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, November 17, 2026**
1070 Faraday Street, Santa Ynez, CA - Conference Room

Notice Regarding Public Participation: For those who may not attend the meeting but wish to provide public comment on an Agenda Item, please submit any and all comments and written materials to the District via electronic mail at general@syrwd.org. All submittals should indicate **"November 17, 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 OCTOBER 20, 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

   B. OPERATIONS
      1. General Update

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

   A. **SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT ACT**
      1. Eastern Management Area (EMA) Update

   B. **CENTRAL COAST WATER AUTHORITY**
      1. General Update

   C. **AMENDMENT TO RULES & REGULATIONS AND CAPITAL FACILITIES CHARGES**
      1. Draft Resolution No. XXX: A Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement No. 1 Approving the Automatic Annual Adjustments to the Capital Facilities Charges and Meter Installation Fees Contained in Appendix "C" and Appendix "D" of the District's Rules and Regulations

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 **December 15, 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 – 2 Cases]

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

       2. Name of Case: *In re: Aqueous Film-Forming Foams Product Liability Litigation*, Master Docket MDL No. 2:18-mn-2873-RMG; *City of Camden v. Carrier*, No. 2:26-cv-02805-RMG; *City of Camden v. Amerex Corporation*, No. 2:26-cv-02798-RMG; *City of Camden v. Archroma U.S. Inc.*, No. 2:26-cv-02802-RMG; *City of Camden v. Nation Ford Chemical Company*, No. 2:26-cv-02806-RMG; All pending in the United States District Court for the District of South Carolina; Proposed Settlement Agreements with Public Water Systems.

    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
OCTOBER 20, 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, October 20, 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 Dan Drugan	Racel Cota Kylie Kelleher	Jessica Diaz Steven Anderson

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:**
President Clay called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m. and indicated 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 SEPTEMBER 15, 2026**
The Regular Meeting Minutes from September 15, 2026 were presented for consideration.

President Clay asked if there were any changes or additions to the Regular Meeting Minutes of September 15, 2026. There were no changes or additions requested.

It was **MOVED** by Trustee Urton, seconded by Trustee Burchardi, and carried by a unanimous 5-0-0 voice vote, to approve the September 15, 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 September. 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 September. She explained that the financials reflect the first quarter of activity for the 2026/2027 Fiscal Year. 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 first quarter of the 2026/2027 Fiscal Year. Ms. Cota stated that revenue exceeded expenses for the month of September by $477,310.62 and the year-to-date income was $1,543,609.99, which will be earmarked and utilized for the District's annual State Water Project expense which is due on June 1, 2027.

   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 27499 through 27562 in the amount of $530,575.15.

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 September 16, 2026 through October 20, 2026.

2. Proposed Amendments to Legal Services Agreements – Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck; Best Best & Krieger LLP

   Mr. Garcia explained to the Board that the District's Legal Services Agreement rates with Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck and Best Best & Krieger LLP have not been updated since 2020. He reported that each of the law firms has requested rate increases, which were specifically outlined to the Board. Mr. Garcia noted that the proposed rate increases would become effective January 1, 2027, and thereafter each firm is requesting automatic annual rate adjustments to become effective January 1st of each succeeding year based on the then current fiscal year's cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) percentage adopted by the Board for annual budget purposes in that year, provided that each law firm's annual rate increase shall not be less than three (3) percent and shall not exceed five (5) percent.

It was **MOVED** by President Clay, seconded by Trustee Burchardi, and carried by a unanimous 5-0-0 voice vote, to approve the Proposed Amendments to Legal Services Ageements with Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck and Best Best & Krieger LLP.

B. OPERATIONS

1. General Update - Mr. Drugan reported that staff are preparing for CCWA's free chlorine conversion, during which CCWA will transition its treated water supply deliveries from chloramines to free chlorine for a limited time leading up to CCWA's November maintenance shutdown. He also reported that the District recently completed installation of a variable frequency drive (VFD) at Well 25. The VFD provides staff with greater operational flexibility for this well site. Staff have also returned Well 18 to service following the installation of a new pump and motor.

2. Zone 2 Reservoir Electrical Service Project: Consideration and Possible Award - Mr. Drugan reported that the District received four bids for the Zone 2 Electrical Service Project. He informed the Board that based on the bid results, D.L. Electric was the lowest responsive and responsible bidder at $43,405. Mr. Drugan recommended acceptance of the bid from D.L. Electric and requested that the Board authorize the General Manager to sign a Notice of Award and related contract documents.

It was **MOVED** by Trustee Moniot, seconded by Trustee Urton, and carried by a 5-0-0 voice vote, to accept the lowest responsive and responsible bid from D.L. Electric in the amount of $43,405, and authorize the General Manager to execute applicable contract documents with D.L. Electric.

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 September 3, 2026 meeting of the Eastern Management Area Citizens Advisory Group (CAG). Mr. Garcia reported various topics discussed at the CAG meeting, including ongoing efforts to register all groundwater wells in the EMA. Mr. Garcia also reported on the Regular Meeting of the Eastern Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) on September 24, 2026. Last, he explained that because the current Agricultural Director and Alternate Agricultural Director terms are expiring in October. The EMA GSA called a Special Meeting on October 7, 2026 to initiate the JPA process for soliciting applications for the Agricultural Director and Alternate Agricultural Director positions on the EMA GSA Board.

2. Los Olivos Community Services District Update

Trustee Joos and Trustee Moniot reported that they attended the Los Olivos Community Services District (LOCSD) candidate forum on October 13, 2026. Mr. Garcia explained that he recently met with the General Manager for LOCSD to discuss draft Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that are being developed by the LOCSD. He noted that the discussion focused on various factual and legal clarifications that have been requested by ID No.1 to avoid misstatements and/or misperceptions relating to ID No.1 water quality or water supply operations.

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 summarized various current event materials included in the Board packet, and discussions ensued among the Board and staff.

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 November 17, 2026 at 3:00 p.m.

14. CLOSED SESSION
The Board adjourned to closed session at approximately 5:17 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 and Application 22423 of 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 5:40 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 Urton, seconded by Trustee Burchardi, and carried by a 5-0-0 voice vote, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 5:41 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

_____
Racel Cota, Secretary to the Board

ATTEST: _____
Jeff Clay, President

MINUTES PREPARED BY:

_____
Kylie Kelleher, Executive Administrative Assistant

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT,
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO.1
November 17, 2026

Consent Agenda Report

CA-1. Water Supply and Production Report. The District's total water production in **October 2026 (278 AF)** was 98 AF lower than total production in **September 2026** (376 AF), 42 AF lower than the most recent 3-year running average (2023-2025) for the month of **October** (320 AF), and 70 AF lower than the most recent 10-year running average (2016-2025) for the month of **October** (348 AF). 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 **October 2026**, approximately **3 AF** was produced from the Santa Ynez Upland wells and approximately **19 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 approximately **256 AF** of SWP supplies for the month, all of which was allocated to Exchange with the South Coast. According to USBR, **47.6 AF** of SWP supplies were delivered to Lake Cachuma for South Coast entities. Direct diversions to the County Park and USBR were **1.99 AF**.

The USBR Lake Cachuma Daily Operations Report for **October** (as of October 31, 2026) recorded the end of month reservoir elevation at **742.08'** and end of month storage of **161,348 AF**. USBR recorded total precipitation at the reservoir of **2.57 inches** for the month. Reported reservoir evaporation in **October** was **1,053.9 AF**. Based on the updated maximum storage capacity of 192,978 AF (previously 193,305 AF), as of **November 9, 2026** Cachuma reservoir was reported at **83.0%** of capacity, with then-current storage of **160,178 AF** (Santa Barbara County Flood Control District, Rainfall and Reservoir Summary).

When reservoir storage exceeds 100,000 AF, the Cachuma Member Units have usually 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 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 325 AF of contractual Project supplies in Cachuma, comprised of this year's allocation less amounts exchanged thus far with the South Coast Member Units. **By joint letter dated June 5, 2026 the Cachuma Member Units requested a 100% Project allocation for WY 2026-2027. Reclamation granted that request by letter dated July 1, 2026, which resulted in an additional allocation of 2,651 AF to the District effective October 1st.**

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.*

On May 15, 2026 DWR increased the final 2026 SWP Table A allocation to 45 percent. As of November 11, 2026 DWR recorded Lake Oroville storage levels at 42 percent of total capacity and 80 percent of its historic average for this time of year.

As reflected in the October 22, November 9, and November 16, 2026 meeting agendas for the CCWA Board of Directors, CCWA remains focused on various important issues related to the SWP and SWP deliveries, including but not limited to: SWP operations and water supply conditions; pending and proposed water transfers; the proposed permanent sale of SWP Table A supplies by the Montecito Water District; land subsidence and invasive mussel issues affecting the California Aqueduct; infrastructure maintenance and improvements; and strategic planning. The next Special Meeting of the CCWA Board of Directors is currently scheduled for December 7, 2026.

— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

Historical Archive and Reports Database

Lake Cachuma Daily Operations

Run Date: 11/10/2026

October 2026

		STORAGE ACRE-FEET		COMPUTED*	CCWA	PRECIP ON	RELEASE - AF.				EVAPORATION		PRECIP
DAY	ELEV	IN LAKE	CHANGE	INFLOW AF.	INFLOW AF.	RES. SURF. AF.	TUNNEL	HILTON CREEK	OUTLET	SPILLWAY	AF.	INCH	INCHES
	743.46	165,179											
1	743.40	165,013	-166	1.8	0.0	0.0	86.1	13.3	32.0	0.0	36.4	0.210	0.00
2	743.37	164,930	-83	90.3	0.0	0.0	89.8	13.3	32.0	0.0	38.2	0.220	0.00
3	743.33	164,819	-111	74.1	0.0	0.0	92.0	13.3	33.0	0.0	46.8	0.270	0.00
4	743.00	163,905	-914	-706.4	0.0	0.0	96.8	13.3	44.0	0.0	53.5	0.310	0.00
5	743.21	164,487	582	775.0	0.0	0.0	95.9	13.2	32.0	0.0	51.9	0.300	0.00
6	743.13	164,265	-222	-24.9	0.0	0.0	97.3	13.2	33.0	0.0	53.6	0.310	0.00
7	743.06	164,072	-193	7.6	0.0	0.0	96.6	13.2	32.0	0.0	58.8	0.340	0.00
8	743.01	163,933	-139	51.9	0.0	0.0	94.6	13.2	33.0	0.0	50.1	0.290	0.00
9	742.93	163,712	-221	-32.4	0.0	0.0	95.1	13.2	32.0	0.0	48.3	0.280	0.00
10	742.88	163,573	-139	42.2	0.0	0.0	97.1	13.2	33.0	0.0	37.9	0.220	0.00
11	742.88	163,573	0	172.3	0.0	0.0	98.5	13.2	33.0	0.0	27.6	0.160	0.00
12	742.88	163,573	0	143.7	0.0	4.6	70.3	13.2	32.0	0.0	32.8	0.190	0.02
13	742.73	163,158	-415	-282.5	0.0	2.3	64.6	13.1	33.0	0.0	24.1	0.140	0.01
14	742.68	163,019	-139	4.8	0.0	0.0	67.7	13.1	32.0	0.0	31.0	0.180	0.00
15	742.58	162,744	-275	-117.3	0.0	0.0	77.5	13.1	31.0	0.0	36.1	0.210	0.00
16	742.53	162,607	-137	49.5	0.0	0.0	89.2	13.1	31.0	0.0	53.2	0.310	0.00
17	742.49	162,497	-110	81.4	0.0	0.0	98.5	13.1	30.0	0.0	49.8	0.290	0.00
18	742.42	162,306	-191	-7.6	0.0	0.0	98.1	13.1	31.0	0.0	41.2	0.240	0.00
19	742.34	162,087	-219	-42.6	0.0	0.0	96.3	13.1	31.0	0.0	36.0	0.210	0.00
20	742.28	161,923	-164	-1.6	0.0	0.0	91.9	13.1	30.0	0.0	27.4	0.160	0.00
21	742.24	161,813	-110	34.1	0.0	29.7	90.3	13.1	31.0	0.0	39.4	0.230	0.13
22	742.36	162,142	329	-33.0	0.0	463.8	55.3	13.1	30.0	0.0	3.4	0.020	2.03
23	742.36	162,142	0	-7.7	18.7	84.5	44.5	13.1	31.0	0.0	6.9	0.040	0.37
24	742.36	162,142	0	83.6	23.1	2.3	41.9	13.1	30.0	0.0	24.0	0.140	0.01
25	742.29	161,950	-192	-87.3	5.8	0.0	40.7	13.1	31.0	0.0	25.7	0.150	0.00
26	742.26	161,868	-82	26.6	0.0	0.0	42.3	13.0	31.0	0.0	22.3	0.130	0.00
27	742.21	161,731	-137	-24.6	0.0	0.0	42.0	13.0	30.0	0.0	27.4	0.160	0.00
28	742.17	161,622	-109	-6.8	0.0	0.0	41.1	13.0	31.0	0.0	17.1	0.100	0.00
29	742.14	161,540	-82	22.2	0.0	0.0	43.4	13.0	29.0	0.0	18.8	0.110	0.00
30	742.11	161,458	-82	14.2	0.0	0.0	41.5	13.0	28.0	0.0	13.7	0.080	0.00
31	742.08	161,348	-110	-5.4	0.0	0.0	42.1	13.0	29.0	0.0	20.5	0.120	0.00
TOTALS			**-3,831**	**295.2**	**47.6**	**587.2**	**2,319.0**	**407.1**	**981.0**	**0.0**	**1,053.9**	**6.120**	**2.57**
AVERAGE		**162,902**											

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

Santa Barbara County - Flood Control District

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

Rainfall and Reservoir Summary

Updated 8am: 11/9/2026 **Water Year: 2027** **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	0.27	2.97	258%	18%	
Cachuma Dam (USBR)	*332*	0.00	0.00	0.80	3.33	281%	17%	
Carpinteria (Fire Stn)	*208*	0.00	0.00	0.48	3.41	280%	20%	
Cuyama (Fire Stn)	*436*	0.00	0.00	0.08	1.40	188%	18%	
Figueroa Mtn (USFS Stn)	*421*	0.00	0.00	1.15	3.13	183%	15%	10.0
Gibraltar Dam (City Facility)	*230*	0.00	0.00	0.52	4.85	351%	18%	9.3
Goleta (Fire Stn-Los Carneros)	*440*	0.00	0.00	0.20	2.21	183%	12%	
Lompoc (City Hall)	*439*	0.00	0.00	0.39	2.99	291%	20%	9.7
Los Alamos (Fire Stn)	*204*	0.00	0.00	0.13	2.50	253%	16%	
San Marcos Pass (USFS Stn)	*212*	0.00	0.00	0.47	4.86	220%	14%	
Santa Barbara (County Bldg)	*234*	0.00	0.00	0.08	3.21	260%	17%	
Santa Maria (City Pub.Works)	*380*	0.00	0.00	0.24	1.44	138%	11%	
Santa Ynez (Fire Stn /Airport)	*218*	0.00	0.00	0.84	3.19	309%	20%	
Sisquoc (Fire Stn)	*256*	0.00	0.00	0.23	1.89	172%	13%	

Countywide percentage of "Normal-to-Date" rainfall : 240%

Countywide percentage of "Normal Water-Year" rainfall : 16%

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)

Click on Site for Real-Time Readings	Spillway Elev. (ft)	Current Elev. (ft)	Max. Storage (ac-ft)	Current Storage (ac-ft)	Current Capacity (%)	Storage Change Mo.(ac-ft)	Storage Change Year*(ac-ft)
Gibraltar Reservoir	1,400.00	1,383.04	4,490	1,262	28.1%	5	-22
Cachuma Reservoir	753.**	741.82	192,978	160,178	83.0%	-850	-9,774
Jameson Reservoir	2,224.00	2,217.80	4,587	3,904	85.1%	-10	-306
Twitchell Reservoir	Twitchell Reservoir level has dropped below the sensor, data no longer available.						

Previous Rainfall and Reservoir Summaries

CENTRAL COAST WATER AUTHORITY

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dessi Mladenova, Controller — November 3, 2026

FROM: Lacey Adam, Senior Accountant

SUBJECT: Monthly Water Deliveries

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

Project Participant	Delivery Amount (acre-feet)
Chorro	121
Lopez	75
Shandon	0
Guadalupe	27
Santa Maria	570
Golden State Water Co.	0
Vandenberg	300
Buellton	27
Solvang	62
Santa Ynez ID#1	256
Bradbury	48
TOTAL	**1,486**

In order to reconcile these deliveries with the DWR revenue meter, which read 1,515 acre-feet, the following delivery amounts should be used for billing purposes:

Project Participant	Delivery Amount (acre-feet)
Chorro	**123**
Lopez	**77**
Shandon	**0**
Guadalupe	**28**
Santa Maria	**538***
Golden State Water Co	**43***
Vandenberg	**306**
Buellton	**28**
Solvang	**63**
Santa Ynez ID#1	**261**
Bradbury	**48**
TOTAL	**1,515**

***Golden State Water Company delivered 43 acre-feet into its system through the Santa Maria turnout. This delivery is recorded by providing a credit of 43 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 261 acre-feet of exchange water.

