

- Consumers trust the quality of tap water
- California consumers see water utilities as highly reliable
- Regional water networks bolster statewide reliability
- Safe water is accessible to all

- Water accessibility - WRF report, "Solutions for Underperforming Drinking Water Systems in California"
- Water quality - emerging contaminants
- Water reuse
- Affordability & revenue sustainability
- Justice, equity, diversity & inclusion

- Declining flows
- Water supply reliability (2015 UWMP updates)
- Water accessibility
- Affordability and rates
- Regional reuse options

- Potable reuse operator training and certification
- Urban stormwater as water supply

- Conservation and water supply reliability

Looking ahead - 2030 and beyond

2020

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

1990

- CUWA established

1991 - 2008

- Bay-Delta water quality, conservation, and water supply reliability

2011 - 2013

- Reliable water finance
- Water supply reliability (2010 UWMP compilation)

2017 - 2019

2016

2014 - 2015

POPULATION SERVED:
26 MILLION

CUWA MEMBER AGENCIES

- Alameda County Water District (**ACWD**)
- City of **Fresno**
- City of San Diego Public Utilities Department (**San Diego**)
- Contra Costa Water District (**CCWD**)
- East Bay Municipal Utility District (**EBMUD**)
- Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (**LADWP**)
- Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (**MWD**)
- San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (**SFPUC**)
- San Diego County Water Authority (**SDCWA**)
- Santa Clara Valley Water District (**Valley Water**)
- Zone 7 Water Agency (**Zone 7**)

For more information visit www.cuwa.org

Executive Director: Cindy Paulson

FISCAL YEAR
2020

CUWA

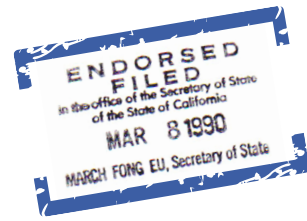
ANNUAL REPORT



Growing from Our Roots – 1990 to Today

When CUWA was founded in 1990, the original purposes included promoting drinking water quality, water use efficiency, and urban water supply reliability. While these remain important topics today, CUWA’s priorities have expanded and evolved to tackle other statewide issues, such as water accessibility (particularly in rural disadvantaged communities), affordability, and reuse.

Today, CUWA demonstrates leadership and informs statewide policy. Through years of producing technical studies and issue briefs, presenting in various forums, and participating in policy discussions, CUWA has become a credible voice on key water issues. CUWA shares resources and ideas among its members and collaborates with other organizations to advance thinking on statewide challenges.



CUWA’s mission is to provide a forum for combining the expertise and resources of its member agencies to advance reliable, high-quality water supplies for the State’s current and future urban water needs in a cost-effective manner for the public, the environment, and the economy.

Achievements in 2020 set the stage for success in years to come

2020 was a year of great strides and new challenges for California water. Whether engaging in ongoing issues—such as advancing solutions for safe drinking water—or responding to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, CUWA agencies continue to come together as a unified voice to inform and support joint solutions at the state and local level.

Exchanging ideas and best practices on pressing issues

Through their collective knowledge and resources, CUWA agencies have been quick to respond to COVID-19 and adapt to the new context, while consistently treating and delivering reliable, high quality water to customers.

In March, the CUWA Board began holding regular calls to exchange ideas and solutions to COVID-19 related challenges, such as employee safety, operations and maintenance continuity, revenue implications, and wellness. Since then, the calls have evolved to cover other important topics, such as justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. CUWA agencies share example resources, statements, and best practices that can be posted and accessed in real time through a shared online platform.

Given the need and value of networking among agencies on several pressing topics, CUWA convened ad hoc groups of agency staff on emergency operations, financial sustainability, and employee engagement and wellness. Additionally, CUWA

launched a new committee on digital systems for Chief Information Officers to discuss cybersecurity and other challenges and opportunities resulting from the remote working environment. Benefits of this exchange extend beyond the CUWA agencies to their 90 retail agencies and others, helping water utilities respond effectively.

Addressing statewide challenges with research and knowledge

CUWA is working with the State Water Resources Control Board and others to explore workable and timely solutions for restoring access to safe drinking water in communities across California. This goal has new urgency with the spread of COVID-19, as safe water for drinking, handwashing, and cleaning is critical for protecting public health.



CUWA partnered with the Pacific Institute through a joint Water Research Foundation (WRF) project to develop a framework for sustainable public water systems that can help drive lasting change in California and ultimately across the country. The final report, **Solutions for Underperforming Drinking Water Systems in California**, examines water quality challenges and identifies specific recommendations associated with four types of solutions.

- **Operational** (remote and contract operations)
- **Treatment** (facilities optimization and point of use/ point of entry treatment)
- **Source water** (new internal and external water supplies)
- **Partnerships** (physical or managerial consolidation and mutual assistance)

CUWA remains committed to successful implementation and is pursuing means to engage directly in advancing solutions. CUWA is motivated to leverage the collective technical, managerial, and financial expertise of its member agencies and has applied to be a Technical Assistance (TA) Provider to support State efforts to secure safe drinking water statewide and help set an early trajectory for sustainable solutions.

CUWA shares the State’s commitment to long-term water use efficiency and drives smart water use through a holistic approach, monitoring the impacts of declining flows on the interconnected urban water cycle. Building on

CUWA’s 2017 white paper, [Adapting to Change: Utility Systems and Declining Flows](#) CUWA released an issue brief in Fall 2019, [Adapting to Change: Informing Water Use Efficiency and Adjusting to Declining](#)

[Flows](#) to inform the State’s studies on a new indoor residential water use standard by analyzing the impacts of lower residential water use on water, wastewater, and recycled water systems. The issue brief, co-funded by WRF, led to further dialogue around the importance of an integrated planning and management approach.

Providing a credible, unified voice

As a consensus-based organization, CUWA serves as the collective voice for several of the largest urban water suppliers in California. CUWA’s policy principles represent member agency consensus on a broad range of important water issues and are updated regularly to reflect current thinking on evolving issues.

CUWA serves on the State Board’s Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) Drinking Water Advisory Group, providing feedback on key analyses, policies, and the Fund Expenditure Plan. In addition, CUWA has engaged in other important topics by providing comments on the draft Water Resilience Portfolio, water loss regulatory framework, conservation reporting, and a tiered approach to emergency drinking water compliance monitoring.

CUWA also formed a joint workgroup in partnership with the Water Reuse Association to discuss expanding LEED criteria around water reuse in collaboration with the US Green Building Council and the LEED Water Efficiency Technical Advisory Group.

Looking Ahead – 2030 and Beyond

CUWA held a strategic workshop in January 2020 to explore driving forces for California water and cast a vision for the future. During the workshop, the CUWA Board developed four aspirations to inspire bold action by CUWA and others. These aspirations, which capture CUWA’s view of “what could be” for California water, are summarized below.



Guided by these aspirations, CUWA will continue to advance efforts around safe and affordable drinking water, regional connectedness, water supply reliability, and consumer confidence in years ahead.