



San Diego County Water Authority

SPECIAL MEETING
LEGISLATION, CONSERVATION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

BOARD ROOM

THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2015
1:30 p.m.

Gary Croucher – Chair
Christy Guerin – Vice Chair
Fern Steiner – Vice Chair
David Barnum
Ed Gallo
Matt Hall
Frank Hilliker

Jim Madaffer
Ron Morrison
Mark Muir
Jose Preciado
Dave Roberts
Elsa Saxod
Yen Tu

1. Roll call – determination of quorum.
2. Additions to agenda (Government Code Section 54954.2(b)).
3. Public comment – opportunities for members of the public to address the Committee on matters within the Committee’s jurisdiction.
4. Conservation Opportunities in Disadvantaged Communities.
5. Adjournment.

Melinda Cogle
Clerk of the Board

NOTE: This meeting is called as a Legislation, Conservation, and Outreach Committee meeting. Because a quorum of the Board may be present, the meeting is also noticed as a Board meeting. Members of the Board who are not members of the Committee may participate in the meeting pursuant to Section 2.00.060(g) of the Authority Administrative Code (Recodified). All items on the agenda, including information items, may be deliberated and become subject to action. All public documents provided to the committee or Board for this meeting including materials related to an item on this agenda and submitted to the Board of Directors within 72 hours prior to this meeting may be reviewed at the San Diego County Water Authority headquarters located at 4677 Overland Avenue, San Diego, CA 92123 at the reception desk during normal business hours.



August 7, 2015

Attention: Legislation, Conservation and Outreach Committee

Water Conservation Opportunities for Disadvantaged Communities (Information).

Purpose

Provide information on water conservation opportunities for disadvantaged communities in the Water Authority's service area.

Background

The severity of drought conditions in California and the need for urban retail water agencies to comply with state-mandated water-use reductions through February 2016 has elevated the need for all customers to be engaged in water-saving efforts. At its June 2015 meeting, members of the Board of Directors requested an opportunity to learn more information and discuss how water conservation programs can be optimized for customers in disadvantaged communities.

The federal government, state government, energy utilities and other organizations use different socioeconomic measurements to determine a community's eligibility for special assistance programs. For example, the state of California defines a disadvantaged community (DAC) as a defined area, such as a census tract, in which the average annual median household income is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median household income (MHI). Data from the 2010 U.S. Census indicates that any defined area with an average MHI of \$48,875 or less qualifies as a DAC.

The 2013 San Diego Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan uses this definition. The plan includes an extensive section about DACs in the San Diego IRWM Planning Region, which encompasses the Water Authority's service area. Based on 2010 U.S. Census data, eight of the County's 18 incorporated cities either qualify as DACs or contain DACs. Additionally, based on the same data, 24 of the 58 community planning areas (CPA) in the city of San Diego and 18 of the 23 CPAs in the unincorporated area of the County are considered DACs or contain areas that qualify as DACs. The majority of the land in San Diego County that is not in the Water Authority service area is considered disadvantaged under this standard. (See Attachment 1 – Location of Disadvantaged Communities).

The San Diego IRWM Regional Water Management Group (RWMG), comprised of the Water Authority, the city of San Diego and the county of San Diego, distinguishes between urban DACs and rural DACs when considering disadvantaged community water issues. The RWMG makes this distinction because the nature of water-related issues and challenges differs markedly between these disadvantaged populations. Urban DACs are those located within the Water Authority's service area that receive municipal water and wastewater services. Like all of the people who are served by the Water Authority and its member agencies, DAC residents receive safe, reliable water supplies. As such, traditionally their water resources needs have generally

related to community development, stormwater management, pollution prevention, flooding and illegal dumping into small urban creeks.

Rural DACs are located outside of the Water Authority's service area and are therefore not likely to be served by a local water or wastewater agency. They rely largely on groundwater, either from individual wells owned and maintained by the property owner or very small drinking water systems. In many cases, their primary water-related concern is lack of a safe, reliable source of drinking water. In addition, rural DACs often lack access to adequate infrastructure and financing, as well as the resources to adequately maintain or improve existing facilities. As a result, rural drinking water systems may face significant challenges in complying with drinking water regulations. Because rural DACs are generally located outside of the Water Authority service area, this report will focus on urban DACs within the Water Authority's service area.

