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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

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IN REPLY PLEASE

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TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Mark Pestrella, PE 
Director of Public Works

BOARD MOTION OF DECEMBER 5, 2023, AGENDA ITEM 8 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY WATER PLAN: A SHARED, REGIONAL PATH TOWARD WATER RESILIENCE

Los Angeles County is experiencing more frequent and intense droughts coupled with less frequent but more torrential rains as a result of climate change. Recognizing this new climate reality and the need to be thoughtful stewards of future water supplies, Public Works collaboratively developed a Countywide water plan focusing on strategic, sustainable, and equitable management of Los Angeles County's water resources.

On December 5, 2023, the County Water Plan (CWP) was unanimously adopted by the Board (Agenda Item 38). The CWP is the first comprehensive planning document that articulates a shared, inclusive, regional path forward to sustainably and equitably achieve safe, clean, and reliable water resources for Los Angeles County.

The Board further approved a motion directing Public Works to begin implementation of the CWP and report back on specific tasks in collaboration with the Chief Sustainability Office, Department of Public Health, and relevant County departments. The attached report marks the second annual update to the Board since the adoption of the CWP and Public Works will continue to submit CWP updates to the Board on an annual basis. We remain committed to achieving a resilient water future for County residents and will continue to facilitate extensive collaboration to actively implement the CWP.

If you have questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Deputy Director Adam Ariki at (626) 458-4012 or aariki@pw.lacounty.gov.

LIA:yg

BOARD MOTION 12.05.2023 ITEM 8 - IMPLEMENTATION OF LA CWP DIRECTIVE 7 (2025-12-05) WITH TRACK CHANGES

Attach.

cc: Chief Executive Office
Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Chief Sustainability Office

2025 REVIEW OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY WATER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Public Works, in partnership with many key water leaders across the region, has made substantial early strides in the implementation of the CWP in this second year since Board adoption.

The four CWP task forces, established in 2024, have continued to meet regularly to implement priority tasks and advance progress on the CWP 2-Year Action Plans intended to drive early implementation for 2025 and 2026. Each task force is led by an industry expert/partner.

Regional Water Reliability (RWR) Task Force

Mission: To implement priority tasks from the CWP 2-Year Action Plan that strengthen regional collaborations and partnerships to support long-term, diverse, and reliable water resources development.

Co-Leads: Dave Pederson (Las Virgenes Municipal Water District) and Stacie Takeguchi (Pasadena Water & Power)

The RWR task force meets quarterly and formed three working groups that meet more regularly—Regional Supply and Storage, Regional Water Quality, and Wildfire. Below are each Working Group's corresponding CWP strategies.

Figure 1: RWR Task Force Working Groups and Strategies

Regional Supply and Storage	Regional Water Quality	Wildfire
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy 3: Coupling local supply development with regional conveyance• Strategy 5: Leveraging regional groundwater storage potential• Strategy 9: Facilitating regional groundwater recharge understanding and initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy 4: Managing salt concentrate regionally• Strategy 6: Collaborating on water quality needs and treatment technologies• Strategy 7: Enhancing cost-effectiveness of pumping and treating impaired groundwater• Strategy 8: Protecting coastal groundwater basins from seawater intrusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy 12: Mitigating wildfire effects on water supply and quality• Strategy 13: Managing invasive species in riparian areas

As part of the initial CWP development process, the 2-Year Action Plan was prepared to provide an implementation strategy with a menu of key actions for task forces to prioritize and pursue. Using the action plan as guidance, each Working Group developed a work plan based on current conditions, needs, opportunities, and participant availability. The RWR task force is responsible for overseeing and documenting progress on the implementation of nine of the strategies. As part of this effort, Working Groups are

responsible for implementing the work plans and sharing progress and outcomes at quarterly RWR task force meetings. To leverage synergies between work planning items, a suite of focused initiatives was defined among Working Group participants.