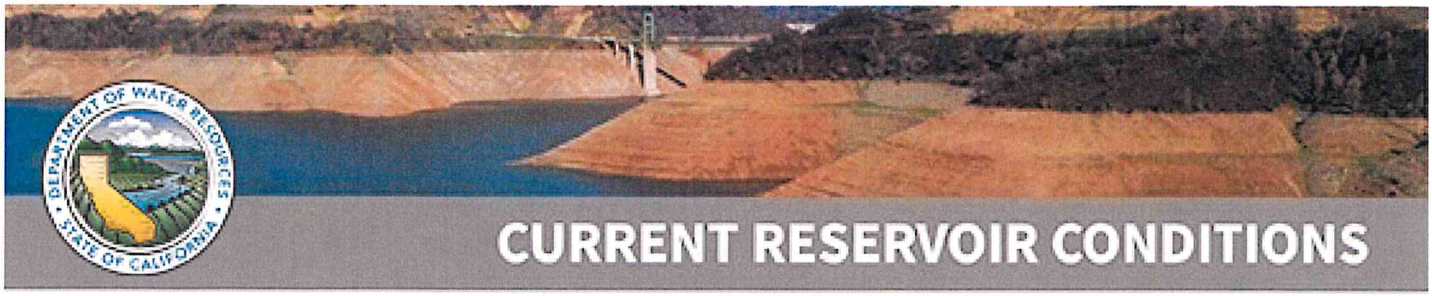
The exchange water is allocated as follows

Project Participant	Exchange Amount (acre-feet)
Goleta	94
Santa Barbara	63
Montecito	63
Carpinteria	41
TOTAL	**261**

Bradbury Deliveries into Lake Cachuma are allocated as follows:

Project Participant	Delivery Amount (acre-feet)
Carpinteria	0
Goleta	0
La Cumbre	48
Montecito	0
Morehart	0
Santa Barbara	0
Raytheon	0
TOTAL	**48**

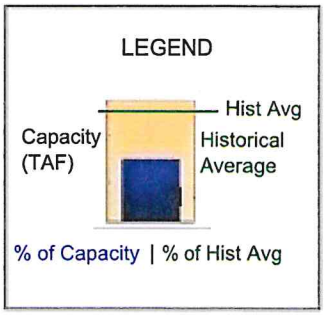
cc: Daniel Brooks, Goleta WD
Mike Babb, Golden State WC
Joshua Haggmark, City of Santa Barbara
Janet Gingras, COMB
Jeromy Caldera, San Luis Obispo County
Paeter Garcia, Santa Ynez RWCD ID#1
Shad Springer, City of Santa Maria
David Trujillo, City of Guadalupe
Kelley Dyer, Carpinteria Valley WD
Mike Alvarado, La Cumbre Mutual WC
Pernell Rush, Vandenberg SFB
Nick Turner, Montecito WD
Jose Acosta, City of Solvang
Rose Hess, City of Buellton

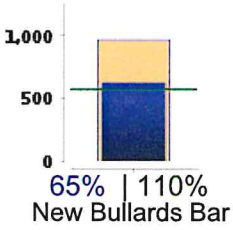


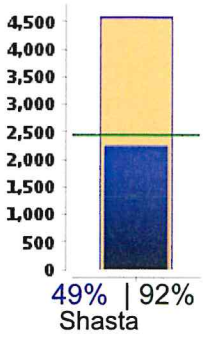
CALIFORNIA MAJOR WATER SUPPLY RESERVOIRS

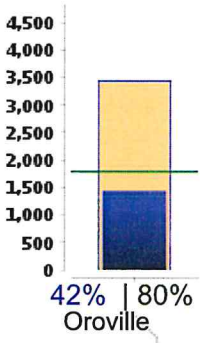
Midnight - November 11, 2026

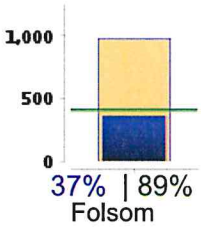
CURRENT CONDITIONS

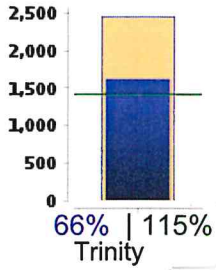


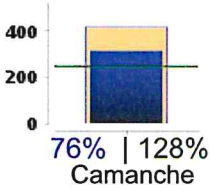


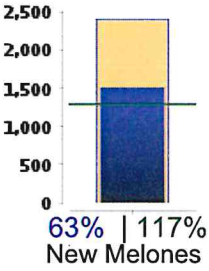


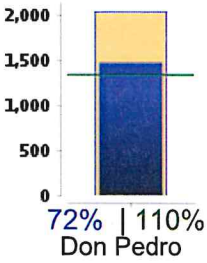


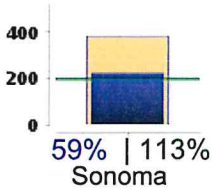


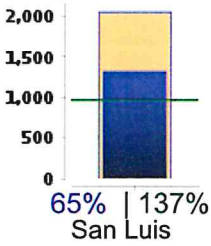




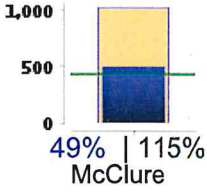


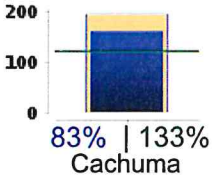


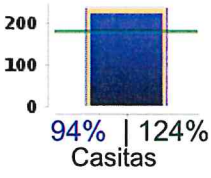


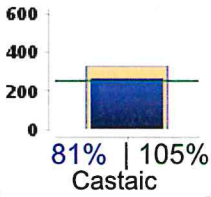


Data From: Nov 10

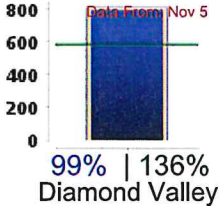


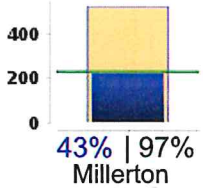


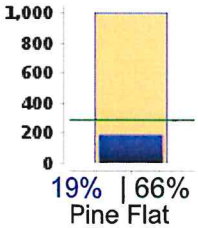




Data From: Nov 5







Updated 11/12/2026 02:18 PM

REVISED

CENTRAL COAST WATER AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

AGENDA

Chairman – Eric Friedman
Vice Chairman – Jeff Clay

Thursday, October 22, 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: 284 583 838 661 716 Passcode: mf7WS7zW
or by dialing +1 323-484-5095,and entering access Code/Meeting ID: 332 367 850#

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.

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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. Consent Calendar

A. Minutes of the August 27, 2026 Regular Meeting ★
B. Bills for Ratification ★
C. Status Report on Fiscal Year 2026-27 Procurements ★
D. Controller's Report ★
E. Operations Report ★
F. California Environmental Quality Act Findings on the Riser Replacement Project – Phase 2 and Electrical Vehicle Charging Station Installation Project ★
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.

C. Presentation from Montecito Water District Regarding Potential Permanent Sale of a Portion of the District's State Water Project Allocation
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.

D. Approving a Reimbursement Agreement for the Chorro Valley Access Road Repair Project ★
Staff Recommendation: Approve and adopt Resolution No. 26-13 entitled "Approving a Reimbursement Agreement for the Chorro Valley Access Road Repair Project"

E. Clerical Changes to CCWA Personnel Policy Manual ★
Staff Recommendation: Approve proposed clerical changes to CCWA Personnel Policy Manual.

F. FY 2026/27 First Quarter Investment Report ★
Staff Recommendation: Accept Report

G. Ernst and Young Audit Report on the 2026 DWR Statement of Charges ★
Staff Recommendation: Accept Report

H. State Water Contractors Report
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.

I. Legislative Report ★
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.

J. Executive Director's General Update
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.

V. Reports from Board Members for Information Only

VI. Items for Next Regular Meeting Agenda

VII. Date of Next Meeting: Special Board of Directors November 9, 2026

VIII. Closed Session

A. CLOSED SESSION: CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION
Government Code section 54956.9(d)(4)
Initiation of litigation: 1 case

B. CLOSED SESSION: PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT
Government Code section 54957
Title: Safety Officer

C. CLOSED SESSION: CONFERENCE WITH REAL PROPERTY NEGOTIATORS
Government Code section 54956.8
Property: CCWA Project Allocation

IX. Return to Open Session

A. Report on Closed Session Actions (if any)

X. Adjournment

CENTRAL COAST WATER AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECIAL MEETING

AGENDA

Chairman – Eric Friedman
Vice Chairman – Jeff Clay

Monday, November 9, 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: 213 921 935 943 006 Passcode: J77jc25o
or by dialing +1 323-484-5095,and entering access Code/Meeting ID: 323 645 049#

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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. Strategic Direction Workshop
Staff Recommendation: Discussion.

IV. Reports from Board Members for Information Only

V. Date of Next Meeting: Special Meeting November 16, 2026
Additional location: 1020 State Street, Santa Barbara

VI. Adjournment

Strategic Direction Workshop Agenda

Special Meeting of the CCWA Board of Directors · CCWA 2027–2032 Strategic Plan

Monday, November 9, 2026, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm, at 255 Industrial Way, Buellton, California

Operating Committee members are invited to participate. Ken Kirby (Evotoco) facilitates the discussion. Pre-read: Strategic Options Memo, distributed with this agenda.

Meeting Goals

- A shared understanding of the current status of the strategic planning process
- Hear reactions to the proposed vision, the mission, and the proposed organizational values
- Receive Board input on the proposed success criteria for the Strategic Plan
- Receive input on descriptions of the two primary ways CCWA will provide value
- Receive input on the five strategic priorities and the staff-recommended strategic options for the draft Strategic Plan

Agenda

1. Welcome, workshop goals, and project status
2. Describing CCWA identity: vision, mission, and values
3. Proposed success criteria for the Strategic Plan
4. Describing how CCWA provides value and how that supports budgeting and implementation
5. Break
6. Strategic Priority 1: Level of service and reliability for all Project Participants
7. Strategic Priority 2: Improve communication and trust between and among Project Participants and CCWA
8. Strategic Priority 3: Advocating on behalf of the CCWA collective in the State Water Project
9. Lunch
10. Strategic Priority 4: Cultivate CCWA's capacity needed to provide desired level of service
11. Strategic Priority 5: Optional additional Project Participant support
12. Confirm what we heard, and next steps

CENTRAL COAST WATER AUTHORITY
SPECIAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

AGENDA

Chairman – Eric Friedman
Vice Chairman – Jeff Clay

Monday, November 16, 2026
9:00 AM
at 255 Industrial Way, Buellton, California 93427
and
1021 Anacapa Street, Santa Barbara, California

Members of the public may participate by video call or telephone via
Microsoft Teams Meeting ID: 295 867 424 573 944 Passcode: yX25uR6f
or by dialing +1 323-484-5095,and entering access Code/Meeting ID: 355 370 093#

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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. Closed Session

A. CLOSED SESSION: CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION
Government Code section 54956.9(d)(4)
Initiation of litigation: 1 case

IV. Return to Open Session

A. Report on Closed Session Actions (if any)

V. Consent Calendar

A. Minutes of the October 22, 2026 Regular Meeting ★

B. Bills for Ratification ★
C. Controller's Report ★
D. Operations Report ★
Staff Recommendation: Approve the Consent Calendar

VI. Executive Directors Report

A. Water Supply Situation Report
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.

B. Water Transfers Update
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.

C. Approve the Filter Media and Underdrain Nozzle Replacement Project ★
Staff Recommendation: Adopt Resolution No. 26-14 approving the Filter Media and Underdrain Nozzle Replacement Project and Authorizing the Executive Director to Award Contract to and Execute Contract Documents with Cushman Contracting Corporation in the Amount of $2,757,100 to Construct the Same

D. Professional Consulting Services Agreement with Network Environmental Solutions, Inc. for Safety Program Management and Consulting Services ★
Staff Recommendation: Approve and adopt Resolution No. 26-15 entitled "A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Central Coast Water Authority Approving the Professional Consulting Services Master Agreement With Network Environmental Solutions, Inc. for Safety Program and Management Services"

E. Brownstein Request for Conflict of Interest Waiver re. Montecito Water District's proposed sale of 1,400 AF to Solstra Communities California, LLC, and related transactions potentially involving Golden State Water Company and Cadiz, Inc.
Staff Recommendation: Approve Brownstein's Request for Waiver of Conflict of Interest regarding Solstra Communities California, LLC, Golden State Water Company, and Cadiz, Inc. with respect to certain potential transactions related to the Solomon Hills Project; Authorize the Chair of the Board of Directors to execute the Request for Conflict of Interest

F. CCWA Meeting Dates for 2027 ★
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.

G. Executive Director's General Update
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.

VII. Reports from Board Members for Information Only

VIII. Items for Next Regular Meeting Agenda

IX. Date of Next Meeting: Special Board of Directors December 7, 2026

X. Adjournment

2025 Urban Water Management Plan

Dismiss

(/2025-urban-water-management-plan)

The Central Coast Water Authority (CCWA) has prepared its 2025 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) and Water Shortage Contingency Plan (WSCP) in compliance with the Urban Water Management Planning Act. Please see Notices page under Newsroom for additional information.

(/2025-urban-water-management-plan)

Central Coast Water Authority

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

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THIS ITEM APPEARS ON

BOARD MEETINGS (/BOARD-MEETINGS)

DEC
7
2026

9 AM

Board Special Meeting

Join Remote Meeting

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NOTICE AND AGENDA OF SPECIAL MEETING

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

HELD AT
SANTA YNEZ COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT, MEETING ROOM
1070 FARADAY STREET, SANTA YNEZ, CALIFORNIA
4:00 P.M., WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2026

Optional remote public participation is available via Telephone or TEAMS
To access the meeting via telephone, please dial: +1 323-618-1948,,225796028# or via the Web at: Join the meeting now

"Join a Meeting" - **Meeting ID 214 676 774 791 557 Meeting Passcode: Rd3RH67u**
***** Please Note *****
The above teleconference option for public participation is being offered as a convenience only and may limit or otherwise prevent your access to and participation in the meeting due to disruption or unavailability of the teleconference line. If any such disruption of unavailability occurs for any reason the meeting will not be suspended, terminated, or continued. Therefore in-person attendance of the meeting is strongly encouraged.

AGENDA OF SPECIAL MEETING

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Public Comment (Any member of the public may address the Board relating to any non-agenda matter within the Board's jurisdiction. The total time for all public comment shall not exceed fifteen minutes and the time allotted for each individual shall not exceed five minutes. No action will be taken by the Board at this meeting on any public comment item.)
3. Agricultural Director and Alternate Director Selection Process
    a. Review and consider approval of requesting nominations for an Agricultural Director and an Alternate Agricultural Director for the EMA GSA Board of Directors
4. Consider Date/Time for Next Regular and/or Special Meetings of the EMA GSA
    a. Next EMA GSA CAG Meeting Thursday, October 15, 2026 at 3:00 PM.
    b. Next EMA GSA Board Meeting Thursday, November 19, 2026 at 4:00 PM at SYCSD Meeting Room.
    c. Next Basin-Wide Joint Special Meeting Friday, December 11, 2026, at 9:00 AM at Buellton City Council Chambers.
5. Board of Directors Reports and Requests for Future Agenda Items
6. Adjournment

[This agenda was posted at least 24 hours prior to the special meeting at 3669 Sagunto Street, Suite 101, Santa Ynez, California, and SantaYnezWater.org in accordance with Government Code Section 54954. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to review agenda materials or participate in this meeting, please contact the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin Eastern Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency at (805) 457-5065. Advanced notification as far as practicable prior to the meeting will enable the GSA to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.]

TO: **SYRVGB EMA GSA Board of Directors**

FROM: **Dan Heimel, Executive Director**

DATE: **October 7, 2026**

SUBJECT: **Item 3a – Review and consider approval of requesting nominations for an Agricultural Director and an Alternate Agricultural Director for the EMA GSA Board of Directors.**

Background

On October 24, 2024, the Member Directors of the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin Eastern Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency (EMA GSA) unanimously appointed Douglas Circle as Agricultural Director and Mary Heyden as Alternate Agricultural Director, following their nomination by the Santa Ynez Water Group (Water Group). Article 7.4 of the Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement (JPA) sets a two-year term for these positions, so both terms expire on or about October 24, 2026. The Agricultural Director and Alternate may be reappointed for additional terms, but reappointment requires re-nomination by the Water Group and a unanimous vote of the Member Directors.