Previous Water Authority programs that targeted low-income residents included the Community-Based Organizations Ultra- Low Flush Toilet (ULFT) Distribution Program (CBO Program). The CBO Program, administered from 1993 to 1996, contracted with community-based organizations to distribute ULFTs at no cost to eligible customers, while at the same time providing job training opportunities for the community-based organizations. Program eligibility was based on a customer's income level. Approximately 22,000 ULFTs were distributed through the program. Program funding was provided by the Water Authority, participating member agencies, and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

Discussion

Because the region's DACs are served by the Water Authority and its member agencies, DAC residents can participate in broadly available water conservation programs and services offered by the Water Authority, its member agencies and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. For example, the Water Authority's school education program provides an important outreach tool in the region's lower-income areas. The program, mainly through school assemblies and school visits by the Splash Science Mobile Lab, focuses on opportunities for elementary school students and teachers and their families to enhance their knowledge of key water issues, especially water conservation. During fiscal years 2014 and 2015, 213 elementary schools participated in the Water Authority's educational programs. Of those, 105 were Title 1 schools, which receive federal funds to help meet the educational needs of students in California's highest-poverty areas. (See Attachment 2 for a map of the Title 1 schools that participated in the Water Authority's educational program.)

However, many residents from communities with socioeconomic challenges do experience barriers to participating in conservation programs run by public water agencies. Income levels or other circumstances may mean that residents lack the resources or eligibility requirements necessary to take advantage of some offerings. For example, rebate programs that require an upfront outlay of cash to purchase a water-efficient device followed by a waiting period to receive the rebate check may experience less participation. In other instances, the opportunity to participate in outdoor-focused programs may be limited because customers rent apartments with no yards, or live in homes where they have already stopped irrigating their landscapes to save money. Even programs that require no upfront costs and apply to indoor customers may

experience lower participation levels. The Water Authority's WaterSmart Checkup program, offered in partnership with its member agencies, includes no-cost home water use surveys that provide a convenient and accessible means to alert residents to how they can reduce their indoor and outdoor water use. Of the nearly 5,000 services supported through the WaterSmart Checkup program during fiscal years 2014 and 2015, only 6 percent were performed in DACs as defined in the region's IRWM plan.

There are additional opportunities beyond water agency-administered programs to help residents in disadvantaged communities save water. For instance, the Water Authority partners with San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) on its residential Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESAP). SDG&E determines eligibility for this program based on income and household size, or by the household's participation in certain public assistance programs. The ESAP offers qualified customers free water and energy-efficient appliances, including high-efficiency clothes washers, home water conservation kits, weatherization services, energy-efficient lighting, and educational materials.

The Water Authority recently expanded its partnership with SDG&E by piloting water surveys, hose nozzle distributions and water conservation outreach for ESAP participants. SDG&E is exploring the addition of these measures and extra features on a long-term basis, as well as introducing other water conservation measures. SDG&E also recently requested authorization from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to add a direct-install program for high-efficiency toilets and other approved cold-water conservation measures to the ESAP in calendar years 2015 through 2017. If authorized by the CPUC, the ESAP will target more than 20,000 homes per year beginning as soon as late 2015.

The Water Authority is also distributing water-conservation devices and educational material at several SDG&E "tailgate" community events that are designed, in part, to provide information and assistance for customers in disadvantaged communities.

In addition, the RWMG has worked directly with many non-profit organizations that are involved with addressing water-related issues in DACs, including the Environmental Health Coalition, Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation, Groundwork San Diego, San Diego Coastkeeper, Alter Terra, WildCoast and others. Outreach has focused on developing an understanding of the water needs in the region's DACs. The RWMG also increased awareness of IRWM funding opportunities in DACs and ensured DAC representation in the IRWM Program's Regional Advisory Committee and IRWM activities.

