

# EVERYONE'S INVESTMENT IN A RELIABLE WATER SUPPLY

The San Diego County Water Authority's wholesale water rates have increased in recent years, while regional water use has fallen. Many residents understandably ask the question, "Why are our water rates continuing to climb if we're using less water than before?"

The answer is increasing costs, along with investments our region needs to ensure we have a safe, reliable water supply to support our 3.3 million residents and \$253 billion economy for generations to come. We live in a semiarid climate, and we rely on sources hundreds of miles away for most of our water. That means it is not cheap to provide our homes, businesses and cities with the water we need to thrive.

There are several reasons why water rates are rising in our region, including the cost of building and financing major regional water supply and infrastructure projects. Over the past decades, the Water Authority has secured more reliable water supplies to help meet growing demands and to protect us from crippling water shortages from any one source especially during the droughts that are hitting California with increasing frequency. We've also built a more robust water system that can meet the region's water needs after a major emergency such as an earthquake.

The most recent example of the Water Authority's supply diversification strategy is the Claude "Bud" Lewis Desalination Plant, the largest seawater desalination project in the nation. It produces approximately 50 million gallons of water a day. While it is more expensive

## THE EMERGENCY & CARRYOVER STORAGE PROJECT

The \$1.5 billion E&CSP is a major part of the Water Authority's Capital Improvement Program. This system of reservoirs, pipelines, pump stations and other facilities provides San Diego County with up to a six-month supply of locally stored water that can be moved around the region in case a natural disaster, such as an earthquake, or other emergency disrupts imported water deliveries.

## THE BEST DEAL AROUND



On average, a gallon of tap water in the San Diego region costs about a penny per gallon. When compared with the cost of other products we use every day, tap water is the best deal around.

A GALLON OF **TAP WATER**  
**\$0.0096\***

A GALLON OF



**\$23.04**

A GALLON OF



**\$8.26**

A GALLON OF



**\$3.52**

A GALLON OF



**\$3.69**

\*based on calendar year 2020

than conventional sources, it's also drought-proof and locally controlled.

Rates are also pushed up by rising power costs and requirements for enhanced environmental protections. And, the region is paying more to the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California for water supplies and transportation.

After years of building major facilities to improve supply reliability, the Water Authority is now focusing on maintaining and operating the regional water treatment and delivery system. The capital improvement budget likely will remain flat for the foreseeable future, pending an update of the Water Authority's Master Plan in 2021. In addition, the Water Authority is taking unprecedented steps to control its budgets and rates from rising due to factors outside its control.

## INCREASING WATER EFFICIENCY

Per capita water use declined by nearly 50 percent in San Diego County between 1990 and 2020.

## MAJOR INVESTMENTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS



### OLIVENHAIN DAM & RESERVOIR

Ratepayer Investment:  
**\$198 million**

The dam and reservoir provide 18,000 acre-feet of storage for regional emergencies and about 6,000 acre-feet for regular operations.

Completed 2003



### TWIN OAKS VALLEY WATER TREATMENT PLANT

Ratepayer Investment:  
**\$179 million**

This plant, one of the largest advanced submerged membrane treatment plants in the world, treats up to 100 million gallons per day of drinking water.

Completed 2008



### ALL-AMERICAN & COACHELLA CANAL LINING

Ratepayer Investment:  
**\$190 million**

The water-conserving All-American Canal Lining Project and Coachella Canal Lining Project secure 80,000 acre-feet of water annually for our region for 110 years.

Completed 2010



### LAKE HODGES PUMPED STORAGE & FACILITIES

Ratepayer Investment:  
**\$208 million**

This project secures regional access to 20,000 acre-feet of emergency water storage in Lake Hodges. It also generates up to 40 MW of hydroelectric power, benefiting ratepayers by producing revenue to offset operating costs.

Completed 2012



### SAN VICENTE DAM RAISE & RELATED FACILITIES

Ratepayer Investment:  
**\$811 million**

The San Vicente project, the tallest dam raise in the United States, is the single largest increase in water storage capacity in the region's history – more than 157,000 acre-feet. Stored water will be used during emergencies or to help manage supplies in dry years. The system of facilities includes the existing pump station, a surge tank and 11 miles of 8.5-foot-diameter underground pipeline.

Completed 2014



### CARLSBAD SEAWATER DESALINATION PLANT

Ratepayer Investment:  
**\$1 billion**

The Claude "Bud" Lewis Carlsbad Desalination Plant, owned by a private developer, produces up to 56,000 acre-feet a year of high-quality water for the Water Authority. A 10-mile pipeline and aqueduct modifications were built to incorporate the desalinated seawater.

Completed 2015

### COLORADO RIVER TRANSFER SUPPLIES

Water supplies from long-term canal-lining agreements and a water conservation and transfer agreement with the Imperial Irrigation District provide nearly 280,000 acre-feet of water for our region annually. That's enough water to meet the annual needs of more than half a million families.

### MORE INFO

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