Discussion

Article 7.2(f) of the JPA (Attachment A) sets out the process for appointing the Agricultural Director and Alternate Agricultural Director. The process has four steps:

1. **Board request.** The process begins upon request of the Board. The Water Group then solicits applications, working with other agricultural associations or entities in the EMA, including the Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau.
2. **Public solicitation.** The solicitation must be publicly noticed in a newspaper of general circulation within the EMA and announced at no less than one public meeting of the EMA GSA.
3. **Nomination.** The Water Group reviews the applications and nominates one or more Qualified Nominees. The Water Group must present a discussion of its review and nomination process at an open public meeting of the EMA GSA.
4. **Appointment.** Appointment requires a unanimous vote of the Member Directors (or Alternates) at a publicly noticed meeting where a Director or Alternate from each Member is present and votes.

A Qualified Nominee does not need to be a member of the Water Group, but must: (i) own, or represent an owner of, property within the GSA boundaries that is involved in Commercial Agriculture and produces at least 2 acre-feet per year of groundwater from within the GSA to support that agriculture; (ii) be a resident and registered voter within the GSA boundaries; and (iii) not be a party, or represent an owner who is a party, to pending litigation against the GSA, other than a groundwater rights adjudication affecting the EMA.

In 2024, the Water Group published its solicitation in the Santa Ynez Valley News and the Santa Maria Times from September 4 through September 30, 2024, and submitted its recommendation to the Board on October 14, 2024. Because of the required public noticing, the process is unlikely to be completed

before the current terms expire. If the Board makes its request at this meeting, Staff anticipates that the Water Group could present its nominations, and the Member Directors could consider appointment, at the next EMA GSA Board Meeting on November 19, 2026.

If the Agricultural Director seat is vacant, items that require a supermajority under Article 11.3(b) of the JPA, such as budgets, fees, GSP amendments, and consultant selection, still require four affirmative votes regardless of the number of Directors appointed. In effect, these items would require a unanimous vote of the four Member Directors. In addition, under Article 9.1(a), while no Agricultural Director is seated, a contract for Executive Director, staff, consultant, or legal services may be approved by at least three votes, but only for a term not to exceed one year.

Recommendation

EMA GSA Staff recommend the Board of Directors review and consider approval of requesting that the Santa Ynez Water Group solicit applications for, and nominate Qualified Nominees to, the Agricultural Director and Alternate Agricultural Director positions in accordance with Article 7.2(f) of the JPA.

Attachment

Attachment A: July 16, 2024 Article 7 of the Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement Santa Ynez River Valley Basin Eastern Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency

imposed on Solvang.

ARTICLE 6
MEMBERSHIP

6.1 Members. The Members of the EMA GSA, as long as they have not withdrawn from this Agreement pursuant to Article 16, shall be:

(a) City of Solvang;

(b) Santa Barbara County Water Agency;

(c) Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District; and

(d) Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1.

6.2 New Members. Any entity authorized by SGMA and other applicable law to participate in the EMA GSA, that is not a Member on the Effective Date of this Agreement, may become a Member upon all of the following:

(a) The approval of the Board of Directors as specified in Article 11.3;

(b) Amendment of the Agreement in accordance with Article 17.2; and

(c) Payment by the new Member of a pro rata share of all previously incurred costs that the Board of Directors determines have resulted in benefit to the new Member, and are appropriate for assessment on the new Member.

ARTICLE 7
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

7.1 Formation of the Board of Directors. The EMA GSA shall be governed by a Board of Directors ("Board"). Directors of the Board shall consist of one representative from each of the Members of the GSA pursuant to Article 6, and one representative

appointed by the Member Directors, initially as follows:

(a) One Director representing Solvang;

(b) One Director representing Santa Barbara;

(c) One Director representing SYRWCD;

(d) One Director representing ID No.1; and

(e) One Director, appointed in accordance with Article 7.2 by the Member Directors listed in (a)-(d) above, specifically representing the agricultural interests of the EMA (the "Agricultural Director").

7.2 Appointment of Directors. Directors of the Board shall be appointed as follows:

(a) The Director representing Solvang shall be appointed by resolution of Solvang's City Council.

(b) The Director representing Santa Barbara shall be appointed by resolution of Santa Barbara's Board of Directors.

(c) The Director representing SYRWCD shall be appointed by resolution of SYRWCD's Board of Directors.

(d) The Director representing ID No.1 shall be appointed by resolution of ID No.1's Board of Trustees.

(e) The Director of any new Member of the EMA GSA pursuant to Article 6.2 shall be appointed by resolution of the governing body of the new Member.

(f) The Agricultural Director listed in Article 7.1(e) shall be appointed as follows:

(1) Upon request of the Board, the Santa Ynez Water Group, working in conjunction with other agricultural associations or entities having members or doing business within the GSA's boundaries, specifically including but not limited to the Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau, shall solicit applications for the Agricultural Director position through an open public process where such solicitation shall be publicly noticed in a newspaper of general circulation within the EMA and announced at no less than one public meeting of the EMA GSA. The Santa Ynez Water Group shall review all received applications and submit (i.e., nominate) one or more Qualified Nominees for the Agricultural Director position to the

Board, where a discussion of the review and nomination process must be provided by the nominating entity as part of an open public meeting of the EMA GSA.

(a) A "Qualified Nominee" need not be a member of the Santa Ynez Water Group, or any other agricultural association or entity having members or doing business within the GSA's boundaries, but shall satisfy the following qualifications:

(i) Be an owner or representative of an owner of property located within the boundaries of the GSA and involved in Commercial Agriculture which produces at least 2 acre-feet per year of groundwater (as defined by SGMA and the EMA GSP) from within the boundaries of the GSA to support Commercial Agriculture on said property;

- For purposes of these criteria, "Commercial Agriculture" means a commercial or family farming enterprise whose business is to cultivate the land for growing plants, vines, or other crops for consumption, fiber, biofuel, or raw materials, or the breeding, feeding, or raising of animals, livestock, or poultry for human consumption or other products, all resulting in the marketing and commercial sale of such products. The GSA may require submittal of documentation satisfactory to the GSA, including but not limited to applicable IRS forms, certifying that the property is used for Commercial Agriculture.

(ii) Be a resident and registered voter within the boundaries of the GSA; and

(iii) The Agricultural Director, or the owner he/she represents, may not be a party to any pending litigation against the GSA, other than as a party to a groundwater rights adjudication affecting the EMA.

(iv) Amendments to these criteria may be adopted through resolution by a unanimous vote of the Member Directors.

(2) After the Santa Ynez Water Group has submitted one or more Qualified Nominees for the Agricultural Director position, the

Member Directors will consider said Qualified Nominees for appointment to the Board. Notwithstanding Article 11.3 of this Agreement, said appointment decision shall require a unanimous vote of all the Member Directors (or Alternates as applicable) during a publicly noticed meeting of the EMA GSA where the Directors from each of the Members (or Alternates as applicable) are present and each casts a vote. In the absence of a unanimous vote of approval and appointment by the Member Directors, the Member Directors may request the Santa Ynez Water Group to submit alternative Qualified Nominees in accordance with the process set forth above.

(3) The Agricultural Director shall be appointed for a term of two years but may be reappointed for multiple terms so long as that Agricultural Director is nominated by the Santa Ynez Water Group in accordance with the processes and requirements set forth above and unanimously approved and appointed by the Member Directors.

(4) If the Santa Ynez Water Group is unwilling or unable to select and submit one or more Qualified Nominees for the Agricultural Director position to the Board pursuant to the process set forth herein, the Board may request another agricultural association or entity having members or doing business within the GSA's boundaries to perform such process.

(g) Each Director representing a Member shall be an elected official of the appointing Member.

7.3 Alternate Directors. Each Director shall have one Alternate to act as a substitute Director for that Director. All Alternates shall be appointed in the same manner as set forth in Article 7.2. Alternate Directors shall not vote or participate in any deliberations of the Board unless appearing as a substitute for a Director due to absence or conflict of interest. If a Director is not present, or if a Director has a conflict of interest which precludes participation by the Director in any decision-making process of the Board, the Alternate Director appointed to act in his/her place shall assume all roles of the Director, and shall have the authority to act on behalf of the absent Director, including but not limited to participating in open session and closed session deliberations and casting votes on matters before the Board. An Alternate Director representing a Member shall be an elected official or staff of the appointing Member.

7.4 Requirements. Each Member Director and Alternate Member Director shall be appointed by resolution as set forth in Article 7.2. Member Directors and Alternate Member Directors shall serve at the pleasure of the governing body of the appointing Member. No individual Director or Alternate representing a Member may be removed

except by the vote of the governing body of the Member that appointed him/her. The term of a non-Member Director or non-Member Alternate appointed in accordance with Article 7.2 above shall be two (2) years, and such Director or Alternate may serve any number of consecutive terms upon re-appointment in accordance with Article 7.2 above; provided, however, that any non-Member Director or non-Member Alternate may be removed from his/her position at any time prior to the expiration of his/her then-current term based on a decision by the Member Directors, where notwithstanding Article 11.3 of this Agreement said removal decision shall be subject to the unanimous voting requirements of Article 7.2(f)(2) above.

7.5 Vacancies. Upon the vacancy of a Director, the Alternate Director shall serve as Director until a new Director is appointed as set forth in Article 7.2 above. Upon the vacancy of an Alternate, a new Alternate shall be appointed as set forth in Articles 7.2 and 7.3. A Member shall submit any changes in its Director or Alternate Director positions to the Board by providing a copy of its executed resolution.

7.6 Duties of the Board of Directors. The business and affairs of the EMA GSA, and all of its powers, including without limitation all powers set forth in Article 5, are reserved to and shall be exercised by and through the Board of Directors, or Member Directors where specifically set forth in this Agreement, except as may be expressly delegated to the Executive Director or other(s) pursuant to this Agreement, Bylaws of the GSA, or by specific action of the Board of Directors.

7.7 Director and Alternate Compensation. No Director or Alternate shall be compensated by the EMA GSA in connection with any meetings or other activities undertaken as a representative of the GSA. Nothing in this Article is intended to prohibit a Member from compensating its Director or Alternate for compensable activities undertaken as a Director or Alternate of the GSA Board.

ARTICLE 8
OFFICERS

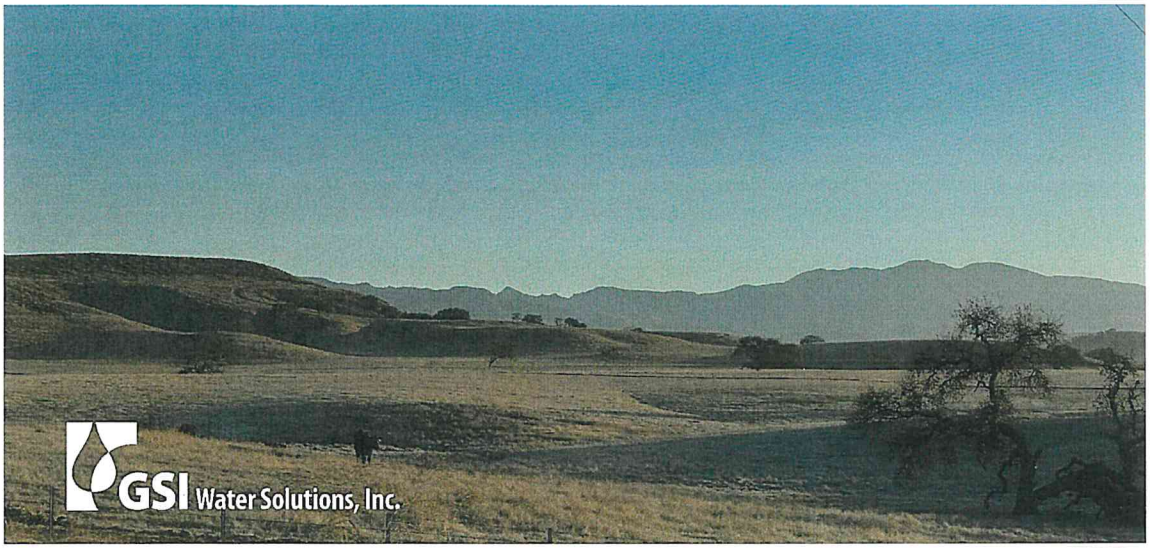
8.1 Officers. Officers of the EMA GSA shall be a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. Additional officers may be appointed by the Board as it deems necessary.

(a) Chair. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors and shall be a member of the Board.

(b) Vice Chair. The Vice Chair shall exercise all powers of the Chair in the Chair's absence or inability to act, and shall be a member of the Board.

(c) Secretary. The Secretary shall certify minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors and shall perform other duties and responsibilities as properly delegated by the Board. The Secretary may, but need not, be a member of the Board.

(d) Treasurer. The Treasurer shall perform such duties and responsibilities specified in Government Code sections 6505.5 and



DRAFT

Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin - Eastern Management Area

Groundwater Sustainability Plan
Periodic Evaluation

Date to be determined, late 2026

Prepared for: Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin - Eastern Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency

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

Prepared by:
GSI Water Solutions, Inc.
418 Chapala Street, Suite H, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

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Proposed Partial Sale of MWD's State Water Project Contract Interests

Presentation to the:
Central Coast Water Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
October 22, 2026

Purpose

01 / INFORMATION

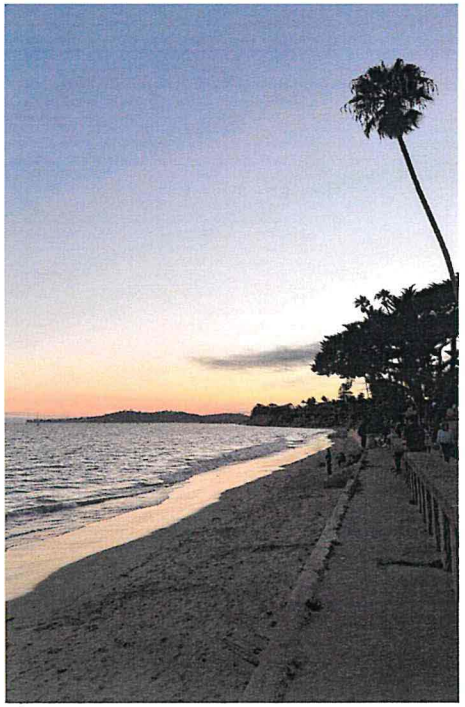
Provide CCWA members with an overview of MWD's proposed sale of a portion of its State Water Project interests.

02 / COLLABORATION

Request CCWA involvement as required to complete the sale.

Overview

1. **ASSET SALE:** MWD advances an opportunity to sell a portion of its State Water interests, approving a non-binding *Letter of Intent* to sell approx. 40% (1,400AF) for use in Santa Barbara County
2. **SUPPLY SECURITY:** Water supply enhancements completed since 2017 strengthen MWD's long-term water security, reducing its reliance on rainfall dependent sources
3. **DROUGHT RESILIENCE:** Long term planning indicates little need for imported water, specifically State Water even during severe drought
4. **LOCAL REINVESTMENT:** A partial sale allows capital to be reinvested locally to further improve water certainty
5. **ASSISTANCE REQUESTED**: As contract holder, CCWA involvement is required and requested to advance and complete a sale



Overview

CCWA Member Potential Concerns

- **CCWA Transaction Costs:** Ensuring all CCWA transaction costs associated with this proposed sale are solely the responsibility of MWD.
- **Cost and Risk Allocation:** Ensuring no liabilities, operational risks, or costs shift to other CCWA members.

MWD's Commitment

- **No Adverse Impacts:** A core requirement is that there be no impacts to other CCWA members.
- **Full Transparency:** Every step of our valuation and risk assessment will be shared openly.
- **Continuity:** With this potential sale MWD remains an active CCWA member with 60% of its original SWP interests.