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) has awarded \$58.5 million in grant funding to support 44 high-priority projects in the San Diego IRWM Program. In August 2015, the RWMG submitted a new grant application for \$31 million to support an additional 13 projects. Included in the grants is funding that was approved, or is expected to be approved for the following urban DAC projects that address water quality or water conservation:

- Chollas Creek Integration Project, Phases 1 and 2 (sponsored by the Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation) – Maintains and improves Chollas Creek as a natural drainage system that is a major conduit for stormwater runoff in the Encanto community of the city of San Diego.
- San Diego Regional Water Quality Assessment and Outreach Project, Phases 1 and 2 (sponsored by San Diego Coastkeeper) – Engages community stakeholders in the ongoing collection and analysis of surface water samples in nine watersheds. The water quality data is accessible on-line. The project also focuses on the removal of trash from these areas.
- Conservation Home Makeover in the Chollas Creek Watershed (sponsored by Groundwork San Diego) – Targets a minimum of 50 owner-owned and occupied residences in Encanto to install greywater systems and rain barrels and replace turf with drought-tolerant landscaping. The project also will provide technical training to ensure proper system maintenance.
- Ms. Smarty-Plants Grows Waterwise Schools (sponsored by the Water Conservation Garden) – Focuses on 12-15 schools in low-income neighborhoods of the La Mesa-Spring Valley and Lemon Grove school districts. The schools will be selected for water-efficient school upgrades, which include funding and technical support to convert turf grass to drought-tolerant landscaping.

In addition to the funding available through the region's IRWM Program, other grant funds will become available in the next few years. Proposition 1, approved by voters in 2014, will offer funding to support the water-related needs of the state's DACs. Proposition 1 allocates \$510 million to DWR to assist IRWM planning and implementation throughout California. The bond language directs DWR to spend at least 10 percent of the funding to support projects that directly benefit DACs. DWR expects to receive at least \$70 million in fiscal years 2016 and 2017 to support the development of DAC IRWM projects and then fund those projects. The San Diego IRWM region will compete for funding. In total, the San Diego RWMG expects to receive approximately \$38.5 million in funding from the Proposition 1 IRWM grant funding, some of which should be awarded to assist DAC projects.

To help make IRWM funding more accessible, the Water Authority has sponsored SB 208 (Lara). SB 208 addresses the difficulty experienced by some project sponsors when they have to wait for a prolonged period to get reimbursed for project expenses. The bill would require that DWR provide advanced payment of 50 percent of an IRWM grant award of less than \$1 million where the project proponent is a nonprofit or a disadvantaged community organization, or the project benefits a disadvantaged community. SB 208 was approved by the Senate and is in the Assembly.

Proposition 1 includes other, non-IRWM funding categories directed at the water-related needs of DACs. Much of this funding is aimed at rural DACs in areas such as the San Joaquin River and Tulare Lake hydrologic regions, where the availability of reliable, clean and safe drinking water is an ongoing problem. However, Proposition 1 includes funding for which the San Diego Region's water providers may compete, including \$100 million to implement water conservation programs, \$625 million for water recycling efforts, \$200 million for stormwater management programs, and \$100 million for seawater desalination projects.

At the August 13, 2015 Special Board Meeting guest speakers and their topics will include:

- Mark Stadler, Principal Water Resources Specialist, will address DACs and the IRWM Plan;
- Jeff Stephenson, Principal Water Resources Specialist, will discuss opportunities and challenges with DAC participation in water conservation programs;
- Mayda Bandy, Residential Customer Programs Manager for SDG&E, will present SDG&E's programs for low income customers;
- Wilson Kennedy of the city of San Diego Public Utilities Department will present the department's research related to funding options for low-income assistance programs; and
- Ravi Bajaj, Education Manager for the San Diego Green Building Council, will highlight the IRWM Groundwork project.

Water Authority staff will continue to explore additional opportunities to work with its member agencies, SDG&E or other community partners to provide assistance to DACs as part of the overall regional drought response and long-term water-use efficiency strategies.