Figure 2: RWR Task Force Working Groups and Initiatives

Regional Supply and Storage	Regional Water Quality	Wildfire
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Supply Conveyance: Invasive Mussels • Regional Project Concept Incubator • Local Supply Target Pathway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA Water Quality Permitting Consortium • Salinity Impacts Study • Groundwater Quality Work Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildfire Report Recommendations • Wildfire Information Exchange

Some highlights of 2025 progress within the RWR task force include:

- Established a new collaborative to facilitate discussions and partnership for mitigating impacts from invasive mussels on the ability to convey and recharge imported waters. This includes a regional draft control plan.
- Established a "Regional Project Concept Incubator" effort within the working groups to help collaboratively identify new big-picture regional project concepts for further consideration.
- Laid groundwork for new levels of information sharing and solution development regarding shared water quality-related permitting and regulatory challenges through a new permitting consortium.
- Reviewed and synthesized findings from the Blue-Ribbon Commission Report and After-Action Reports.
- Initiated wildfire information exchange to facilitate development and sharing of key information and resources amongst County water purveyors, including standard Wildfire Vulnerability Assessments (and subsequent hardening measures).

Additionally, the RWR task force is responsible for collecting and analyzing the data and information necessary to calculate and present progress made on all 16 CWP targets on an annual basis. This data is maintained on the CWP Dashboard and summarized in the attached table, Exhibit A.

Water Communications (WC) Task Force

Mission: To implement priority tasks from the CWP 2-Year Action Plan to transform Los Angeles County water consumers to become empowered and informed water advocates in the region.

Lead: Charley Wilson (Southern California Water Coalition)

The WC Task Force meets quarterly and has prioritized two major research initiatives this year in collaboration with Water for LA – a general Los Angeles County public opinion survey and in-depth water leader opinion interviews.

In September 2025, the Los Angeles County public opinion survey was conducted among 1,553 adult residents of Los Angeles County. The results are representative of Los Angeles County's adult population, including age, gender, race/ethnicity, and geographic regions. The survey was designed to determine baseline familiarity with Water for LA and interest in receiving general information from Water for LA as well as specific water topics. The survey also assessed awareness and concern about water-related issues to help the region better understand how best to provide information and opportunities for involvement to residents through Water for LA and the CWP. The survey was designed to determine if additional education would increase interest in getting information from Water for LA. Lastly, the survey evaluated the credibility of current and potential messengers or spokespeople for Water for LA, with firefighters ranked as the most trusted source for information.

From August through October 2025, 20 one-on-one interviews were conducted with key water opinion leaders. These interviews provided an opportunity to gather candid insights from trusted leaders in the water industry, with voices from retail water agencies and wholesalers, non-governmental organizations, and community-based organizations within Los Angeles County. Overall, results showed that water supply, reliability, and affordability remain key concerns, in addition to an overreliance on imported water, worsening droughts, and aging infrastructure. The high cost of infrastructure continues to pose a challenge for project implementation. Furthermore, on the topic of wildfire and disaster preparedness, there is a public disconnect in understanding residential water system capabilities and major wildfire emergencies. The recent wildfire disaster resulted in astronomical influxes of litigation claims, and measures vary by agency to prepare for future disasters.

The feedback gathered through this process will support the WC Task Force in identifying opportunities and messages to inform the regional water communications platform, advancing collaborative initiatives, and shaping how the CWP addresses regional water supply needs, stormwater management and flood protection, and sedimentation management.

Small Water Systems (SWS) Task Force

Mission: To implement priority tasks from the CWP 2-Year Action Plan to support small water systems within Los Angeles County to improve drinking water equity and create longer term resilience and higher quality supplies.

Lead: Adam Ariki (Los Angeles County Public Works)

The SWS Task Force and its Working Group meet regularly to guide efforts to support small water systems. The Working Group engaged with several ongoing efforts, including the development of the Los Angeles County Drought Resilience Plan (DRP), review of the University of California, Los Angeles' (UCLA) study on Drought and Climate Resiliency Solutions for Small Water Systems, and draft guidance for the small water systems support program framework.