Background

The District's Decade Long Transformation

The Old Vulnerability:

- ⚠ Reliance on imported, rainfall dependent sources increased exposure to supply fluctuations and shortages

The Response:

- ✓ Significant long-term planning & modeling and analysis
- ✓ Investment in predictable and reliable sources and supply management practices

The Result:

- ✓ A more diverse, local and rainfall independent water supply
- ✓ Adequate local water projected to meet demands even during severe drought conditions with limited State Water
- ✓ State Water largely not needed, presenting a sale opportunity
- ✓ Benefits: reducing cost & liabilities, redirecting financial resources



Background

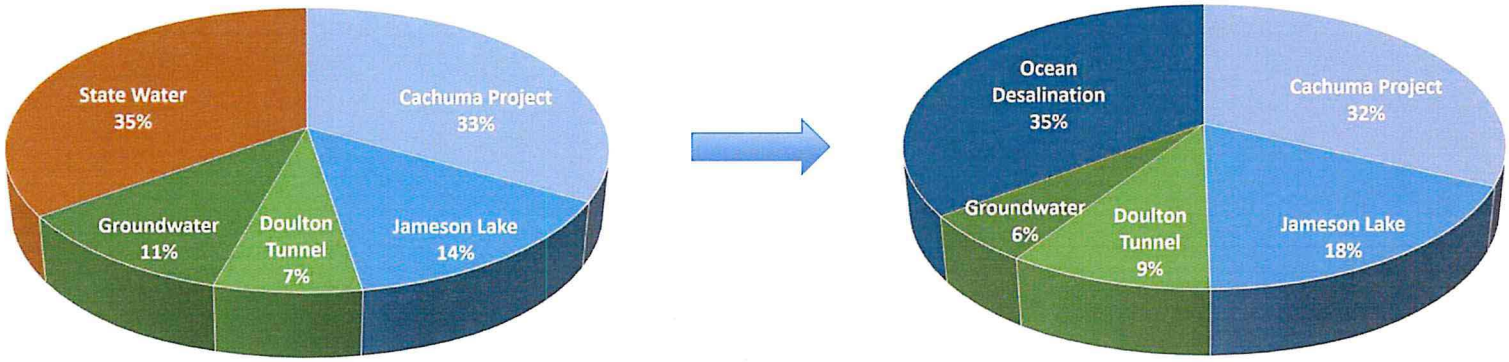
The District's Decade Long Transformation

THEN

- Dependent on rainfall dependent sources
- Reliance on imported water during drought
- Significant demand fluctuations
- Highly susceptible to water shortages

NOW

- 35% rainfall independent supply (desalination)
- Little to no need for imported supplies
- Demand Stability
- Limited projected water shortages, not driven by lack of supply



Strategic Next Step

Partial Divestment of SWP Interests

1. Identified as longer term goal during the negotiation of the 50-Year Water Supply Agreement for desalination with the City of Santa Barbara in 2020
2. Successful execution of annual SWP water sales contract
3. Permanent asset sale opportunity has been under evaluation since 2024
4. Board authorized a *Letter of Intent* (LOI) in September 2026
5. LOI outlines the principal terms of a permanent transfer whereby MWD would sell portion of its SWP water supply interests, inclusive of water supply, treatment, and conveyance

The Proposed Sale

Principal Terms

1. **SELLER:** Montecito Water District (MWD)
    - CCWA Member with contractual rights to 3,300 AF of SWP Contract Interests
2. **BUYER:** Solstra Communities California, LLC.
    - Pursuing water supply to facilitate development
3. **DEVELOPMENT:** Solomon Hills Project
    - 4,000 residential dwellings and ancillary commercial
4. **LOCATION:** Northern Santa Barbara County, south of Orcutt

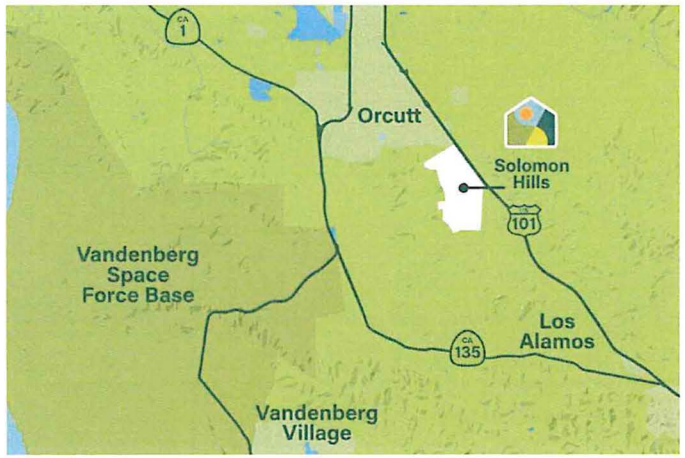


Image from Solomon Hills Project website, https://solomonhillsca.com/

The Proposed Sale

Principal Terms

5. PROPERTY:

- **SWP Entitlement**:
  - 1,400 AF of MWD's 3,300 AF of SWP interests (42.4%)
  - Inclusive of annual water allocation, treatment and conveyance capacity
- **Groundwater Storage**:
  - 550 AF of MWD's contractual rights to recharge, store and recovery capacity in Semitropic
- **Stored Water**:
  - 1,650 AF of MWD's water currently stored in Semitropic

The Proposed Sale

Principal Terms

6. BUYER ASSIGNEE:

- Buyer must assign the Property to a Buyer Assignee
- Buyer Assignee
  - Local water purveyor identified by Buyer to serve the Solomon Hills Project
  - CCWA Project Participant, as determined or approved by CCWA
- Buyer Assignee to assume all rights and obligations to the Property
- Assignment must occur prior to the proposed sale becoming final

The Proposed Sale

Principal Terms

7. Price and Annual Costs:

- Purchase Price: ±$40M in 2028 (financial closing)
- Buyer Assignee to assume all financial obligations for the Property including
  - Annual Fixed and Variable Costs
  - Supplemental Costs (e.g. subsidence, golden mussel mitigation)

The Proposed Sale

Principal Terms

8. SCHEDULE:

- ✓ *Letter of Intent* between MWD and Solstra was authorized in September 2026
- *Purchase & Sale Agreement* between MWD and Solstra to be prepared by March 2027
- Solstra to designate Buyer Assignee by September 2027
- Solstra expects final County approval of the Solomon Hills Project in early 2028
- Related CCWA transfer docs (e.g. contract amendments as necessary) expected in 2028
- Final closing of SWP sale targeted for late 2028/early 2029

The Request

MWD Requests CCWA's Timely Assistance

1. **Define Transfer Process**: Detail the steps required to permanently transfer SWP interests
2. **Review LOI**: Legal counsel review of the proposed sale structure, verifying that all affected agreements, covenants, or restrictions comply with CCWA requirements
3. **Prepare Necessary Amendments**: Assistance with preparing the necessary CCWA contract amendments and/or other documents required to complete the sale.
4. **Board Consideration**: Placement of the contract amendments on a future CCWA Board of Directors agenda for discussion and, ultimately action.

Questions & Discussion

On Behalf of Montecito Water District and its Constituents:
Thank You for Your Ongoing Partnership and
Consideration and Support of Improved Water Certainty for our Community.

CENTRAL COAST WATER AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECIAL MEETING

AGENDA

Chairman – Eric Friedman
Vice Chairman – Jeff Clay

Monday, November 9, 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: 213 921 935 943 006 Passcode: J77jc25o
or by dialing +1 323-484-5095,and entering access Code/Meeting ID: 323 645 049#

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. Strategic Direction Workshop
Staff Recommendation: Discussion.

IV. Reports from Board Members for Information Only

V. Date of Next Meeting: Special Meeting November 16, 2026
Additional location: 1020 State Street, Santa Barbara

VI. Adjournment

Strategic Direction Workshop Agenda

Special Meeting of the CCWA Board of Directors · CCWA 2027–2032 Strategic Plan

Monday, November 9, 2026, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm, at 255 Industrial Way, Buellton, California

Operating Committee members are invited to participate. Ken Kirby (Evotoco) facilitates the discussion. Pre-read: Strategic Options Memo, distributed with this agenda.

Meeting Goals

- A shared understanding of the current status of the strategic planning process
- Hear reactions to the proposed vision, the mission, and the proposed organizational values
- Receive Board input on the proposed success criteria for the Strategic Plan
- Receive input on descriptions of the two primary ways CCWA will provide value
- Receive input on the five strategic priorities and the staff-recommended strategic options for the draft Strategic Plan

Agenda

1. Welcome, workshop goals, and project status
2. Describing CCWA identity: vision, mission, and values
3. Proposed success criteria for the Strategic Plan
4. Describing how CCWA provides value and how that supports budgeting and implementation
5. Break
6. Strategic Priority 1: Level of service and reliability for all Project Participants
7. Strategic Priority 2: Improve communication and trust between and among Project Participants and CCWA
8. Strategic Priority 3: Advocating on behalf of the CCWA collective in the State Water Project
9. Lunch
10. Strategic Priority 4: Cultivate CCWA's capacity needed to provide desired level of service
11. Strategic Priority 5: Optional additional Project Participant support
12. Confirm what we heard, and next steps

Strategic Options Memo

CCWA 2027–2032 Strategic Plan · Staff Recommendations Informed by the Operating Committee

To	CCWA Board of Directors
From	Peter Thompson, Executive Director, with support from the Operating Committee
Date	November 3, 2026
Subject	Strategic options and staff recommendations for the 2027–2032 Strategic Plan

Purpose of This Memo

This memo brings forward staff recommendations for the 2027–2032 Strategic Plan, informed by the Operating Committee's input at its October 8, 2026, Needs Assessment Workshop and by the questionnaires completed in September by 12 Project Participants and 10 senior staff. This memo describes the primary topics to be discussed during the Board's Strategic Direction Workshop on November 9, 2026.

The memo covers:

- CCWA's identity as captured in a proposed vision statement, its long-standing mission, and a proposed set of organizational values
- Proposed success criteria for the Strategic Plan, for Board input
- A description of the two primary ways CCWA provides value, and a proposed way to decide when work is for all Project Participants and when it is for a subset
- Five strategic priorities, each with strategic options and staff recommendations for what to include in the Strategic Plan

At the November 9 workshop, we will discuss the content in this memo and request reactions and input from Board members and Operating Committee members. The input from the Strategic Direction Workshop will be used to prepare the first draft of the CCWA Strategic Plan.

Who CCWA Is

Vision

CCWA has not had a vision statement. Staff propose the following:

> A secure and resilient water supply that supports thriving communities in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties.

What makes a good vision statement. A vision describes the future CCWA is helping bring about: an outcome larger than CCWA itself, one that Project Participants and the communities they serve want, and that CCWA helps achieve alongside others. The mission then names CCWA's specific part in that future, providing reliable, high quality supplemental water, and the values describe how CCWA behaves along the way. Effective visions are vivid rather than abstract, aspirational yet credible, and short

enough to repeat. A vision faces outward, looks further ahead than the five years of the plan, and can be updated as it is achieved or as conditions change.

Mission

CCWA's mission has appeared unchanged since it was established by the Board in December of 1997, and staff recommend carrying it into the Strategic Plan as written:

> To provide San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties with reliable, high quality supplemental water.

Organizational Values

Staff propose five values to set shared expectations for how everyone associated with CCWA (staff, Project Participants, and Board members) will work with one another:

- **Respectful.** We choose to honor each other's perspectives, experience and roles by interacting with courtesy, sincerity and goodwill.
- **Collaborative.** We seek mutual understanding, support each other's efforts, and work together to provide reliable water to the communities that depend on us.
- **Open**. We keep each other informed early and often, explain our reasoning, and report honestly on outcomes.
- **Trustworthy.** We do what we say we will do, and we hold ourselves and each other accountable.
- **Adaptive**. We adjust to changing conditions in supply, regulation and cost, and we look for better ways to serve those who rely on us.

Proposed Success Criteria for the Strategic Plan

The following criteria describe what a successful Strategic Plan contains and does. They draw on the FY 2026/27 budget, which calls for a strategic plan that sets out CCWA's mission and vision, strategic priorities and measurable goals, and on the questionnaire results. The Operating Committee discussed them on October 8 and asked that goals be specific, carry timelines and explain the reasons behind them. Staff invite the Board's input on them. The Strategic Plan:

1. States CCWA's long-standing mission and introduces a recommended vision and organizational values for the Board to consider.
2. Describes the primary ways CCWA plans to provide value to Project Participants (the value propositions).
3. Sets out key strategic priorities that set bounds on what CCWA will and will not do.
4. Includes measurable goals and indicators CCWA can track and report year to year, with timelines and the reasons behind them.
5. Describes how CCWA works with Project Participants and reports results to them.
6. Can be implemented through annual departmental goals and the budget.
7. Is adopted by the Board in February 2027.

How CCWA Provides Value

Value Proposition 1: Managing the State Water Project Contract and Delivering State Water Project Water for All Project Participants

This is CCWA's core work on behalf of all Project Participants: administering the State Water Project contract with DWR; scheduling and delivering water at the time, place and quality Project Participants need; operating and maintaining the pipeline and treatment plant; providing Project Participants a common picture of supply, demand and cost; representing CCWA with DWR and the State Water Contractors; scrutinizing and, when needed, contesting DWR charges; and advocating for State Water Project reliability and affordability.

Value Proposition 2: Evaluating and Developing Additional Water Supply Arrangements with Project Participants Who Want CCWA's Support

This is work CCWA does with Project Participants who want more than what the CCWA collective wants and needs: identifying mismatches between expected demands for water and supply, identifying and evaluating options to reduce the mismatch, facilitating consideration of options for willing Project Participants, and developing and administering arrangements evaluated to be beneficial. The Supplemental Water Purchase Program is a precedent.

The Operating Committee voiced support for Value Proposition 2. Much of its discussion centered on a practical question: how CCWA decides when work is no longer for the collective and becomes work for a subset of Project Participants.

Deciding What Is for the Collective and What Is for a Subset

Staff recommend the following approach, which reflects the Operating Committee's suggestions:

1. **Work for the collective consistent with existing agreements.** Work is for the collective when it is needed to meet CCWA's obligations under the State Water Project contract and its agreements with Project Participants, or to operate and maintain CCWA's facilities to satisfy the agreements described here.
2. **Standing opt-in programs.** Where work is being offered to Project Participants that go beyond the standard administration of the State Water Project contract and its related agreements with Project Participants, CCWA develops standing programs that Project Participants can opt in to. CCWA staff lead a process to identify interest in specific programs by Project Participants, discuss and refine with the Operating Committee, and bring recommendations to the Board.
3. **Programs that serve a subset.** When a program serves a subset, the Project Participants who take part in the program will cover the costs to administer the program. All optional programs will be designed and administered to not reduce the level of service to other Project Participants or shift cost or risk to them.
4. **Early work stays collective.** Watching for opportunities to help meet the desired level of service, relaying options CCWA learns of through the State Water Contractors and its other relationships, and an initial screening of an opportunity remain collective work.

5. **Unclear cases.** If a situation arises where it is unclear which category applies, staff bring the question to the Operating Committee for a recommendation, and the Board decides.

Strategic Priorities and Strategic Options

The Strategic Plan will define the top strategic priorities for CCWA during 2027 to 2032. The strategic options listed here include potential ways to address the strategic priorities with recommendations from staff for what to include in the Strategic Plan.

Strategic Priority 1: Level of Service and Reliability for All Project Participants

What we heard. Reliable dry-year supply was among the top three things that matter most for 9 of 12 Project Participants. Predictable charges matter for Project Participants' own budgets and rate-setting. The Operating Committee asked that the description of CCWA's core service include the quantity of water delivered, with priorities for how water would be allocated during shortages. Some would like to verify that a first right of refusal is in place among Project Participants in the event that a Project Participant decides to discontinue their use of State Water Project water.

What This Priority Addresses

- Water supply deliveries responsive to Project Participant requests.
- Balance costs and benefits, and support stable cost estimates.

Strategic Options

- **Define desired level of service for each Project Participant.** Include a goal in the Strategic Plan to define what each Project Participant wants CCWA to prepare to provide in terms of water quantities, timing, and water quality over the next 10 years. This goal is the foundation for the other Strategic Priority 1 goals: the near-term strategy and the evaluation of suspended Table A both depend on the defined level of service. Proposed target date for completion is June 30, 2027. This includes desired support to maximize the value received by Project Participants of access to State Water Project water that exceeds specific demand for water.
- **Define near-term strategy to provide collective desired level of service.** Include a goal to evaluate and define how to apply the State Water Project tools already available (carryover, banking, transfers and exchanges) for the benefit of all Project Participants, weighed against the cost of doing so. Proposed target date for completion of this goal is October 1, 2027.
- **Consider reacquisition of suspended Table A.** CCWA has first-priority access to more than 10,000 acre-feet of suspended Table A now held by DWR. The choice is whether to reacquire it or allow another State Water Project contractor to acquire it. Include a goal in the Strategic Plan to evaluate whether to reacquire some or all of the suspended Table A informed by the defined desired level of service of all Project Participants. Proposed target date for completion of this goal is July 1, 2028.

