent theme: drought conditions across the West are not only severe—they are worsening, and current tools alone will not be enough to manage what lies ahead.

“We made it very clear—this isn’t a future problem, it’s a now problem. And if we don’t start aligning policy, funding, and innovation around that reality, we’re going to be playing catch-up in ways that could have real consequences for our food system.”

— Samantha Barncastle, Executive Director

The 2026 Farm Bill

The 2026 Farm Bill remains one of the most important near-term opportunities. The House Agriculture Committee has advanced its version, with provisions aimed at strengthening risk management, expanding access to credit, and enhancing conservation and disaster programs. At the same time, the Senate is exploring its own approach, with potential adjustments to conservation programs and additional tools to respond to rising input costs and drought pressures. While timelines remain uncertain, the Farm Bill represents a critical vehicle for shaping how agriculture responds to water scarcity in both the short and long term.

Water Infrastructure & Drought

Beyond the Farm Bill, congressional activity around water infrastructure and drought is picking up. The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power has already begun reviewing a wide range of proposals—from improving hydropower operations at major facilities to expanding water recycling, storage, and watershed-level investments across the West.

Appropriations

At the same time, appropriators are beginning the early work of crafting fiscal year 2027 spending bills. While the Administration’s proposed budget includes significant cuts to water programs, Congress has historically stepped in to restore—and in some cases increase—funding for priorities that matter to Western communities.

“The good news is that Congress understands the importance of these programs, and they’ve shown a willingness to protect them. But that doesn’t happen automatically. It happens because people stay engaged and make their voices heard.”

— Samantha Barncastle, Executive Director

There are also emerging signs that Congress is thinking beyond traditional funding models. Legislation like the proposed DROUGHT Act aims to expand federal cost-share support for large-scale water projects, helping communities finance critical investments in storage, recycling, and conveyance infrastructure.

“Money alone won’t create water. But it will allow us to plan, to build, and to invest in the kinds of solutions that can carry us into a drier future. And right now, we need both immediate support and long-term vision.”

— Samantha Barncastle, Executive Director

Against that backdrop, the Alliance’s message to its members is straightforward: stay engaged. The decisions being made right now—on funding, policy, and priorities—are going to shape how we manage water in the West for years to come.

“We need to protect the tools we have. But we also need to be thinking bigger—about what’s possible, about how we work together, and about how we build a system that can actually meet the demands of the future for the West, for America, and for the world. We have to constantly be thinking in terms of our food supply, and without water, we have no food.”

— Samantha Barncastle, Executive Director

From drought response to infrastructure investment, from permitting reform to augmentation, the path forward will depend on aligning federal action with local expertise and real-world needs. And in that equation, Congress remains a critical piece of the puzzle.

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CORRESPONDENCE LIST**MAY 2026**

1. April 16, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Central Coast Water Authority Regular Board Meeting on April 23, 2026.
2. April 20, 2026 – District received an Updated Time for the Central Coast Water Authority Regular Board Meeting on April 23, 2026.
3. April 21, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Central Coast Water Authority Special Board Meeting on April 23, 2026.
4. April 22, 2026 – District sent Delinquent Payment Notices to three customers.
5. April 23, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board Regular Board Meeting on April 27, 2026.
6. April 25, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Santa Ynez Community Services Personnel Committee Meeting on April 28, 2026.
7. April 25, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Santa Ynez Community Services District Wastewater Committee Meeting on April 29, 2026.
8. April 30, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Santa Ynez Community Services District Finance Committee Meeting on May 5, 2026.
9. May 7, 2026 – District sent a Superseding Water Service Requirements Letter to one customer.
10. May 11, 2026 – District sent a Water Service Requirements Letter to one customer.
11. May 13, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District Special Board Meeting on May 15, 2026.
12. May 14, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board Regular Board Meeting on May 18, 2026.