

# INVESTMENTS PROTECT REGION FROM DRY YEARS

Over the past three decades, the Water Authority and the region's water ratepayers have invested in a diversified "portfolio approach" to water security that protects the region's economy and quality of life from droughts and other water supply shortages. The strategy includes increasing locally controlled water supplies, expanding water storage capacity, and improving water-use efficiency.

The result is enhanced water supply reliability that provides a safety net for San Diego County. The Water Authority's draft 2020 Urban Water Management Plan highlights how the region's strategy to supply management and a sustained emphasis on water-use efficiency mean the region will continue to have sufficient water supplies through the 2045 planning horizon even during multiple dry years.

Current dry conditions statewide are a reminder of just how important those investments are. The emerging drought also serves as a reminder that Sacramento should not impose one-size-fits-all mandates for combating drought like it did during the 2012-2016 drought. At that time, unprecedented state water-use decrees unnecessarily undermined regions like San Diego that had prepared for dry times.

It would be especially damaging to restart the drought cycle with sweeping one-size-fits all demands that are inequitable and counterproductive. That approach would depress our economy just as it's restarting after the year-long pandemic pause. Instead, the state should employ a stress test methodology for water agencies that acknowledges the unique circumstances of each area of the state and allows for local, targeted, real-time responses.

## MEETING THE REGION'S NEEDS

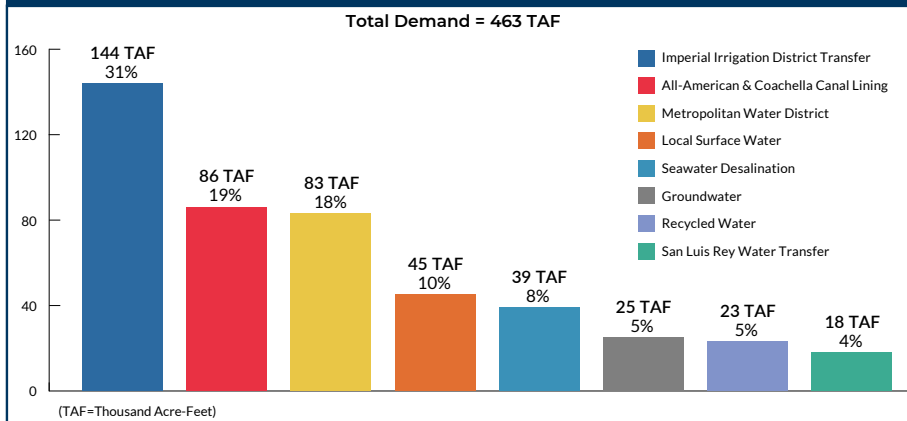
California is a large state, with many diverse regions that have unique water profiles based on their topography and geology. The San Diego region differs greatly in its water resources, even compared to Orange and Los Angeles counties which have access to vast amounts of groundwater.

In contrast, San Diego County's groundwater reserves are relatively small and brackish. To meet the unique needs of the San Diego region, the Water Authority and its member agencies have invested in a portfolio of water supplies and projects to develop, transport and store water. These projects and supplies work together to ensure that the region's water needs are met, even in times of shortage and emergencies.

In the early 1990s, the San Diego region was 95% dependent on a single source of imported water. When a multi-year drought brought severe cutbacks and hammered the local economy, water agencies and civic leaders joined together to support a package of initiatives and actions that would build a secure water future for San Diegans. Thirty years later, those initiatives have resulted in a portfolio of water supplies, storage facilities

and conservation actions that work together to ensure the region is protected from inevitable drought and other water supply emergencies.

### WATER AUTHORITY SERVICE AREA FISCAL YEAR 2020 DEMAND AND SUPPLY



## LOCALLY CONTROLLED SUPPLIES



Local supplies mean decisions are made for San Diegans by San Diegans.

Long-term contracts for high-priority Colorado River water provide low-cost conserved supplies.

Desalinated seawater, groundwater and recycled water provide additional security.

Potable water reuse is the next source of supply.

## WATER STORAGE



Investments have created more than 190,000 acre-feet of emergency and drought response storage capacity that shield the region from potential supply cuts during multiple consecutive dry years.

Regional water storage capacity totals approximately 723,000 acre-feet, a 30 percent increase since 2003.

San Diego County ratepayers have invested in reservoirs owned by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

The Water Authority is seeking a storage account in Lake Mead as a low-cost way to increase reserves and provide water to the drought-stricken reservoir.

## WATER-USE EFFICIENCY



Per capita water use in the San Diego region has declined by nearly 50% since 1990.

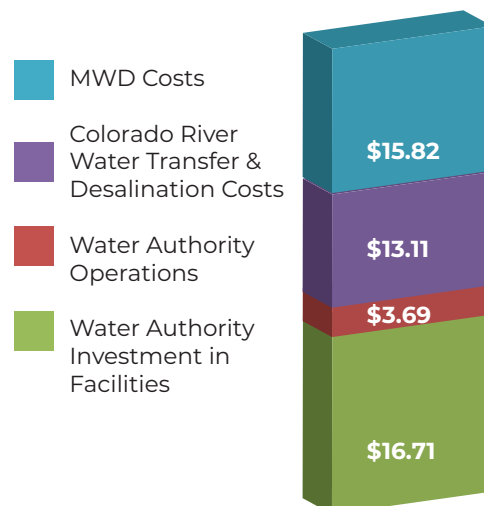
San Diego County ratepayers have conserved more than 1 million acre-feet of water over 30 years.

The Water Authority has been a leader since the 1980s in requiring and supporting conversions to water efficient devices like low-flow showerheads and toilets.

## WATER SECURITY AT A REASONABLE COST

There's no getting around it: Investments in water supply security come at a cost – but they also power the region's economy and quality of life. In the end, an average ratepayer in San Diego County spends about \$50 a month for safe, reliable water supplies from the Water Authority. That's about the same as a single tank of gas. Local water retailers add fees and charges to pay for their parts of the delivery and treatment system.

Estimated 2020 Wholesale Costs per Household\*



**Total: \$49.33/month**

\*Based on 0.32 acre-feet of annual consumption and 2019 calendar year rates

### MORE INFO

[www.sdcwa.org/your-water](http://www.sdcwa.org/your-water)