Strategic Priority 2: Improve Communication and Trust between and Among Project Participants and CCWA

What we heard. This theme drew the most discussion on October 8. Operating Committee members appreciated recent communication across multiple topics and want it to continue. They asked CCWA to explore the potential for ways to communicate more outside of public meetings, for more flexibility in how CCWA staff and Project Participant staff communicate, for early notice of activities that could affect other Project Participants, and for clarity on what communication is allowed among Project Participant staff in relation to the Operating Committee. They also raised how items are sequenced before they reach the CCWA Board, how Project Participant staff can support their own Board members, and the idea of shared commitments among Project Participants. Several questionnaire respondents asked to hear more about CCWA's collaboration work and its results.

What This Priority Addresses

- Cultivating trust and effective collaboration between and among Project Participants and CCWA.
- Identifying activities CCWA will not engage in, and adopting a process to update this list over time.

Strategic Options

- **Clarify how Brown Act requirements affect communication between Project Participant staff and CCWA staff.** Include a goal in the Strategic Plan to conduct a legal review and provide guidance on what types of communication and interactions between and among Project Participant staff and CCWA staff are subject to Brown Act requirements and how that affects the function of the Operating Committee. Proposed target date for completion of this goal is September 1, 2027.
- **Set shared expectations for communication practices.** Include a goal in the Strategic Plan to design a communications program that identifies the types of information to be shared and potentially discussed. Include identification of topics of potential interest and concern for each Project Participant, identification and selection of potential methods and tools that could be used to provide information, and the importance of sequencing and timing of how and when different types of information are shared. Include the possibility of developing and adopting a short set of shared commitments among Project Participants and CCWA. Reconsider the roles of the Operating Committee, including alternatives for how and where it meets, to facilitate better communication, trust, and effectiveness of CCWA providing the desired level of service. Proposed target date for completion of this goal is January 1, 2028.
- **Setting guardrails.** Include a goal in the Strategic Plan to work with Project Participants to identify activities that CCWA will not participate in (if any), along with a process to review and update the list as needed. Proposed target date for completion of this goal is January 1, 2028. Note: this goal is intended to help CCWA staff have clear understanding if there are actions they should not engage in or consider when working quickly to meet the identified desired level of service within the very dynamic water management environment.

Strategic Priority 3: Advocating on Behalf of the CCWA Collective in the State Water Project

What we heard. Advocacy for State Water Project reliability and affordability was rated essential by 11 of 12 Project Participants, and CCWA's collective voice with DWR and the State Water Contractors was the leading reason Project Participants gave for what they get from CCWA. About three-quarters of the CCWA budget is for expenses paid to DWR. The Operating Committee asked that representation cover all aspects of the State Water Project, including infrastructure, that CCWA make the most of its influence, and raised a legislative platform as a potential goal.

What This Priority Addresses

- Clear and authoritative representation by CCWA staff on behalf of the collective interests of Project Participants related to the State Water Project.

Strategic Options

- **Develop and adopt a CCWA legislative platform.** Include a goal in the Strategic Plan to define key elements of a collaborative legislative platform that provides direction for dynamic advocacy by CCWA staff to represent the collective interests of CCWA and Project Participants. Proposed target date for completion of this goal is June 1, 2027.
- **Identify key resources and key activities needed for advocating on behalf of the CCWA Collective.** Commit to providing specific estimates for the key resources and key activities to be applied for collective advocacy and include in annual budget.
- **Develop approach to track effectiveness of advocacy.** Include a goal in the Strategic Plan to work with the Operating Committee to identify ways of sharing information about the advocacy work and methods for how to determine the effectiveness of the advocacy work and refine approach and resources as needed over time. Proposed target date for completion of this goal is August 1, 2027.

Strategic Priority 4: Cultivate CCWA's Capacity Needed to Provide Desired Level of Service

What we heard. The condition of CCWA's own infrastructure, built between 1994 and 1997, was the risk senior staff ranked highest (9 of 10). The FY 2026/27 budget already commits to a condition assessment, an asset registry and a Capital Improvement Program. Several senior staff raised staffing and succession.

What This Priority Addresses

- Managing local infrastructure to support the desired level of service.
- Cultivating and managing CCWA staff and related resources to support the desired level of service.

Strategic Options

- **Asset management.** Initiate a facilities condition assessment study in the first quarter of 2027 with a goal of receiving the final report by February 29, 2028. The final report will be used to develop a Capital Improvement Program and inform CCWA budgeting decisions beginning in Fiscal Year 2028-29.

- **Staffing.** CCWA's Engineering Manager will lead the condition assessment study and will be supported by the Engineering Technician and Department Heads. High-priority items identified in the final report will be considered for inclusion in the Fiscal Year 2028-29 Budget. CCWA staff will also use the final report to inform future estimates for fixed and variable charges that will be collected from Project Participants. Following the condition assessment, CCWA administrative staff will evaluate and document the staffing needs of the organization necessary to maintain and operate the system to the desired level of service of Project Participants and to other objectives of the Strategic Plan that may not be met at the current structure or level of staffing by February 28, 2029. CCWA administrative staff will seek opportunities to grow and advance talent within CCWA.

Strategic Priority 5: Optional Additional Project Participant Support

What we heard. Several questionnaire responses point to support beyond what all Project Participants need. Asked why they chose CCWA's role in banking, transfers and exchanges, 7 of 12 Project Participants said members' needs differ, so the role has to flex, including the view that CCWA may be best placed to identify opportunities to present to willing participants while others prefer to pursue their own; 2 added in their comments they want CCWA to act as a facilitator and not favor one member over another. Looking to 2047, 4 of 12 named managing the availability and cost of water through banking and transfers, in and out, including a long-term transfer arrangement to avoid last-minute efforts to find a buyer when a spill is imminent. Finding and arranging water-portfolio opportunities was rated essential by 3 of 12, though all 12 rated it 3 or higher. On October 8, the Operating Committee supported Value Proposition 2, suggested standing opt-in programs, and noted other financial activities related to the State Water Project that could benefit a subset. Some expressed a desire for CCWA to consider serving a significantly expanded role in supporting planning and management of water supplies for the region, including potentially offering access to water supplies beyond the State Water Project. Some would like CCWA to investigate the potential for developing more local (within region) forms of storage.

What This Priority Addresses

- Providing additional support to improve water supply reliability and resilience for Project Participants, that goes beyond the standard administration of the State Water Project contract and its related agreements with Project Participants.
- Sharing the costs of CCWA activities fairly among Project Participants.

Strategic Options

- **Priority optional programs.** Include a goal in the Strategic Plan that identifies the desire for additional support from CCWA that goes beyond the standard administration of the State Water Project contract and its related agreements with Project Participants and outlines the potential programs to develop. Proposed target date for completion of this goal is June 1, 2027.

Next Steps

- Staff and the consultant prepare a draft Strategic Plan reflecting the Board's and Operating Committee's input.

- The Operating Committee reviews the draft Strategic Plan in early January, and the Board holds a review workshop on January 28.
- Target adoption: February 25, 2027.

RESOLUTION NO. XXX

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO.1 APPROVING THE AUTOMATIC ANNUAL ADJUSTMENTS TO THE CAPITAL FACILITIES CHARGES AND METER INSTALLATION CHARGES CONTAINED IN APPENDIX "C" AND APPENDIX "D" OF THE DISTRICT'S RULES AND REGULATIONS

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 ("District"), is empowered to prescribe, revise, and collect charges and costs for services and facilities funded by the District; and

WHEREAS, a capital facilities charge is a critical component of the District's overall financing plan; and

WHEREAS, State law (Government Code § 66000 et seq.) requires that a reasonable relationship exist between the amount of a capital facilities charge and the costs of associated public facilities; and

WHEREAS, the District and the vast majority of water agencies throughout California require that new water users and those requesting new or expanded levels of service pay the costs of facilities needed to serve them; and

WHEREAS, the alternative to collecting charges and costs from new development and water users requesting new or expanded levels of service would be raising charges and costs paid by current water users, which is not equitable; and

WHEREAS, revenues from capital facilities charges are available to and used by the District to pay for new facilities and the proportionate costs of system improvements and expansions and maintenance thereof needed to serve and otherwise accommodate new and expanded water uses within the District's system; and

WHEREAS, capital facilities and meter installation charges are collected during the period when a new use or expanded level of use or service is requested from the District; and

WHEREAS, on October 19, 1993, the District Board approved Resolution No. 422 adopting and establishing the capital facilities and meter installation charges and provided that each year on January 1, the capital facilities charges shall be automatically adjusted by an increment based on the change in the Engineering News Record (ENR) Construction Cost Index (20 cities average) from a base index of 5167; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 603 and Section 709 of the District's Rules and Regulations, the District's capital facilities and installation charges relating to water service connections and meters shall be automatically adjusted each year on January 1 by an increment based on the change in the ENR Construction Cost Index; and

WHEREAS, the ENR Construction Cost Index is 14,444 as of this date.

DRAFT

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

1. That APPENDIX "C" Installation and Capital Facilities Charges Pursuant to Article 6, Section 603 of the District's Rules and Regulations, as attached hereto and approved herein, be attached to the District's Rules and Regulations, effective on January 1, 2027; and,

2. That APPENDIX "D" Capital Facilities Charges and Meter Installation Charges for Services from Main Extensions Pursuant to Article 7, Section 709 of the District's Rules and Regulations, as attached hereto and approved herein, be attached to the District's Rules and Regulations, effective on January 1, 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 adopted and passed by the Board of Trustees at a Regular Meeting of the District held on the 15th day of December 2026, by the following roll call vote:

AYES, and in favor thereof, Trustees:

NOES, Trustees:
ABSENT, Trustees:

DRAFT

_____
Jeff Clay, President

_____
Racel Cota, Secretary to the Board of Trustees

APPENDIX "C"

INSTALLATION AND CAPITAL FACILITIES CHARGES PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 6, SECTION 603

(Effective January 1, 2027)

Lot Size	Minimum Meter Size	Maximum Flow Rate	Ratio to 5/8" meter (1993 ratios)	Capital Facilities Charge	Installation Charges
10,000 sq. ft.	5/8"	25	1.0	$ 5,226.65	The meter and service installation charges shall be determined and adjusted by the District from time to time.
>10,000 sq. ft. to 1 acre	3/4"	35	1.2	$ 6,271.98	
>1 to 3 acres	1"	55	2.0	$ 10,453.30	
>3 to 10 acres	1½ "	125	4.0	$ 20,906.60	
>10 acres	2"	160	6.4	$ 33,450.56	
	3"	500	12.8	$ 66,901.12	
	4"	1,250	18.0	$ 94,079.70	
	6"	2,000	40.0	$209,066.00	
	8"	4,000	64.0	$334,505.60	

For parcels with multiple Domestic or Rural Residential meters, the meter sizes (e.g. 5/8-inch and 1-inch) may be added to result in a combined equivalent size that satisfies the minimum meter size requirements. Ratios to 5/8" meter are based on 1993 ratios.

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APPENDIX "D"

CAPITAL FACILITIES CHARGES AND METER INSTALLATION CHARGES FOR SERVICES FROM MAIN EXTENSIONS PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 7, SECTION 709

(Effective January 1, 2027)

Lot Size	Minimum Meter Size	Capital Facilities Charge	Meter Installation Charge	Total
10,000 Sq. Ft.	5/8"	$5,226.65	$730.07	$5,956.72
>10,000 to 1 acre	3/4"	$6,271.98	$766.70	$7,038.68
>1 to 3 acres	1"	$10,453.30	$901.39	$11,354.69
>3 to 10 acres	1-1/2"	$20,906.60	$1,663.18	$22,569.78
> 10 acres	2"	$33,450.56	$2,020.91	$35,471.47
	3"	$66,901.12	$4,486.23	$71,387.35
	4"	$94,079.70	$5,300.82	$99,380.52
	6"	$209,066.00	$8,333.51	$217,399.51
	8"	$334,505.60	$11,725.00	$346,230.60

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Capital Facilities and Meter Installation Charges
Comparison Between Years 2026 and 2027

District Rules and Regulations
Appendix "C" and Appendix "D"

Meter Size	2026 Charges	2027 Charges	$$$ Change	% Change
5/8"	$5,725.21	$5,956.72	$231.51	4.04%
3/4"	$6,771.93	$7,038.68	$266.75	3.94%
1"	$10,974.97	$11,354.69	$379.72	3.46%
1 1/2"	$21,605.95	$22,569.78	$963.83	4.46%
2"	$34,036.21	$35,471.47	$1,435.26	4.22%
3"	$68,965.41	$71,387.35	$2,421.94	3.51%
4"	$95,986.18	$99,380.52	$3,394.34	3.54%

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Solvang Considers Privatizing City's Water and Sewer Systems

Its request for expression of interest is a non-binding document to assess market interest

by Jack Dindia, Noozhawk Staff Writer

November 10, 2026 | 8:05 pm

Solvang is exploring whether private companies are willing to buy, lease or operate the city's water and sewer systems.

The City Council is searching for ways to lower utility bills for Solvang residents, who pay some of the highest water rates in the county, according to Utility Director Jose Acosta.

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"This is a multi-step process. It's not going to happen overnight," City Manager Randy Murphy said of the item discussed by the council Monday night.

Acosta said issuing a request for expression of interest is strictly to gather information and would not commit the city to any sale or future endeavor of privatizing the city's utility operations.

A request for expression of interest is a non-binding document that is used as a market-research tool to see if any suppliers or contractors are interested in taking over a project.

Council members instructed staff to bring all market findings back for council review before any formal request for proposals is issued.

Councilwoman Elizabeth Orona noted that the primary objective must remain relieving costs for residents.

"I would just say let's be careful with how much staff time and energy we spend if we can't qualify that this is really going to save our ratepayers some money," Orona said. "That should be the north star for us on this whole exercise."

The announcement led to questioning from residents, such as Kathryn Rohrer, who raised concerns on whether the privatization proposal had been sent to the Los Olivos Community Services District. That agency is considering sending its wastewater to the Solvang treatment plant rather than building its own.

Acosta offered reassurance that any private operator would be legally bound to all interagency agreements.

"The [request for expression of interest] does mention that they would be obligated to take over any agreements, interagency agreements that we have," Acosta said. "So they would assume those and honor those contracts and have to put that into the contract if we did."

Solvang is simultaneously pursuing a utility rate study through 2027 plus a proposed tourist transient occupancy tax utility measure to address its 10-year capital improvement program. The capital improvement program totals nearly $68 million — $39 million for water, $5.3 million for sewer collections and $23.3 million for wastewater plant upgrades.

Ultimately, any proposed utility sale or lease would require public hearings, regulatory approval, including the California Public Utilities Commission, and a majority approval from Solvang residents during an election.

The request for expression of interest will be posted on PlanetBids for 30 to 45 days, and staff will review responses in early 2027.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

EXECUTIVE ORDER N-14-26

WHEREAS on September 21, 2026, I proclaimed a State of Emergency to exist statewide due to the 2026–2027 El Niño event; and

WHEREAS in the weeks since that proclamation, California has already experienced significant impacts linked to El Niño, including severe coastal flooding and unusual precipitation caused by Tropical Storm Rachel; and

WHEREAS El Niño has continued to strengthen significantly, and has not yet reached its peak; and

WHEREAS although no particular storm can be predicted months in advance, forecasts continue to project wet conditions for California during the fall and winter, leading to heightened risk of flooding, debris flows, and similar impacts; and

WHEREAS elevated sea levels and high surf additionally raise the risk of further coastal flooding and erosion, particularly when combined with potential fall and winter storms; and

WHEREAS public agencies throughout the state have warned that preparations to mitigate these impacts must begin now if they are to be ready in time for potential fall and winter storms; and

WHEREAS when I proclaimed a State of Emergency, I directed the California Environmental Protection Agency and the California Natural Resources Agency to prioritize work to help local agencies prepare to mitigate the anticipated impacts of El Niño; and

WHEREAS I further directed the Secretary for Environmental Protection and the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency to submit a joint recommendation as to whether further emergency suspensions or other actions are necessary to support and expedite this work; and

WHEREAS the California Environmental Protection Agency and the California Natural Resources Agency have since engaged with flood control districts and other local agencies to support their preparations for the anticipated impacts of El Niño and to identify further ways to support and expedite this work; and

WHEREAS the suspension of certain state statutes and regulations (subject to approval by the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency, and subject to other conditions to protect public health and the environment) will support critical work to mitigate the expected impacts of El Niño, including by preparing flood-control infrastructure and other infrastructure for flooding, landslides, mud and debris flows, erosion, and other impacts related to El Niño; and

WHEREAS the suspension of certain planning requirements imposed by section 1242.1(a)(1) of the Water Code will allow the diversion of potentially dangerous floodflows by agencies that have not yet completed those

planning requirements but would otherwise be authorized to divert floodflows; and

WHEREAS the deferral of certain fees and the suspension of certain timelines under title 23 of the California Code of Regulations will allow the Central Valley Flood Protection Board to prioritize and expedite applications for permits to mitigate the anticipated impacts of El Niño; and

WHEREAS the suspension of section 30600 of the Public Resources Code, to the extent it would otherwise apply to the creation or placement of sand berms and sandbags, will facilitate the use of sand berms and sandbags to mitigate the anticipated impacts of El Niño; and

WHEREAS the State Water Resources Control Board has adopted an emergency permit to expedite certain projects upon proclamation of a state of emergency, which the State Water Board and Regional Water Quality Control Boards will continue using to help municipalities, flood control districts, and other local agencies prepare for the anticipated impacts of El Niño; and

WHEREAS under the provisions of Government Code section 8571, I find that strict compliance with various statutes and regulations specified in this Order would prevent, hinder, or delay the mitigation of the effects of the El Niño event.

