



San Diego County  
Water Authority

# San Diego County Water Authority

## AN OVERVIEW

### FACT SHEET

The Water Authority is a public agency serving the San Diego region as a wholesale supplier of water. The Water Authority works through its 23 member agencies to provide a safe, reliable water supply to support the region's \$142 billion economy and the quality of life of 3 million residents.

### Search for Water

The history of the San Diego region revolves around a never-ending search for a safe, reliable water supply in this semiarid region of Southern California. Beginning with the Native Americans, and later the Spanish missionaries and early settlers, local water supplies provided sufficient water for the county until World War II, when a vastly expanded military and industrial presence doubled the local population. When water shortages threatened the area's wartime mission, President Franklin Roosevelt issued an executive order directing the Navy to build the area's first aqueduct connecting to the newly completed Colorado River Aqueduct owned by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

The San Diego County Water Authority was created through special act legislation by the California Legislature in 1944. It was created to administer the region's Colorado River water rights, import water and take over the operation of the aqueduct from the Navy. The first imported water arrived in the county in November 1947.

### Reliability Through Diversification

Providing a safe and reliable water supply to the people who live and work in the San Diego region is the mission of the Water Authority. The region's 3 million residents and \$142 billion economy depend on the Water Authority to fulfill this vital mission.

The best way to ensure reliability now and into the future is to avoid being overly dependent on a single source of water. Today, up to 90 percent of this region's water is imported from a single supplier. Virtually all imported

water is currently obtained from MWD. The Water Authority is MWD's largest member agency, purchasing up to 30 percent of MWD's supplies annually.

### Securing New Imported Water Supplies

On Oct. 10, 2003, representatives from the Water Authority and three water agencies signed documents

required to implement the Quantification Settlement Agreement. This landmark accord fundamentally changed the way Colorado River water is distributed and used in California. This historic agreement provides California a transition period to implement water transfers and supply programs to reduce the state's over-dependence on the Colorado River and reduce its draw to its 4.4 million acre-foot annual apportionment.

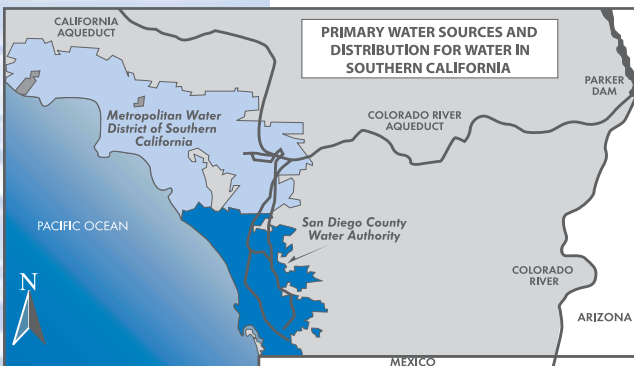
The QSA clears the way for the annual transfer of up to 200,000 acre-feet of water from the Imperial Irrigation District to the Water Authority for up to 75 years. An additional 77,700 acre-feet of water will flow annually to the Water Authority for 110 years. The additional water will be conserved by concrete lining the All-American and Coachella canals to prevent seepage losses. When deliveries of the water are fully ramped up, San Diego County will receive nearly 280,000 acre-feet annually of new, highly reliable water supplies.

### Making the Most of Local Supplies

Doing more with local water resources is a key strategy in diversifying the region's water supply portfolio. This includes promoting the use of recycled water, desalinating brackish (salty) groundwater through modern reverse osmosis technology and developing groundwater storage programs. Expanding water conservation also plays a vital role in diversification. The Water Authority's highly successful conservation programs have saved more than 446,000 acre-feet of water since 1990.

Seawater desalination is now on the horizon as a new local water supply for San Diego County. The Water Authority's plans call for the region's first seawater desalination facility to be located adjacent to the Encina Power Station in the city of Carlsbad. If approved, it will be the largest seawater desalination project in the Western Hemisphere, producing 56,000 acre-feet per year.

Seawater desalination is expected to provide up to 90,000 acre-feet per year of high-quality, safe drinking water for the San Diego region by 2015. It will increase the amount of water available to the region, while reducing dependence on imported supplies. Tapping the ocean provides a drought-proof and cost-effective local supply of water. Because desalinated



seawater will be a supply developed locally, it can provide greater cost certainty than San Diegans now have and enhanced water reliability for the region.