The Working Group also serves as the Senate Bill 552 Drought and Water Shortage Task Force, compliant with California Water Code 10609.70(a)(1), which (1) requires all California counties to establish and regularly convene a task force to facilitate drought and water shortage preparedness for State small water systems and domestic wells within the County's jurisdiction, and (2) extends invitations to representatives from State and local governments (e.g., groundwater sustainability agencies), community-based organizations, local water suppliers, and residents to participate in these convenings. The DRP's components are in development currently, including identifying priority areas in the Risk Assessment and sharing information to inform Short-Term Response Actions. The DRP is anticipated to be finalized in summer 2026.

- The UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation conducted several studies on small water systems within the region, reviewed by the Working Group. These efforts produced the *Drought & Climate Resiliency Solutions for Small Water Systems in Los Angeles County* report, which focused on improving drought and wildfire resilience through consolidation, emergency preparedness, and equitable access to safe drinking water. UCLA also released the *Southern California Community Water Systems Atlas*, a report and companion mapping tool that assesses water quality, affordability, governance, and climate resilience aspects of water systems across six counties in Southern California. UCLA has been a strong collaborator and demonstrated this tool for members of the task force and working group.
- The SWS task force is developing a framework of tools and strategies to support SWS across Los Angeles County. This framework responds directly to the needs identified by SWS operators, partner agencies, and findings from the initial evaluation. The framework aims to connect SWS to existing resources while identifying where key partner organizations can fill remaining gaps. The framework includes targeted strategies and tools, recognizing that no single solution can address the diverse needs of all small systems in the County. The following seven overarching themes have emerged, together forming a coordinated approach to regional support.
 1. Facilitating Capacity Exchange
 2. Advancing Workforce Development
 3. Supporting Community Engagement
 4. Expanding Access to Funding

5. Maintaining a Resource Repository
6. Enhancing Emergency Preparedness and Response
7. Providing Advocacy Support

The SWS Support Program Framework is expected to be completed by summer 2026.

Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) Task Force

Mission: To implement priority tasks from the CWP 2-Year Action Plan to support the use of nature-based water management solutions across the County to improve the health of communities and ecosystems.

Lead: Eileen Alduenda (Council for Watershed Health)

The NbS Task Force was established to help develop standards for nature-based water management solutions. Within the Task Force, a more focused Blue-Ribbon Panel (BRP) was formed to develop the iterative work of establishing a definition, a standard, and additional recommendations. The Task Force included over 50 participants representing tribes, community-based organizations, technical experts, government agencies, and academia. Over the course of many Task Force and BRP meetings held from 2024 through 2025, the BRP developed Countywide NbS definitions and standards for consideration. The draft NbS Task Force Report is undergoing final review and is expected to be finalized in December 2025.

The draft definition and standard for NbS is as follows:

- *NbS Definition:* NbS address societal challenges through sustainable actions that protect and restore living ecosystems and their functions to ensure human well-being and benefit biodiversity by meeting the established NbS standard and associated criteria.
- *Water-specific NbS Definition:* NbS address water quality, water supply, and stormwater challenges through sustainable actions that protect and restore living ecosystems and their functions to ensure human well-being and benefit biodiversity by meeting the established NbS standard and associated criteria.
- *Standard:* NbS must implement place-appropriate and evidence-backed living processes and infrastructure, such as soil and vegetation, to improve long-term ecosystem function, habitat connectivity, and community health and well-being. The success of NbS should be qualitatively and quantitatively evaluated using criteria and indicators as described in the BRP report.

Related Efforts Supporting the CWP

- Antelope Valley Water Plan (AVWP)
 - The AVWP builds on the CWP to further explore the unique characteristics and needs of the Antelope Valley and expand upon Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) collaborations with and by the Antelope Valley water management entities. The AVWP supports regional collaboration to develop projects and actions eligible for implementation and funding through existing mechanisms such as the Antelope Valley IRWM Program and CWP. The AVWP's focal areas will address gaps and define how Antelope Valley needs to connect with CWP, Antelope Valley IRWM, and other regional efforts.

- Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP) Initial Watershed Plans
 - The SCWP draft Initial Watershed Plans (IWPs) were developed to identify meaningful opportunity areas for multi-benefit investments to advance the 14 SCWP goals within each of the nine unique Watershed Areas. The IWPs proactively direct implementation by supporting the Los Angeles region in carrying out the SCWP goals and leading through Watershed Area-specific contributions to greater Countywide targets. As part of the SCWP Program Goal (18.04.B), Increase Drought Preparedness (Water Supply), the draft Initial Watershed Plans have set an SCW Program-wide target to increase local supply through distributed stormwater capture by 110,000 acre-feet/year by 2045 (subdivided across the nine Watershed Areas), which is intended to supplement other regional/storage solutions to achieve CWP Target B to increase overall local supply sources by 580,000 acre-feet/year by 2045.

- Infrastructure Los Angeles Water Committee
 - The purpose of the Infrastructure Los Angeles Water Committee is to collaborate to revitalize the Los Angeles region by investing in equitable, sustainable, and resilient infrastructure. This will be accomplished by developing integrated, cross-agency projects that serve the Los Angeles region and maximizing use of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding. The CWP RWR Task Force works closely with the Infrastructure Los Angeles Water Committee to explore priority infrastructure projects that will contribute to the resilience of Los Angeles County's local water supply.

- Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM)
 - IRWM is a Statewide collaborative effort to manage all aspects of water resources in a region. IRWM is watershed-based and crosses jurisdictional and political boundaries; involves multiple agencies, non-governmental organizations/community-based organizations, and community members; and

attempts to address the issues and differing perspectives of all the entities involved through mutually beneficial solutions. In Los Angeles County, there are three IRWM Regions—Greater Los Angeles County (GLAC), Upper Santa Clara River, and Antelope Valley. The IRWM meeting platform was utilized extensively during CWP development to gather valuable input from the three IRWM Regions. Public Works is leading the exploration for how best to align/integrate IRWM efforts (and any future State resources – e.g., Prop 4) with CWP implementation.

- Water for LA
 - Water for LA is a program to transform County residents into empowered, informed water advocates. As a trusted resource on all things water, Water for LA leads campaigns that educate the public and foster more sustainable behavior to help ensure the future of the region's water resources and is intended to showcase both regional water management successes and opportunities. The CWP WC task force works closely with Water for LA to survey public and expert opinions and develop strategies to launch meaningful, targeted campaigns to bolster the public's knowledge.





CWP Adoptions

In addition to implementing the task forces and hosting the annual Water Resiliency Summit, the CWP team has engaged with a variety of local and regional water partners across Los Angeles County to foster collaboration and support toward achieving the CWP vision for water resiliency. To date, the following 11 organizations have formally adopted the CWP via resolution:

Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts
Las Virgenes Municipal Water District
Crescenta Valley Water District
Foothill Municipal Water District
Water Replenishment District
Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster
West Basin Municipal Water District
Los Angeles Department of Water & Power
City of Santa Monica
Gateway Water Management Authority
Kinneloa Irrigation District

2025 Review of CWP Targets

The CWP is organized around a framework of targets and strategies, which provides a measurable representation of desired outcomes for regional water resilience across Los Angeles County. The four task forces are a key element of achieving these targets and are working from the 2-year action plan that was included in the adopted CWP. Progress on each target is presented and maintained on the CWP Dashboard, and a summary of each target and its progress is included in the attached table, Exhibit A.

CONCLUSION

The CWP is advancing regional water resilience by turning shared goals into early priorities and collective action across Los Angeles County. It continues to expand its reach through partnerships with agencies, tribes, and communities that are adopting the CWP resolution and aligning their local plans with its strategies and targets. These growing collaborations reflect a Countywide commitment to modernizing infrastructure, accelerating nature-based and multi-benefit solutions, and strengthening local water supplies. As the CWP evolves, this shared and inclusive framework will continue to guide investments and innovations that help ensure that every community in Los Angeles County has access to safe, clean, and reliable water.

