



## San Diego County Water Authority

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### News Release

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#### **Water Authority Helps Launch National Leak-Detection Competition**

*Agency aims to boost efficiency of large-scale water pipelines*

As part of its pioneering approach to pipeline asset management, the San Diego County Water Authority is co-sponsoring a nationwide contest to advance leak- and corrosion-detection technologies for large-diameter pipelines. Leaks and corrosion are major problems across the country, resulting in billions of gallons of water wasted annually – enough to fill more than three million Olympic-sized swimming pools – along with disruptions in water service and costly repairs.

The competition runs through May 8 and includes a \$75,000 purse provided by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the nation's largest water provider and the operator of more than 20,000 miles of buried water pipelines. The Water Authority's contribution includes helping to design

the competition and providing judges to identify new approaches that can work effectively regardless of pipeline diameter or construction material.

“It’s exciting to focus national attention on an issue that’s of vital importance to us, but usually out of sight and out of mind for the public,” said Mark Muir, chair of the Water Authority’s Board of Directors. “We are eager to see this competition yield new, cost-effective strategies that agencies can deploy locally and across the country.”

The Water Authority participates annually in national Fix a Leak Week activities – which run March 19-25 this year – to promote leak detection at homes and businesses while maintaining an active leak-detection program for its own facilities. In fact, the Water Authority is a national leader in corrosion detection, and over the past 25 years has adopted several cutting-edge tools to inspect its 310-mile large-diameter pipeline system. Those technologies include acoustic leak detection, acoustic fiber optic monitoring, remote field eddy current inspections, magnetic flux leakage tests, and remote field technology.

“Many methods exist for finding leaks and flaws, but none of them can efficiently assess the overall condition of pipelines while in operation,” said Nathan Faber, who leads the Water Authority’s Asset Management Program. “It’s a tall order, but this nationwide competition could help us discover the next generation of condition assessment and water-saving tools.”

Contest sponsors are seeking white papers that describe novel technologies for detecting leaks and flaws in operating water pipelines larger than 48 inches in diameter. Proposals will be evaluated for cost-effectiveness, scalability, and reliability in providing condition assessments regardless of pipeline size, burial depth, construction material or lining material.

During the first stage of the competition, judges from the Water Authority and other participating agencies will look for the most promising theoretical solutions. Organizers envision

a second stage of the competition with a larger purse that would involve proving the concepts in laboratory or field demonstrations.

Contest entries must be received by the Bureau of Reclamation's partnering innovation marketplace, InnoCentive, before midnight on May 9, 2018. To learn more about the competition, or to complete the required registration with InnoCentive for entering the contest, go to [www.usbr.gov/research/challenges/leakypipes.html](http://www.usbr.gov/research/challenges/leakypipes.html). More information about the Water Authority's Asset Management Program is at [www.sdcwa.org/asset-management](http://www.sdcwa.org/asset-management), and a Bureau of Reclamation video about leak detection that features the Water Authority is [here](#).

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*The San Diego County Water Authority sustains a \$220 billion regional economy and the quality of life for 3.3 million residents through a multi-decade water supply diversification plan, major infrastructure investments and forward-thinking policies that promote fiscal and environmental responsibility. A public agency created in 1944, the Water Authority delivers wholesale water supplies to 24 retail water providers, including cities, special districts and a military base.*



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