Prepared by: Mark Stadler, Principal Water Resources Specialist

Prepared by: Lori Swanson, Water Resources Specialist

Reviewed by: Jeff Stephenson, Principal Water Resources Specialist

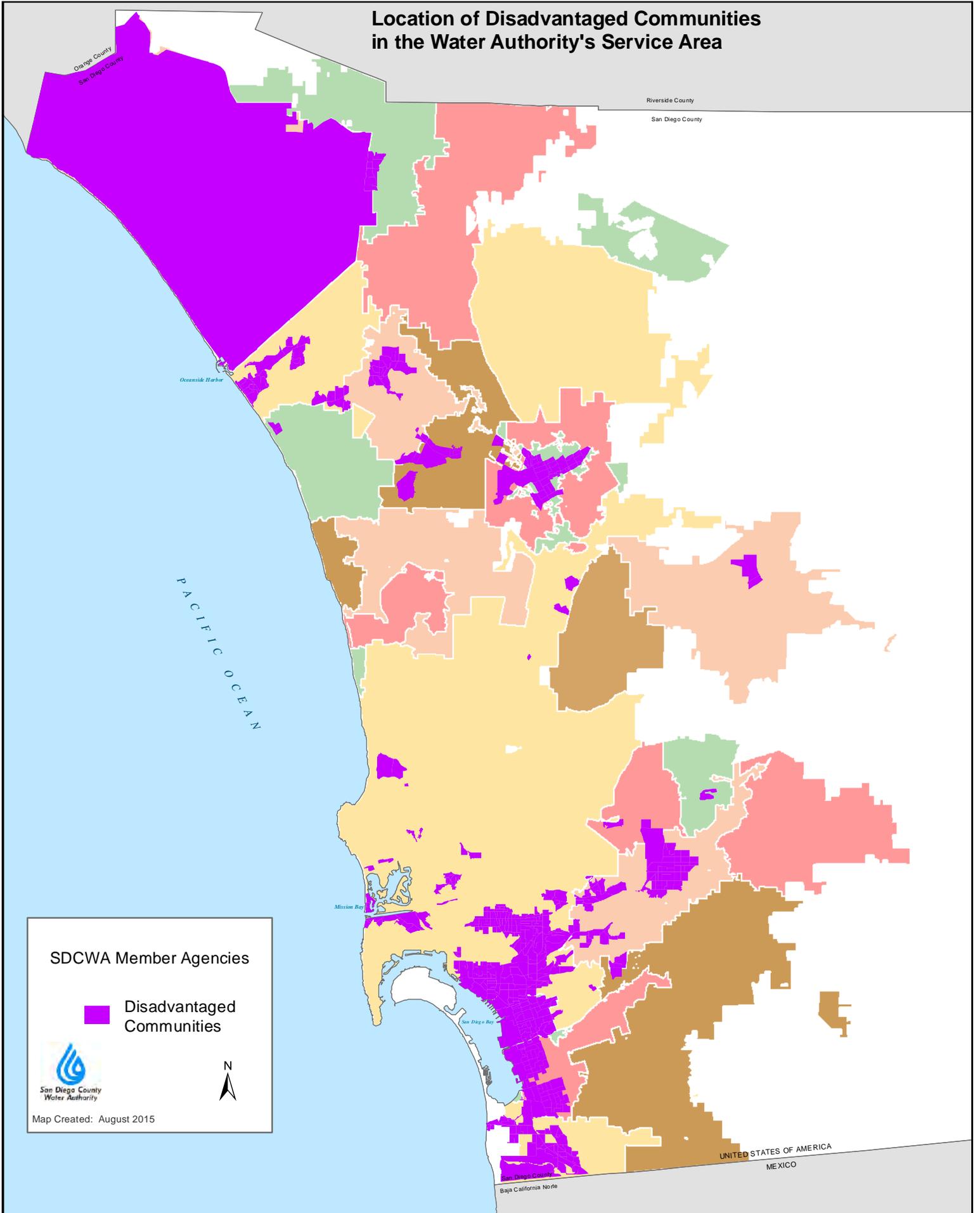
Reviewed by: Jason Foster, Director of Public Outreach and Conservation

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Location of Disadvantaged Communities

Attachment 2 – Location of Title 1 Schools Participating in Water Authority Educational Programs