Exhibit A | CWP Targets Table (2045 Horizon)

Target	2025 Target Status*		Notes
Reginal Water Supply Reliability Targets			
A: Achieve 100% compliance with State Urban Water Use Objectives	N/A		Guidance on State Urban Water Use Objectives have not been finalized
B: Increase local supply sources by 580,000 AFY	40,544 AFY*		Total cumulative increase in capacity from constructed regional projects
C: Meet 100% of water demands even in times of drought	54% of suppliers are in Stage 1 or No stage (49 out of 90 reporting)		Data Source: State Water Resources Control Board Drought Reporting
D: Maximize ability to meet health and safety needs following an emergency by maintaining access to 6 months of emergency supply, for 100% suppliers to have access to emergency supply	69% of water suppliers have access to an emergency source of supply (119 out of 173 reporting)		Data Source: 2023 eAR database
Groundwater Management and Quality Targets			
E: Optimize production of groundwater by maintaining at least 700,000 AFY baseline groundwater production	647,000 AFY (avg from 2015 – 2024)		Data Source: Estimated from pumping data for Upper Los Angeles River Area (ULARA) Overall pumping demand has shown a decreasing

Target	2025 Target Status*	Notes
		trend since 2011 resulting in lower demands for groundwater supplies
F: Optimize production of groundwater by increasing production in areas overlying stranded groundwater by 18,000 AFY	8,246 AFY*	Based on estimated new treatment facilities in Main San Gabriel and Central Basins, and Antelope Valley
G: Increase groundwater recharge and storage by enhancing regional facility recharge by 250,000 AFY	45,625 AFY*	Data Source: Los Angeles County Public Works annual recharge and hydrologic reports, Watermaster Annual Reports
H: Increase groundwater recharge and storage by increasing decentralized infiltration by 80,000 AFY	6,218 AFY*	Data Source: Constructed Safe Clean Water Program projects to date
Infrastructure Resilience and Drinking Water Equity Targets		
I: Reduce at-risk systems by 100%	81 systems potentially at-risk, at-risk or failing (November 2025)	Data Source: 2025 SAFER Dashboard
J: 100% of water agencies, including those in severely disadvantaged communities, have affordable cost of water to meet health and safety needs	96%	Data Source: 2023 eAR Database

Target	2025 Target Status*	Notes
K: Reduce color, taste, and odor drinking water quality issues by 50%	19% decrease (0.795 complaints per 1,000 connections)	Data Source: 2023 eAR Database Baseline – 0.983 complaints per 1,000 connections
L: Maximize ability to meeting health and safety needs following an emergency by confirming 100% of small community water systems have access to alternative sources of supply	44% (31 out of 71 reporting)	Data Source: 2023 eAR Database
Watershed Land Management Targets		
M: Reduce fire-contributing species in riparian areas by 2,900 acres	106 acres*	Data Source: California Vegetation Treatment Program and the Water Action Hub
N: Reduce human-caused ignitions by 50%	3% decrease (current measure is approximately 3.2 fires/year over a 10-year average, 2014-2024, excluding 2023)	Data Source: 2024 CalFire
O: Maintain a minimum of 75% average available capacity in debris basins and 80% average available capacity in reservoirs	98% - average capacity available at debris basins 91% - average capacity available in reservoirs	Data Source: LACFCD

Target	2025 Target Status*	Notes
P: Confirm 100% of water management agencies within the wildland-urban interface are implementing a wildfire resilience or mitigation plan	60% (2022 eAR database)	2023 eAR database was reviewed, and equivalent reporting questions could not be identified.

* Status values represent the progress compared to 2022 baselines utilized in the CWP that was adopted in December 2023.