## Mapping the Region's Water Future

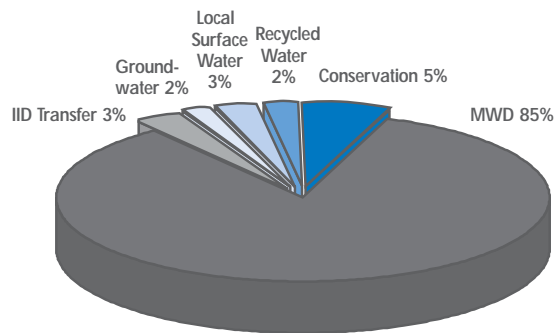
Long-range planning is key to meeting future water needs. Through the Water Authority's Capital Improvement Program, new water supply options and facilities required to meet regional needs through 2030 are in San Diego's water future.

Projects included in the Capital Improvement Program will increase production of treated water, increase water storage, improve operational flexibility and expand the capacity of the aqueduct system. The Water Authority will build a new water treatment plant north of San Marcos and will raise San Vicente Dam in Lakeside to increase storage capacity in the reservoir. Existing facilities will be rehabilitated and water delivery bottlenecks will be eliminated. Moreover, the agency's Emergency Storage Project is creating water storage, pipeline and pumping facilities to protect the region against emergency cutbacks in imported water deliveries.

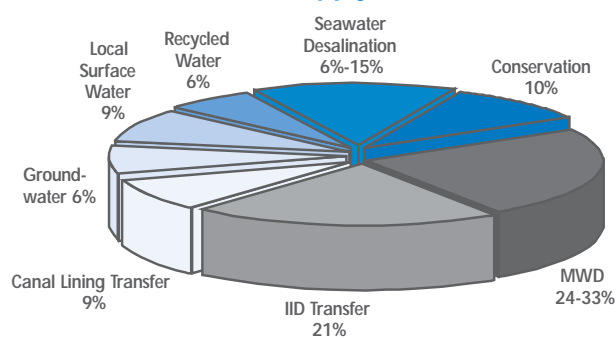
These sound investments in a diversified water supply portfolio, local water resources and new water facilities will secure a safe and reliable water supply for the region well into the future.

## Diversifying the Water Authority's Water Supply Portfolio

### Water Supply (FY 2004)



### Water Supply in 2020



## FAST FACTS

Member agencies: 23  
 6 cities  
 4 water districts  
 3 irrigation districts  
 8 municipal water districts  
 1 public utility district  
 1 federal agency (military base)

Established:  
 June 9, 1944

First water delivered to county:  
 Nov. 24, 1947

Area served:  
 908,974 acres

Population served:  
 3 million

Economy served:  
 \$142 billion

Number of primary pipelines: Five

Miles of pipeline: nearly 300

Acre-foot (AF): Large amounts of water are measured by the acre-foot. One acre-foot is about 326,000 gallons, or enough water to cover one acre to a depth of one foot. An acre-foot can supply the household needs of two typical families for one year.

## Member Agencies

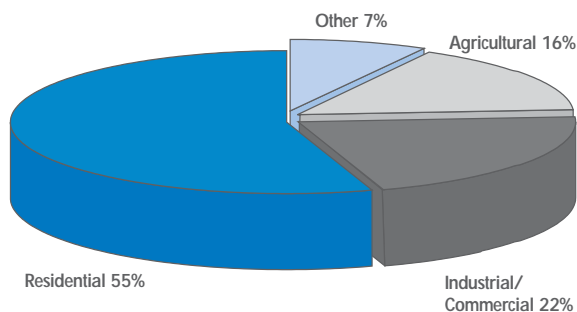
- 1 Carlsbad MWD
- 2 City of Del Mar
- 3 City of Escondido
- 4 Fallbrook Public Utility District
- 5 Helix Water District
- 6 City of National City\*\*
- 7 City of Oceanside
- 8 Olivenhain MWD
- 9 Otoy Water District
- 10 Padre Dam MWD
- 11 Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base
- 12 City of Poway
- 13 Rainbow MWD
- 14 Ramona MWD
- 15 Rincon del Diablo MWD
- 16 City of San Diego
- 17 San Dieguito Water District
- 18 Santa Fe Irrigation District
- 19 South Bay Irrigation District\*\*
- 20 Vallecitos Water District
- 21 Valley Center MWD
- 22 Vista Irrigation District
- 23 Yuima MWD

A member of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors also serves as a representative to the Water Authority board of directors.  
 \*\* The Sweetwater Authority is a service organization for the city of National City and the South Bay Irrigation District.

## Water Conservation (FY 2004)

Conserved water: nearly 42,000 acre-feet (most water was conserved by installation of ultra-low-flush toilets and commercial, industrial and institutional water conservation devices)

## Water Use in San Diego County



Source: June 2004 survey of member agencies



**San Diego County Water Authority**

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