



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

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News Release

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\$25 Million in State Funds Support Local Water Ratepayers

Water Authority and its member agencies advocating for more financial relief for residents

March 24, 2022 – After helping secure nearly \$25 million to cover past-due water bills in 2021, the San Diego County Water Authority and its member agencies are seeking additional state money to help residents financially impacted by the pandemic.

The Water Authority led regional ratepayer advocacy efforts in Sacramento last year, working with State Senate President pro Tem Toni Atkins and others to help water and energy customers who were delinquent on their bills due to the financial impacts of COVID-19. For her proactive and effective leadership, Senate President pro Tem Toni Atkins received the Legislator Leader Award for water issues from the California Municipal Utilities Association. Of the \$2 billion in relief funds issued statewide, \$24.6 million was distributed to retail water agencies in San Diego County. The money helped cover agency costs while reducing the number of water bills in arrears.

However, nearly \$10 million in past due residential and commercial water bills across San Diego County were not eligible for the first round of relief funds because they occurred after June 2021. The Water Authority is now advocating in Sacramento for additional funding to cover those bills.

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-- Gary Croucher, Board Chair
San Diego County Water Authority

“Affordability and reliability are central to our mission, and we will continue to advocate for the region’s water ratepayers at every opportunity,” said Water Authority Board Chair Gary Croucher. “Senator Atkins has been an invaluable ally in this effort, and we look forward to working with her to help even more water ratepayers.”

Beyond pandemic relief, the Water Authority is working on several fronts to enhance water affordability, and it has identified affordability for low-income ratepayers as a legislative priority in 2022. For instance, the Water Authority is helping to shape the emerging California Low-

Income Household Water Assistance Program, which would provide tens of millions of dollars statewide for water customers that did not have access to the previous relief funding.

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The San Diego County Water Authority sustains a \$253 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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