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

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. Subject to review and approval by the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency or his designee, consistent with Paragraph 2, and subject to the further conditions in Paragraphs 3 and 4:

   State statutes, rules, regulations, and requirements that fall within the jurisdiction of boards, commissions, councils, departments, and offices within the California Natural Resources Agency are hereby suspended to the extent necessary to expedite or otherwise support action by a public agency to prevent or mitigate impacts from flooding (including coastal flooding), landslides, mud and debris flows, or erosion (including coastal erosion) anticipated to be caused by El Niño. Such action includes, but is not limited to, local efforts to repair levees, dams, and other flood management infrastructure; the management or removal of sediment, vegetation, or debris, or similar measures to improve channel capacity; and the protection of bridges, sea walls, and other structures.

   Statutes and regulations subject to suspension under this Paragraph 1 include, but are not limited to, Division 13 (commencing with section 21000) of the Public Resources Code; Chapter 10 (commencing with section 1900) and Chapter 11.5 (commencing with section 1927) of Division 2 of the Fish and Game Code; Chapter 6 (commencing with section 1600) of Division 2 of the Fish and Game Code; Chapter 1.5 (commencing with section 2050) of Division 3 of the Fish and Game

Code; sections 3503, 3503.5, 3511, 4700, 5050, 5515, 5901, and 5948 of the Fish and Game Code, and section 5504 of the Fish and Game Code to the extent it imposes a 30-day limit on authorizations pursuant to that section; Division 35 (commencing with section 85000) of the Water Code; and any regulations adopted pursuant to any of the foregoing statutes.

2. Persons or other entities that desire to conduct activities under the suspension of statutes, rules, regulations, or requirements specified in Paragraph 1 shall first request that the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency (or his designee) make a determination that the proposed activities are eligible to be conducted under the suspension. The Secretary (or his designee) shall use sound discretion in applying his authority under Paragraph 1 to ensure that the suspension serves the purpose of mitigating the anticipated impacts of El Niño, while also protecting public health and the environment. The California Natural Resources Agency shall maintain on its public website a list of all suspensions approved under Paragraph 1.

3. Any suspension under Paragraph 1 shall be subject to all of the following conditions, as applicable:

    a. If the suspension applies to the removal of sediment, vegetation, or debris, or similar measures to improve channel capacity, such action shall be conducted in a manner that:

        i. Does not involve excavation resulting in the creation of a new low-flow channel—i.e., a new channel that may split water from existing channels and reduce passage for fish once flows diminish—that did not exist prior to September 21, 2026;

        ii. Serves either to reestablish a functional low-flow channel or to clear sediment or debris from the stream channel near bridges or other structures;

        iii. Maintains the natural contour of the relevant stream or other waterway, including the downstream slope of the flow line;

        iv. Does not impede fish passage or cause fish stranding;

        v. For the removal of sediment or vegetation from the channel of a stream or other waterway, is limited to portions of the channel that are dry; and

        vi. Does not remove more than thirty percent, per mile, of native vegetation from the channel and bank of a stream or other waterway.

    b. If the suspension applies to the repair of levees, the levees shall either be set back from their previous location (increasing channel capacity) or be rebuilt as they existed prior to September 21, 2026.

    c. If the suspension applies to the repair of a dam, it shall not apply in any way to the construction of a new dam or to the raising of an

existing dam beyond the height for which it was authorized as of September 21, 2026.

d. The action shall not involve disposal or placement of sediments or debris into waters of the state or at locations or in a manner where sediments or debris may be washed into waters of the state by rainfall or runoff.

e. The action shall be accompanied by reasonable, feasible measures to minimize impacts to all of the following, as applicable:

   i. Listed or protected species;

   ii. Nesting birds; and

   iii. Beneficial uses of any impacted waterways and other bodies of water.

f. If the Delta Reform Act (including regulations adopted pursuant thereto) is to be suspended, in whole or in part, with respect to an action, the suspension shall not apply in any way to the Delta Conveyance Project.

4. No suspension under Paragraph 1 may remain in effect after January 31, 2027, unless that date is extended by future Executive Order.

5. In addition to suspensions pursuant to Paragraph 1, the following statutes and regulations are suspended as applied to actions to mitigate the anticipated impacts of El Niño:

   a. Section 1242.1(a)(1) of the Water Code, to the extent it requires the adoption of a local plan of flood control or consideration of flood risk in a general plan as a prerequisite for the diversion of floodflows pursuant to section 1242.1. This suspension applies only to local or regional agencies that are otherwise able to comply with the notice requirement in section 1242.1(a)(1) and that would otherwise be authorized to divert floodflows under section 1242.1.

   b. The following sections of title 23 of the California Code of Regulations:

      i. Section 8, to the extent it requires submission of the required fee prior to the Central Valley Flood Protection Board's review of an application or issuance of a permit.

      ii. Section 9, to the extent it imposes timelines in connection with the Central Valley Flood Protection Board's review of applications or issuance of permits, so that the Board may prioritize applications for permits related to the anticipated impacts of El Niño. The Board is directed to review such applications and (as appropriate) issue such permits as quickly as possible.

   c. Section 30600 of the Public Resources Code, to the extent it would otherwise apply to the creation or placement of sand berms and

sandbags to mitigate flooding, erosion, or other impacts in the coastal zone.

6. The California Environmental Protection Agency and the California Natural Resources Agency—in consultation with the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, the Department of Finance, and other relevant public agencies—are directed to continue to remain vigilant for obstacles that may inhibit efforts to mitigate the anticipated impacts of El Niño, and to bring any such obstacles to my office's attention as appropriate for potential further action.

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

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

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 27th day of October 2026.

GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor of California

ATTEST:

SHIRLEY N. WEBER, Ph.D.
Secretary of State

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State Water Resources Control Board

State Water Board adopts innovative new model to protect California's Bay-Delta, water and wildlife

Framework combines new flows, habitat restoration, science and enforceable rules to protect the Sacramento River and Delta

For immediate release

Date: 2026-10-29 | **Category:** Water Rights | **Region:** Statewide | **Contact:** Ailene Voisin – Information Officer

SACRAMENTO – In a landmark development driving large-scale ecosystem restoration and creating greater security for the heart of California's water system, the State Water Resources Control Board today adopted modernized water quality protections for the Sacramento River and San Francisco Bay-Delta.

The updated Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Watershed (Bay-Delta Plan) strengthens protections for native fish and wildlife, provides water security, improves water quality and positions the state to better withstand the challenges of a changing climate.

Today's decision concludes a multi-year public process and reflects years of scientific study, hundreds of hours of public engagement, and significant input from environmental organizations, tribes, water agencies, and local communities.

"This groundbreaking plan begins a new era of environmental protection, creating enforceable flow standards while giving communities, farms and industry the flexibility to manage their supplies and work together to restore California's most important and overburdened watershed," said State Water Board Chair E. Joaquin Esquivel. "The new plan also gives us the modern tools we need — especially increased monitoring and data collection — to manage the Bay-Delta for the 21st century. Today we celebrate the collective work that brought us here and the progress this represents for the entire state."

At the center of the updated plan is a new model for protecting water quality that provides two robust, enforceable pathways to achieve the plan's objectives and improve the health of the Bay-Delta. One pathway pairs commitments by participants in the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes (HRL) program — known as the voluntary agreements compliance pathway — with enforceable requirements and a strong regulatory backstop. The other pathway is a more traditional regulatory pathway focusing primarily on enhanced flows.

Relying on collaboration and innovation, the voluntary pathway combines river flows, habitat restoration and rigorous scientific oversight to improve the health of the Bay-Delta. Independent science will measure progress, and if anticipated results do not materialize, the regulatory pathway provides an enforceable backstop to realize flow requirements. However, if conditions in the watershed improve and meet the

plan's objectives, the plan will demonstrate that ecosystem protection can be achieved at a lower water supply cost to communities, farms and industry.

The voluntary pathway has regulatory effect and is subject to ongoing monitoring and review. Flow contributions are verified through public accounting, and habitat restoration projects must meet construction milestones. The board can modify or end the pathway if commitments are not met.

"Ultimately, the test for the new Bay-Delta Plan will be whether the ecosystem becomes healthier, native fish populations recover and the people who depend on this extraordinary ecosystem can sustain their communities and livelihoods," Esquivel said.

In particular, the updated plan:

- Establishes enforceable protections to ensure water right holders meet a clear environmental standard, either through an approved voluntary agreements pathway or traditional regulatory pathway.
- Harnesses creativity and collaboration to allow water users, farmers, landowners, conservation organizations and government agencies to develop and implement projects that deliver environmental benefits.
- Recognizes "Tribal Tradition and Culture" as a protected beneficial use of water for the first time, reflecting the deep cultural connections between tribes, rivers and native fish such as salmon.
- Increases river flows and enables restoration of more than 27,000 acres of aquatic habitat.
- Expands monitoring of harmful algal blooms across the Delta and supports the board's development of statewide water quality objectives for harmful algal blooms and cyanotoxins.
- Lessens periods of reduced water supply for municipalities and water districts while maintaining protections for Delta flows in drier times.
- Supports a HRL program designed to direct roughly $2.9 billion in state, federal and local investment to watershed-scale, multi-benefit projects that restore ecosystem function, improve flows and reconnect floodplains.
- Uses science to measure results, with annual reporting, triennial board review and a dedicated science program that relies on robust data collection and monitoring to determine whether restoration efforts are improving ecological conditions.

Pending Office of Administrative Law approval, board staff will release a draft implementation methodology within one year and develop implementing regulations within two years, and the voluntary agreements pathway will begin implementation no later than Oct. 1, 2027

Background

The Bay-Delta supports some of the state's most iconic and threatened fish and wildlife, sustains tribes and other local communities, and provides water for nearly 30 million Californians and 4 million acres of farmland. These benefits are essential to the economy and environment. But the Delta and its tributaries have long been under threat. Native fish populations have suffered, habitat has been lost, and the watershed faces increasing pressure from climate change and competing demands for water.

Federal and state law require that the plan, like other water quality control plans, be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to protect beneficial uses of water, which include water for cities, agriculture,

ecosystem functions (including the protection of aquatic species), recreation (boating, fishing, swimming), navigation, groundwater recharge and tribal uses.

Today's updated plan was shaped by an extensive and transparent public process that included four iterations of draft language, more than 200 days of total public comment, dedicated tribal and environmental justice listening sessions, and other public workshops.

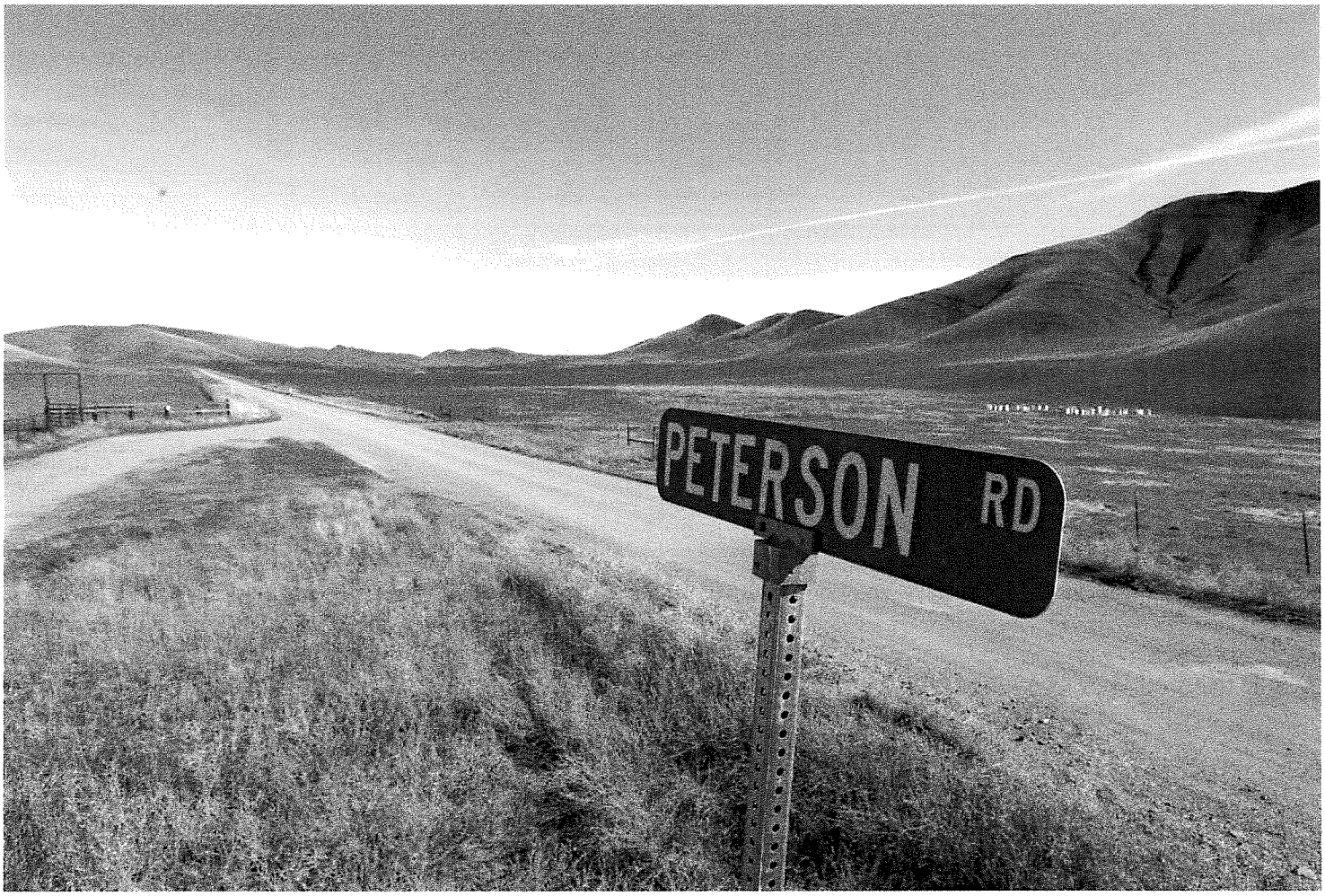
More information about the plan, including an updated Frequently Asked Questions, is available on the board'swebsite.

The State Water Board's mission is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper resource allocation and efficient use for present and future generations.

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CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

Amid controversy, California greenlights the state's first large reservoir in decades



A road runs through the Sites Valley, the location of the planned Sites Reservoir, near Maxwell, Calif. (Rich Pedroncelli/Associated Press)



By Ian James
Staff Writer | 𝕏 Follow

Nov. 4, 2026 **Updated** 11:05 PM PT

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California water regulators have approved a permit for Sites Reservoir, clearing the way for construction of the state's first new major reservoir in decades.

Plans call for two large dams about 300 feet high, as well as nine smaller ones, holding water pumped from the Sacramento River and inundating about 15,000 acres in a valley northwest of Sacramento.

After a heated debate, the State Water Resources Control Board voted unanimously late Wednesday to approve the water right permit for the reservoir near the community of Maxwell.

"We're living with more extreme droughts and floods, and a growing need to store water during wet periods. Sites is built for exactly that," Board Chair E. Joaquin Esquivel said.

State officials and managers of water agencies said the $7 billion reservoir will be a critical part of California's efforts to adapt to climate change.



CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

Newsom praises court ruling dismissing environmental groups' challenge of Sites Reservoir

June 5, 2024

Gov. Gavin Newsom celebrated the decision, saying it shows "California can get big infrastructure projects moving again." He called it a smart investment, saying: "Now it's time to get shovels in the ground."

Construction is scheduled to begin next year and conclude in 2034.