Location of Disadvantaged Communities in the Water Authority's Service Area



SDCWA Member Agencies

Disadvantaged Communities

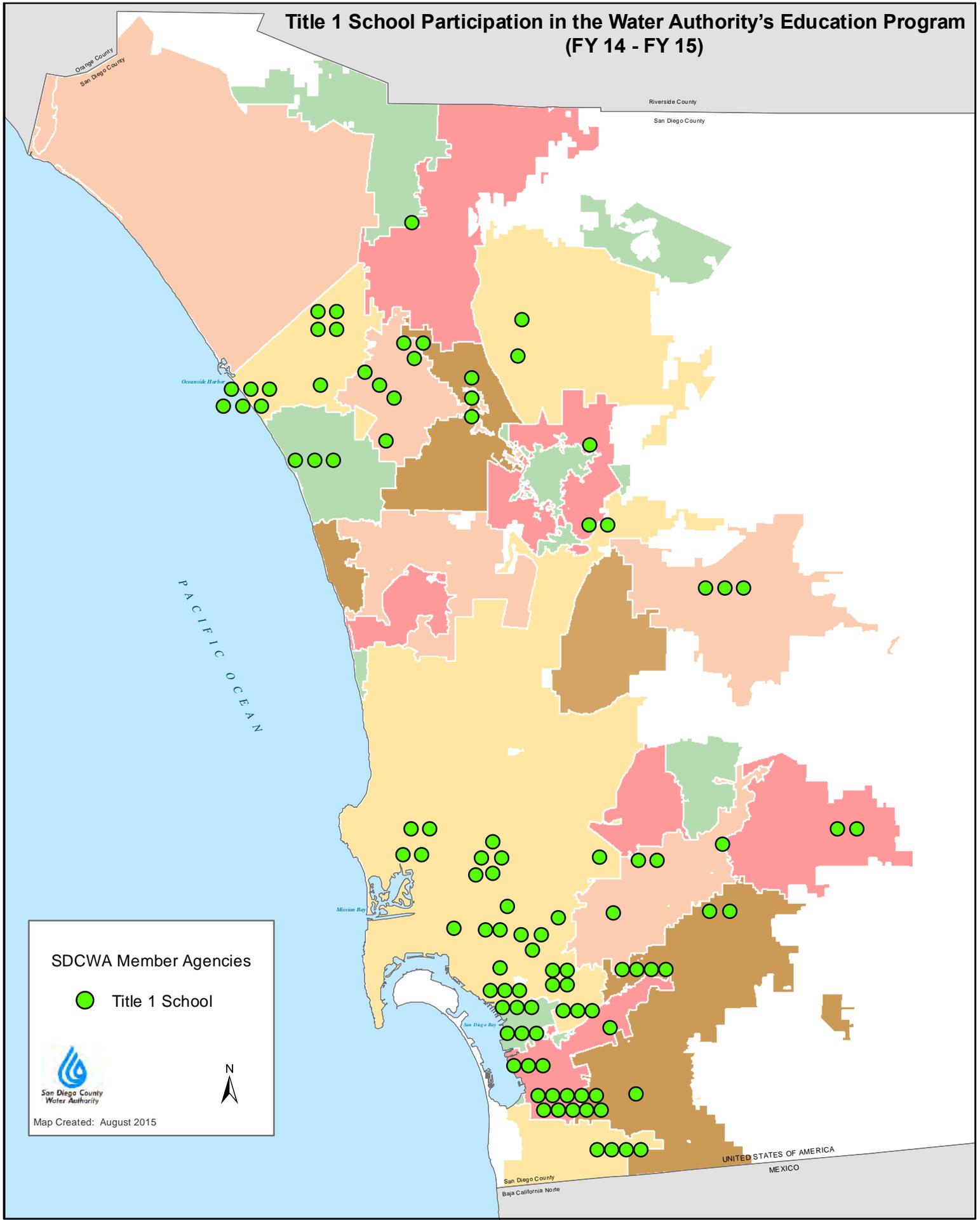


Map Created: August 2015

San Diego County
Baja California Norte

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
MEXICO

Title 1 School Participation in the Water Authority's Education Program (FY 14 - FY 15)



SDCWA Member Agencies

- Title 1 School



San Diego County Water Authority

Map Created: August 2015



San Diego County
Baja California Norte
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
MEXICO