



San Diego County Water Authority And Its 24 Member Agencies

4677 Overland Avenue, San Diego, CA 92123

News Release

Ed Joyce
(949) 276-1675 cell
EJoyce@sdcwa.org

Water Authority Wins National 2023 EPA WaterSense Excellence Award

Agency honored for advancing water-use efficiency in San Diego

October 9, 2023 – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has recognized the San Diego County Water Authority with a 2023 WaterSense Excellence Award for advancing water efficiency through its Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper program, better known as QWEL. The Water Authority received one of 25 Excellence Awards on Oct. 5 at the national WaterSmart Innovations Conference in Las Vegas.

This is the fourth EPA WaterSense award won by the Water Authority. The 2023 award is for Excellence in Promotion and Outreach of the QWEL program. Since the early 1990s, the Water Authority has offered an array of programs and incentives to promote water-use efficiency, and the suite of offerings continues to evolve as needs and conditions change.

“Over the past three decades, the Water Authority has been dedicated to helping the San Diego region save water every day, in every way,” said Mel Katz, chair of the Water Authority Board of Directors. “Water-efficient landscaper trainings in English and Spanish are among the most impactful strategies to help our community thrive in a changing climate. We thank EPA WaterSense for its partnership and guidance as we advance water-saving practices that sustain San Diego County’s beautiful landscapes.”

“Water-efficient landscaper trainings in English and Spanish are among the most impactful strategies to help our community thrive in a changing climate. We thank EPA WaterSense for its partnership and guidance as we advance water-saving practices that sustain San Diego County’s beautiful landscapes.”

-- Mel Katz, Chair, San Diego County Water Authority Board of Directors

The Water Authority has offered the QWEL certification program free of charge to people who live and work in the Water Authority's service area since 2015. In 2022, almost 300 new

participants were certified through the program and half of the QWEL-certified individuals attended webinars to renew their certifications. After conducting more than 25 in-person and online exams, there were nearly 460 certified participants for the year.

To reach San Diego’s Spanish-speaking residents, the Water Authority recruited and trained bilingual instructors and offered virtual training in Spanish, attended by more than 40 new participants.

In 2023, the Water Authority transitioned from QWEL to a new program to achieve similar goals, in partnership with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Through the California Landscape Contractors Association, MWD offers one-of-a-kind certification and education opportunities for landscape professionals in Southern California. The program combines the CLCA Water Management Certification Program with the Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper program to offer the landscape industry an opportunity to obtain two nationally recognized EPA WaterSense Professional Certifications with one course and one written test. New [courses](#) will be offered in the San Diego region starting December 2023.

WaterSense, a voluntary partnership program sponsored by EPA, is both a label for water-efficient products, programs, and homes and a resource for helping consumers learn ways to save water. More than 2,100 manufacturers, builders, retailers, utilities, government, and nonprofit organizations partner with WaterSense to promote water-efficient products, homes, and programs.

“With extreme weather affecting water supplies and quality, saving this precious resource is more important than ever,” said Veronica Blette, Chief, WaterSense Branch. “The 2023 award winners helped Americans look to WaterSense and save not just water, but the energy required to heat and treat it, as well as reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with energy use.”

Since 2006, over 40,000 certified water-efficient plumbing and irrigation products have helped consumers and businesses nationwide save 7.5 trillion gallons of water; the amount of energy needed to pump, treat, and heat water by 880 billion kilowatt hours; and \$171 billion in water and energy bills. These savings also helped prevent 337 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions, which is equivalent to planting 5.6 billion trees.

For more information about WaterSense, visit www.epa.gov/watersense. For rebates, classes, and water-saving tips go to: sdcwa.org/your-water/conservation/.

###

The San Diego County Water Authority sustains a \$268 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.



 [LINKEDIN](#)
 [YOUTUBE](#)
 [FACEBOOK](#)