Opponents, including environmental activists and fishing advocates, urged the board to reject the permit, saying the reservoir would siphon too much water out of the Sacramento River and harm salmon and other native fish. They called it a costly boondoggle that will mainly benefit agribusiness and other powerful interests, and said filling the reservoir will warm up the river, worsen algae blooms, and degrade the aquatic ecosystem in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

"The Sites Reservoir project makes no sense. It costs billions, delivers a trickle of new water, and threatens the health of the Sacramento River and San Francisco Bay-Delta," said Keiko Mertz, policy director of the environmental group Friends of the River.

Native activists strongly criticized the plan. They said inundating the valley would destroy sacred sites and ancestral burial grounds.

"If this reservoir goes through, you will literally be covering up the footprints and trails that my father walked with his mother, he walked with me, and I walk with my children. And that'll all be gone," said Amanda Mitchum, a leader of the Cachil Dehe Band of Wintun Indians.

Theresa Moore, of the Chhé'ee Fókaa Band of Northeastern Pomo, called it a "destructive, extractive" project and told the board: "You are corruptly embracing a role as the mouthpieces and rubber-stamps of Big Ag, water profiteers, and the politicians in their pockets."

The large agencies supporting the project include the Metropolitan Water District, which delivers water for nearly 19 million people across Southern California. It and other agencies plan to consider paying part of the costs.

"Given the impacts of climate change, extreme drought, and intense flood years, this generational project is necessary," said Ryan Shaw, a manager of Western Municipal Water District.



CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

Fierce debate as California changes course in central water hub

Oct. 30, 2026

A reservoir like the Sites project has been debated since the 1950s. The current iteration of the project took shape starting in 2010.

It's slated to be the largest reservoir built in California since the completion of New Melones Dam on the Stanislaus River in 1979, holding up to 1.5 million acre-feet of water.

The state and federal governments have pledged to pay for about one-third of the construction costs. The project has been allocated more than $1.3 billion from California's Proposition 1 bond measure, which voters approved in 2014.

During Wednesday's meeting, state officials said the reservoir is designed to take water from the Sacramento River during wet periods, helping the state adapt as climate change intensifies extremes and brings more precipitation as rain, not snow.

"Our water systems that were really once on the vanguard and the envy of the world are not built for the climate we have," Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot said. "And it demands something different than what we've done in the past."

Supporters, including managers of water agencies, said the reservoir represents a vital strategic investment to modernize California's water system.

Nearly 70 people urged the board not to approve the permit. Among them were boaters, fishers and people who live near the Sacramento River. Many said they believe building the reservoir is an outdated approach that will cause environmental damage.

Beth McCullough, a kayaker who lives in Sacramento County, said the idea of pumping water out of the river and sending it to an arid valley "sounds like a proposal to create an enormous stagnant pond," where toxic algae would grow, then later be released into the stressed ecosystem of the Delta.

Lindy Rice, a retired professor, said she thinks the reservoir is "a 20th century solution to a 21st century problem."

She and others said the state should instead invest in alternative approaches, such as stepping up conservation, switching to less water-intensive crops, and devising nature-based solutions to capture stormwater and recharge groundwater. They pointed out that, unlike a reservoir, underground water storage avoids loss to evaporation.



CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

Native tribes denied greater say in water decisions with Newsom veto

Oct. 1, 2026

Christina Swanson, an environmental scientist who has studied the Delta, told the board that she thinks the project is "amazingly ill-conceived."

"Basically, there's not enough water available to fill this reservoir," she said, adding that it will harm water quality.

Environmental advocates have also argued that building the reservoir would emit a substantial amount of planet-warming greenhouse gases.

The five-member state water board, after hearing those concerns, said the project has undergone a thorough review and they are satisfied with the environmental protections.

The process leading up to the decision was contentious.

A judge-like officer appointed by the board oversaw a series of hearings to weigh the permit application. When the officer, Nicole Kuenzi, released a draft decision earlier this year, the project's proponents objected that it would severely limit how much water the reservoir could deliver.

In May, Newsom urged the board in a letter to make changes in the draft permit to allow for "adequate storage in the reservoir." Opponents of the project criticized what they said was political pressure.

The agency later adopted changes that satisfied the concerns of Newsom and the project's developers — which critics said weakened environmental protections.

With the permit approved, leaders of the Sites Project Authority, the agency overseeing plans for the reservoir, will turn next to securing funding commitments from water agencies.

Jerry Brown, the authority's executive director, said he expects that will take about four months, and then the agency will be ready to start taking out loans and making final preparations to start construction.

More to Read

Legal Alerts | 10/22/2026

California Further Expands State Accessory Dwelling Unit Law

New Laws Require Approval of Two Detached ADUs on Single-Family Lots and Limit Impact Fees

In nearly every legislative session for the last several years, the California Legislature has amended changes to laws governing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and junior accessory dwelling units (JADUs). 2026 is no exception, as Governor Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill 956 and Senate Bill 1117 on September 29, 2026, effective January 1, 2027.

State law already required local agencies to ministerially approve a detached ADU on a lot with a single-family dwelling, without applying any local standards. AB 956 doubles that by-right allowance to two detached ADUs. AB 956 also broadens state limits on HOA rules and private covenants that restrict ADUs.

State law already required a local agency to pro-rate impact fees for ADUs larger than 750 square feet based on the size of the ADU compared to the size of the primary dwelling. SB 1117 changes the impact-fee calculation on a lot with up to two ADUs by excluding the first 750 square feet of each unit from the fee calculation. This may require changes to local impact-fee schedules.

The principal changes are summarized below.

AB 956 Requires Approval of Two Detached ADUs

Two Detached ADUs on a Single-Family Lot

Government Code section 66323 requires a local agency to ministerially approve building permit applications for specified ADUs and JADUs or qualifying combinations of those units. Before AB 956,

section 66323(a)(2) required ministerial approval of one (but only one) detached, new-construction ADU of up to 800 square feet on a lot with a proposed or existing single-family dwelling. AB 956 doubles that number to two.

A local agency may continue to impose side and rear setbacks of up to four feet, an 800 square foot size limit and the applicable statutory height limit on each detached ADU. This now allows for an owner to get two detached ADUs.

AB 956 does not change the separate rules governing detached ADUs on lots with existing or proposed multifamily dwellings.

Maximum Single-Family Lot Combinations

Read together with the combination language added to section 66323 in 2025, AB 956 establishes two principal maximum configurations for a qualifying single-family lot:

- One converted ADU; **one** JADU; and one detached, new-construction ADU (for a total of three), or
- One converted ADU; **two** detached, new-construction ADUs (also totaling three).

Note that a local agency is not required to ministerially approve a JADU on the same lot where two detached, new-construction ADUs have been constructed. AB 956 eliminates the requirement to approve a JADU in that configuration but it does not affect the separate requirement to approve a qualifying converted ADU under section 66323(a)(1).

Broader Limits on HOA Rules and Private Covenants

AB 956 also amends Civil Code sections 714.3 and 4751. Those statutes make provisions in deeds, HOA governing documents and other private real estate documents unenforceable if they "effectively prohibit" or "unreasonably restrict" the construction of an ADU or JADU. Those protections previously applied only to lots zoned for single-family residential use. AB 956 extends them to *all* zoning districts that permit a single-family residence as a primary residential use, even if the district is not exclusively a single-family residential zone (think multifamily and mixed-use zones that still allow a single primary dwelling). The statutes continue to allow reasonable restrictions within specified limits.

Note: These are issues for private HOAs and private property owners to sort out. Public agencies are rarely in a position to enforce a private property restriction, such as CC&Rs.

SB 1117 Revises Impact Fees for ADUs

New Calculation for Lots with Up to Two ADUs

An ADU with 750 or fewer square feet of interior livable space is already exempt from impact fees under Government Code section 66311.5. Before SB 1117, once an ADU exceeded 750 square feet, an

agency could calculate a proportionate impact fee using the unit's entire floor area.

Now, with SB 1117, for up to two ADUs on a lot, the "proportionate" impact fee for an ADU larger than 750 square feet is calculated using only the excess above 750 square feet.

For example, if the applicable impact fee for a 2,000-square-foot primary dwelling is $20,000, for a 1,000-square-foot ADU, the proportionate fee under the *old* rule would be $10,000 ($20,000 x (1,000 sf / 2,000 sf)). But now under SB 1117, the proportionate fee would be just $2,500 ($20,000 x ((1,000 sf - 750 sf) / 2,000 sf)). In other words, it drops from 50% of the normal fee to 12.5%.

Rules for Third and Additional ADUs and Utility Charges

For a lot with more than two ADUs, SB 1117 retains the old rule for proportional calculation using the ADU's *full* square footage. The bill also preserves the existing exemption for an ADU of 750 square feet or less and the separate exemption for a JADU of 500 square feet or less.

The revised calculation applies only to "impact fees" imposed by local agencies, special districts and water corporations. This includes fees governed by the Mitigation Fee Act and the Quimby Act but this does not include utility connection fees or capacity charges. They remain governed by the separate standards in section 66311.5.

Next Steps for Local Agencies

Every local ADU ordinance must comply with the changes made by these two bills before the end of the year or the local ordinance becomes null and void as a matter of law on January 1, 2027.

Every city and other local agency should review its ADU ordinance, application materials and permitting procedures before January 1, 2027, to ensure compliance. A local agency that adopts an amended ADU ordinance must submit it to the California Department of Housing and Community Development within 60 days after adoption.

Contact your BBK attorney for assistance updating local ordinances to comply with AB 956 and SB 1117.

Key Contacts

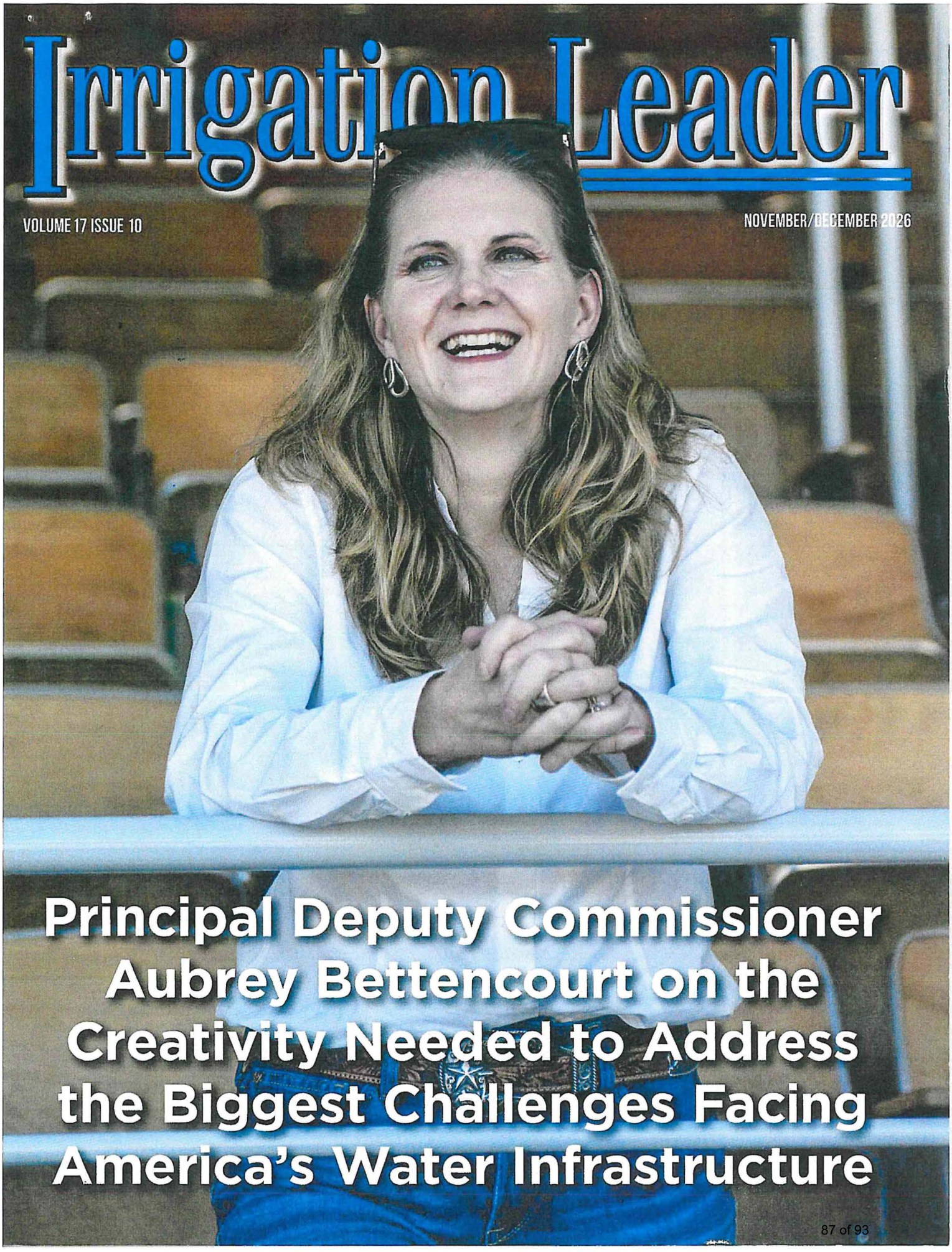


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Irrigation Leader

VOLUME 17 ISSUE 10

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2026



Principal Deputy Commissioner Aubrey Bettencourt on the Creativity Needed to Address the Biggest Challenges Facing America's Water Infrastructure

In This Issue:
Introducing a Reclamation Leader

This month, our cover story is an in-depth conversation with Aubrey Bettencourt, the principal deputy commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation. We hear about her background in agriculture and her career, which has spanned nonprofits; trade associations; private business; and government agencies such as the Farm Service Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and now Reclamation. We also hear about the topline problem statement that guides her work—that western water's infrastructure and policies are out of date—and the top priorities for action during what she calls "an incredible window to leap forward and make the big changes we know are needed."

AssetGuard's lining systems help eliminate seepage and save water in canal systems across the nation. In our conversation with Operations Manager Omar Castillo, we focus on several impressive recent projects at the Carlsbad Irrigation District in New Mexico, the Lugert–Altus Irrigation District project in Oklahoma, and El Paso Water.

After that, we get an update on the Four States Irrigation Council, which is gearing up to celebrate 75 years of service to irrigators and water managers in Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, and Wyoming. At-Large Board Director Eric Brown tells us about the council's conferences and tours and what it contributes to the sector as an organization exceptionally focused on day-to-day operations and maintenance issues.

Thunderbird Manufacturing's technology brings precision and reliability to wheel-line irrigation. Its U.S.-manufactured end-drive wheel-line systems can handle harsh climates and hills and can be used on many different crops.

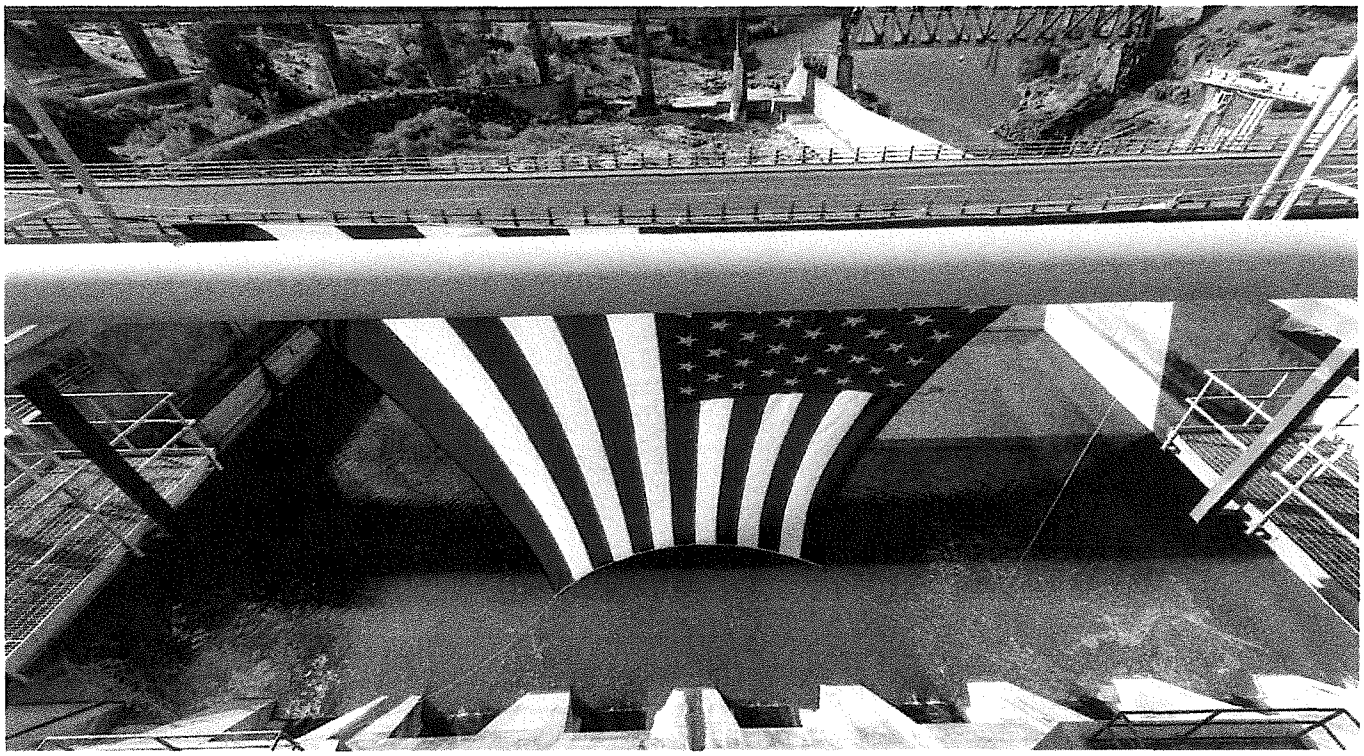
Finally, we speak to John Walker, whose company, Walker Water, has created software solutions for snowpack measurement, watershed management, water ordering, and seepage monitoring. While they were all created for his local watershed and water users' association, they have the potential to benefit users worldwide.

