



Our Region's Trusted Water Leader **San Diego County Water Authority**

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News Release

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Tish Berge Joins Water Authority Executive Leadership Team

Region will benefit from her extensive experience in the water industry

February 11, 2021 – Veteran water industry executive Tish Berge is joining the San Diego County Water Authority as assistant general manager, bringing experience from every aspect of water utility management to serve the region. Berge is currently general manager of the Sweetwater Authority, one of the Water Authority's 24 member agencies. Berge starts her new role February 22 alongside Deputy General Manager Dan Denham and General Manager Sandra L. Kerl.

“Tish is a respected leader in San Diego County who understands the needs of retail water agencies and the communities we collectively serve,” said Kerl. “Her knowledge of all aspects of the industry will enhance our mission both day-to-day and over the long-term. I look forward to collaborating with her even more closely in her new role.”

As general manager of the South Bay-based Sweetwater Authority since 2017, Berge led the agency to a “District of Distinction” award from the Special District Leadership Foundation for demonstrating sound fiscal management policies and practices. Only 2% of special districts receive that honor. Working with the Sweetwater Board and community, she deployed a new 5-year rate structure and associated award-winning outreach campaign to smooth rates and provide financial sustainability.

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■ Sandra L. Kerl, general manager
San Diego County Water Authority

Before joining Sweetwater, Berge served as director of administration and finance at the Escondido-based Rincon del Diablo Municipal Water District, where she implemented a 10-year

financial model to inform policy decisions related to debt issuance, Capital Improvement Projects, and rates. She also moved the organization to a two-year budget practice, allowing for longer-term planning and cost savings. Prior to her time at Rincon, Berge was the assistant general manager at the San Elijo Joint Powers Authority in Cardiff, where she oversaw administration, finance, operations, maintenance, and laboratory staff.

“While it saddens me to leave the Sweetwater community, I’m delighted to continue serving ratepayers across our great region as part of the Water Authority team,” said Berge. “This is both an exciting opportunity and a critical responsibility to help the Water Authority maintain its proud tradition of reliability and innovation that sustains 3.3 million people and a \$245 billion economy.”

Berge earned a Bachelor of Science in Engineering from Harvey Mudd College and a Master of Business Administration with an emphasis in Finance from the Paul Merage School of Business at UC Irvine. She is also a Certified Special District Manager and Registered Professional Engineer.

Her appointment fills one of two executive positions left vacant by the Water Authority since April 2019 as part of the agency’s ongoing strategy to combat upward pressure on water rates outside the agency’s control.

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The San Diego County Water Authority sustains a \$245 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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