In Aubrey Bettencourt, Reclamation is fortunate to have a dynamic and highly engaged leader who is focused on resolving problem points and increasing efficiency. The bureau's highly skilled workforce, under her leadership, will continue to effectively bring water and power to the American West.

ADVERTISEMENT



Principal Deputy Commissioner Aubrey Bettencourt on the Creativity Needed to Address the Biggest Challenges Facing America's Water Infrastructure



Reclamation's American Falls Dam in Idaho.

When Aubrey Bettencourt was named the principal deputy commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation this summer, she brought a wealth of personal and professional experience to the role. A third-generation farmer herself, she has seen the importance and power of water to make or break a region's prosperity. Now, in her fourth appointed position with the Trump administration, she is wasting no time in creating an environment at Reclamation that will foster and support creative approaches to solving the country's most pressing water challenges—most notably aging infrastructure and outdated policies. During a recent visit to Washington, DC, Paul Arrington, the executive director of the Idaho Water Users Association and the chair of the National Water Resources Association's Federal Affairs Committee, had a chance to catch up with Principal Deputy Commissioner Bettencourt. In this interview, she shares how an agency built on the pride of protecting the country's water resources is poised to craft its own future in the midst of a challenging water landscape across the United States, but especially in the West.

Paul Arrington: Please tell us about your background and how you came to this role at Reclamation.

Aubrey Bettencourt: First of all, thank you for the opportunity and for the leadership that this publication provides in the water community. I don't think I've ever walked into a water office and not seen an *Irrigation Leader* on a desk somewhere.

I am a third-generation farmer from Central California. I still farm there with my family. As a result, I've always had an awareness of the importance of water in the West. As my career has progressed, I've always had one foot in water, specifically in natural resources management and issues as they relate to agriculture. I started my career by calling the people whose names were listed at the top of the press releases from local water districts and saying, "Hey, can I take you out for a cup of coffee? I want to know more about this issue, and I want to know more about your organization." I was able to build an incredible network of friends, mentors, and colleagues throughout the water community that way.

I started in the nonprofit space as the executive director of a public education nonprofit called the California Water Alliance. We were working to elevate the importance of water quantity, quality, management, and supply in California's political discourse. I built a network

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION.

nationwide, working with state secretaries of agriculture all over the country on irrigation policy, public engagement, and advocacy. We built a great organization, and I was privileged to serve almost 10 years there.

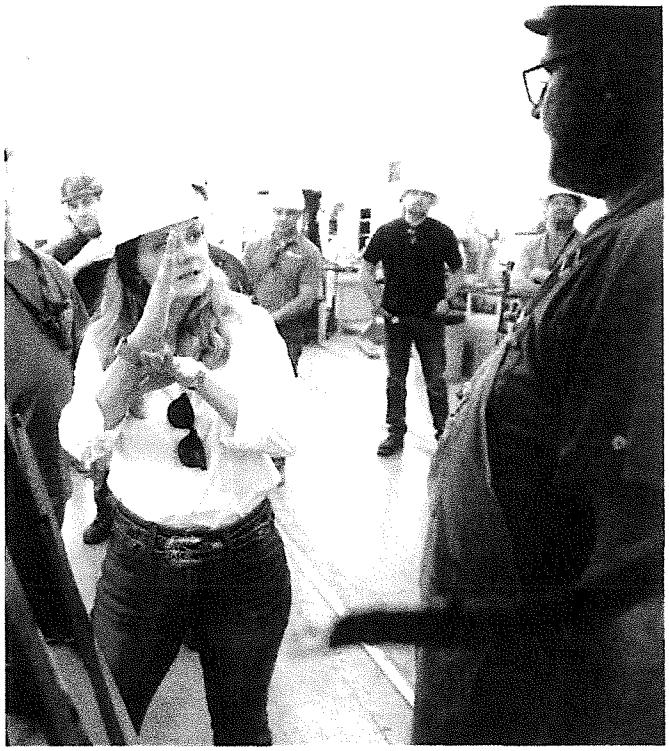
Then, I served as a presidential nominee during President Trump's first term. I was the Farm Service Agency state executive director for California, and then I came over to the U.S. Department of the Interior, where I was the deputy assistant secretary for water and science. After President Trump's first term ended, I worked in groundwater management programming in California through Western United Dairies and ended up as the executive director of the Almond Alliance, where I thought I was going to do water policy and ended up doing trade policy! From there, I worked with the irrigation technology company Netafim for a period of time, looking at irrigation technology solutions that are affordable and accessible to communities, water users, and landowners; protect users' private property rights and productivity; and give them a chance to be a part of the solution.

During President Trump's second term, I was asked to serve as the chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the largest private-land conservation organization in the world. We have worked hard to modernize the department, seeing farmers and ranchers as key to the prosperity, culture, and natural vitality of the country and working to make sure they have access to the technical assistance and resources to do their jobs well.

Paul Arrington: What lessons did you learn from that experience that you're looking to bring to Reclamation?

Aubrey Bettencourt: I'm a firm believer that if there is a problem inside an organization, the solutions are probably inside it as well. Half the time, we forget to look inside. For Reclamation, I want to empower our teams to find and act on those solutions internally. The same goes for our partners, our water users, and our contractors. I'm also aware that I've come to an organization that is truly committed to its mission. When I ask our employees why they came to Reclamation and why they stay, it always comes back to two things. First, Reclamation gets things done; we don't just push paper. The effect is seen and felt by our folks. Second, the employees all love the mission. Since 1902, Reclamation has dedicated itself to the development and delivery of water and power. We in the leadership team want to unleash that pride so we can continue to be an organization that gets stuff done and comes up with new ways to do it. Western water is facing challenging times, but the flip side of that is that we have an opportunity to craft our own future.

Paul Arrington: In your conversations with Reclamation's irrigation customers, what are you hearing from them about challenges and opportunities?



Aubrey Bettencourt during a visit to Shasta Dam.

Aubrey Bettencourt: If you go into my office right now, you will see a whiteboard with a problem statement right at the top: The greatest challenge in western water today is that the infrastructure and the policies that guide it are out of date. That relates to two things. The first is financing water infrastructure at scale. Regarding this, there are certain guardrails we don't have control over; however, we have a responsibility to be as knowledgeable and transparent as we can about the real costs of the projects we oversee and the return on investment.

The second is regulatory reform, which we do have a lot of control over. There are big pieces like the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act, and we've been able to get those reforms done early in this administration. In the first Trump administration, we did these things at the end of the term, so we did not have the runway to implement them to their fullest. My question for the customers and water users—and we love having creative conversations with them—is how we can leverage the extra runway now. How do we grab these reforms and drive them like we stole them? There's so much potential here.

Then, there's internal regulatory reform—hearing from our own Reclamation team as well as our customers about the policies that aren't working and trying to do something about them. Internally, we are taking a fine-tooth comb to our policies, our *Reclamation Manual*, and our guidance. We are asking what is absolutely required under the law and what is not. Why do we have a given policy in place? Can it be done by someone else? Can we have a trigger mechanism that decides when it should be employed and when it shouldn't be?



Aubrey Bettencourt speaks with site personnel during a recent visit to Shasta Dam.

Can it be done concurrently with something else? We have a secretarial order instructing us to eliminate red tape. We define that as reduction in pages, process, and time.

We've seen incredible opportunities to get dollars obligated faster using the Cutting Red Tape and Reducing Consumer Costs at Reclamation Construction Projects secretarial order (SO 3446). Now, we're also looking at applying that to all our internal processes. That's where I open the conversation up with our customers and our districts to ask how we will give ourselves the best resources and tools to address our greatest challenges. This administration is empowering us to look at everything in a new way and really make a difference. That mandate for this period of time, combined with the incredible advancement in human capacity provided by affordable, accessible, and adoptable technology, gives us an incredible window to leap forward and make the big changes we know are needed to address our biggest challenges ahead.

Paul Arrington: As you look at that window of opportunity, have you identified your top priorities?

Aubrey Bettencourt: Yes, I have: (1) western water supply and conveyance, resiliency, and reliability; (2) construction, including extraordinary maintenance; (3) maximizing hydropower generation and affordable transmission across Reclamation; and (4) using tools (including AI), data, process improvements, and contracts and partnerships to increase the speed, accuracy, and flexibility of Reclamation's operations and daily services.

We have to prioritize our initiatives to make sure we're not spread thin as an organization. Our partners are a huge asset as we prioritize initiatives and stretch our dollars. It comes back to our core mission: What is true development and delivery of water and power, and what is compliance or the cost of doing business? There have been a lot of requirements placed on Reclamation in its effort to deliver water and power over time. Some of them are good, but they are not our core mission. They are requirements placed on the core mission. Having that distinction and then using it to prioritize is useful. The intention is not to diminish compliance, but rather to be clear that it's compliance.

Empowering our team to be creative in pursuing our mission is massive. We are taking every possible freedom and flexibility we are given and also advocating for regulatory reform that works for us and is needed for our mission. Giving that permission and instilling it in the culture all the way down is step 1. Step 2 is to embed that in our manual. The manual becomes the thing that everybody looks to. It sounds boring, but those little changes make a huge difference. It helps the customer say, "Wait, I can actually be a better advocate for myself in the process because now I know what I need to do." Customers can visit our website right now, pick a chapter of the manual, redline it, and send it to us. We will take their recommendations into consideration and adopt the change within 30 days upon review.

Paul Arrington: How do you see Reclamation balancing the need to maintain and modernize existing infrastructure with investments in new opportunities?

Aubrey Bettencourt: That's the ultimate question, isn't it? I see the two as intertwined, which makes balancing them hard in some ways. Overall, I look at how we define *return on investment*. How much is this costing us over time? If I am going to start a new project, what does the time cost? What does the dollar cost? What challenges am I addressing? Can I address multiple priorities at once? It's hard, but I think it's necessary and something that we should be transparent with our customers about.

Paul Arrington: The other major water issue these days is the Colorado River basin. How do you see Reclamation's role in helping identify a path forward?

Aubrey Bettencourt: We have seen incredible leadership from Interior in terms of creating an environment that lets states lead and adheres to the compact of the river. The role I see Reclamation playing in the immediate term is that of a transparent operator, clearly communicating the conditions and rules to water users. We're adhering to the law of the land. We make sure to communicate our support to our customers. At the end of the day, customer service is what we fall back on. Under the leadership of President Trump and Secretary Burgum, we believe we can provide an environment under which negotiations can continue, even with challenges. We know everybody still has concerns, but the necessary tools—environmental compliance, short-term operations guidance, and 10-year guidelines—are in place to support the development of a durable solution for the river, led by the states. This administration knows and values the West and is willing

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to face the challenges head-on rather than kicking the can down the road, ensuring that the states and tribes have the power to lead for their farms and communities. The table is still set, and we're all still at it.

Paul Arrington: There are so many plates spinning at Reclamation—what does a day in the life of Principal Deputy Commissioner Aubrey Bettencourt look like?

Aubrey Bettencourt: It starts with faith and family. The first thing in my day is to get up, get a cup of coffee, say a little prayer, kiss my husband—my good man—and cuddle my 22-month-old. That grounding is necessary. It's why I'm here, and it's what allows me to do this job. I wouldn't be here if I didn't have the support of my family. We're all in! They believe in our mission, too, and they believe in this moment in time. On good days—if not rushed—I call my dad while I'm on my way to work, because usually, he's the only one up on the West Coast. He always makes sure that I stay grounded, too.

The best part of being here is that every hour, every meeting, and every document I have to review is a different challenge. I learn something new about the organization every day. I learn what we're capable of and what we need to be capable of. I talk to other agencies, telling them, "We have got to work together. We need open communication. I'm prioritizing this, this, and this. I need you guys, too. Can you please communicate that out or down?" We elevate problems that need to be fixed and decide how we will address the president's priorities, the secretary's priorities, executive orders, and so on. I work with the assistant secretary's office and make sure we're in alignment, because she's got to be an advocate for us, too, both inside the building and across her networks.

We also get to take phone calls, meetings, and tours with our customers. I love it when I hear from them about what's happening on the ground. When I hear about a problem, I can turn it over to my awesome team for a solution. I get to be creative: How do we best leverage and lean in to serve our customers and deliver on our mission? How do we ensure that what we do is not frivolous but deliberate, intentional, and durable?

Paul Arrington: How can Reclamation and its customers continue to maintain and strengthen relationships moving forward?

Aubrey Bettencourt: From the Reclamation side, we need to make sure we're managing the expectations of water users. We have a lot of new faces under this administration and a lot of new and emerging leaders in the water community, too. We have the chance to get to know each other again. I'm excited about the new generation of leadership that I get to work with here at Reclamation and the new roles we are taking on. It's an exciting time to get to know each other again and establish trust so we can move quickly.

Paul Arrington: We've talked a lot about the challenges and opportunities of the moment. As you look forward, what do you see as future challenges or opportunities that are on the horizon for Reclamation in western water?

Aubrey Bettencourt: We've made it so easy to turn on a tap in this country, which is a blessing that not every country has. It is the foundation of our prosperity, yet it requires continued prioritization. The opportunity and challenge we have is ensuring a new era of dedication to infrastructure and the technology that operates it. We want to ensure we are investing the needed time, talent, and finances to meet the new pressures and priorities we have placed on the resource.

When this infrastructure was built, many places did not have did not have the population or the demands on the resources that they have now. The solution is to invest in water infrastructure so that it operates at its highest and best, both to meet the increased demand placed on it from a population perspective and to meet the requirements put on it by policy and regulation. One example is that we are deploying new on-farm technology all across the West. The design of our infrastructure did not anticipate the invention of subsurface drip irrigation that could reduce applied water use on alfalfa by 55 percent a year—nor did the policies that were established with that infrastructure. Those technological advances are particularly valuable as we have increased pressure and demand on the resource. Now, we can apply some great innovation from a policy or management perspective in addition to investing in optimizing and modernizing the core infrastructure.

There are two types of water. There's paper water, and there's wet water. The wet water is the one that matters. Only one grows crops. Only one feeds cities. Only one ensures a healthy ecosystem and the beautiful natural vitality that people from all over the world come to visit. But in order to have all those things, you need the infrastructure and the technology to do it. You have to invest in both, and that comes back to the core problem statement: that the infrastructure and the policies governing water are equally out of date. They must equally be prioritized and updated.



Aubrey Bettencourt is the principal deputy commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation. She can be reached at communications@usbr.gov.

CORRESPONDENCE LIST
NOVEMBER 2026

1. October 16, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Santa Ynez Community Services District Regular Board Meeting on October 21, 2026.

2. October 21, 2026 – District sent a Backflow Test Requirement letter to one customer.

3. October 23, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Santa Ynez Community Services District Finance Committee Meeting on October 28, 2026.

4. October 23, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Santa Ynez Community Services District Community Interface Committee Meeting on October 28, 2026.

5. October 23, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Santa Ynez Community Services District Wastewater Committee Meeting on October 28, 2026.

6. November 6, 2026 – District sent Backflow Test Reminders to seventeen customers.

7. November 6, 2026 – District sent a Water Service Requirements Letter to one customer.

8. November 8, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Los Olivos Community Services District Regular Board Meeting on November 11, 2026.

9. November 10, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Central Coast Water Authority Special Board Meeting on November 16, 2026.

10. November 10, 2026 – District sent a Water Service Requirements Letter to one customer.