



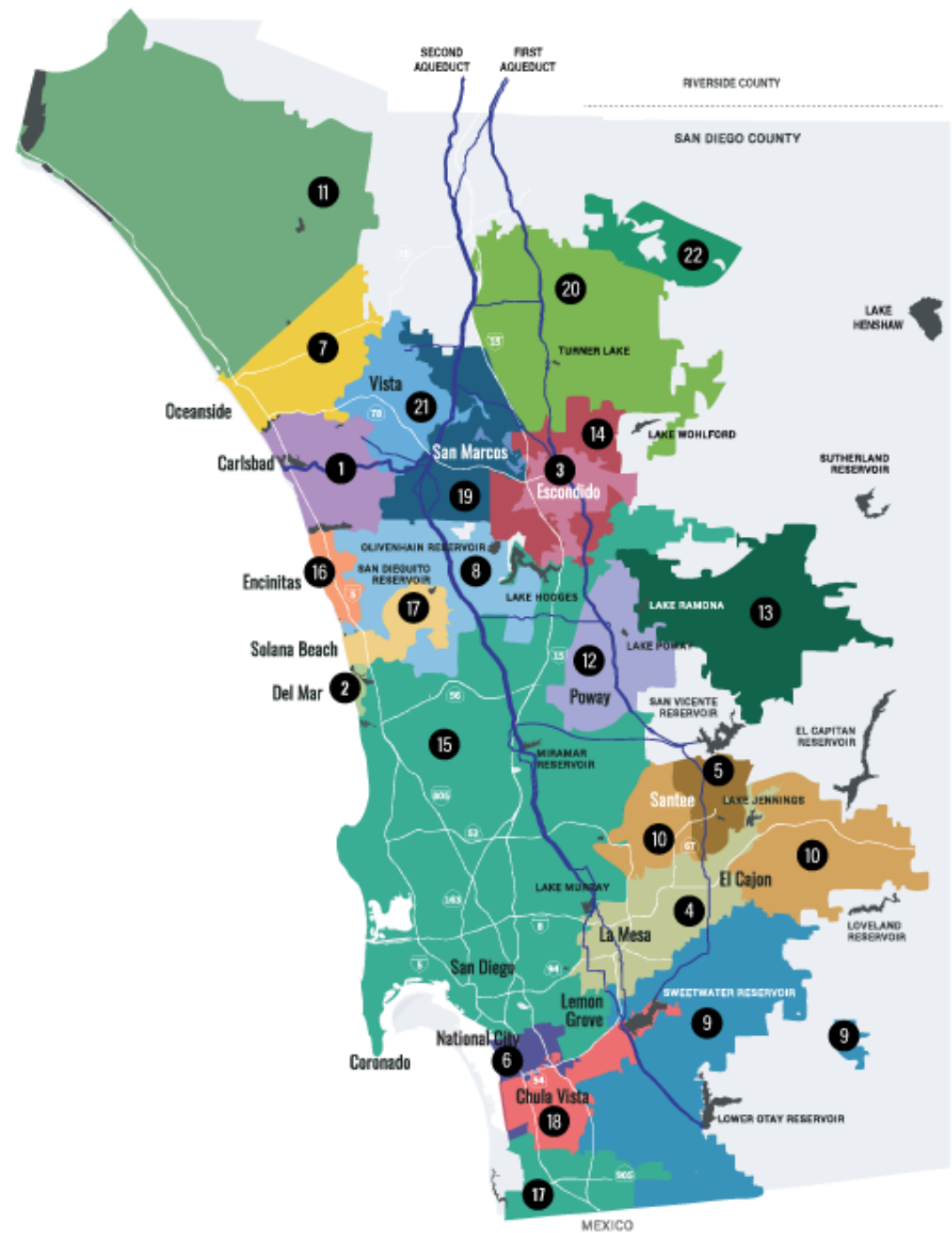
Securing Our Sustainable Water Future: Making Generational Investments

- Resiliency Advisory Board
October 16, 2025

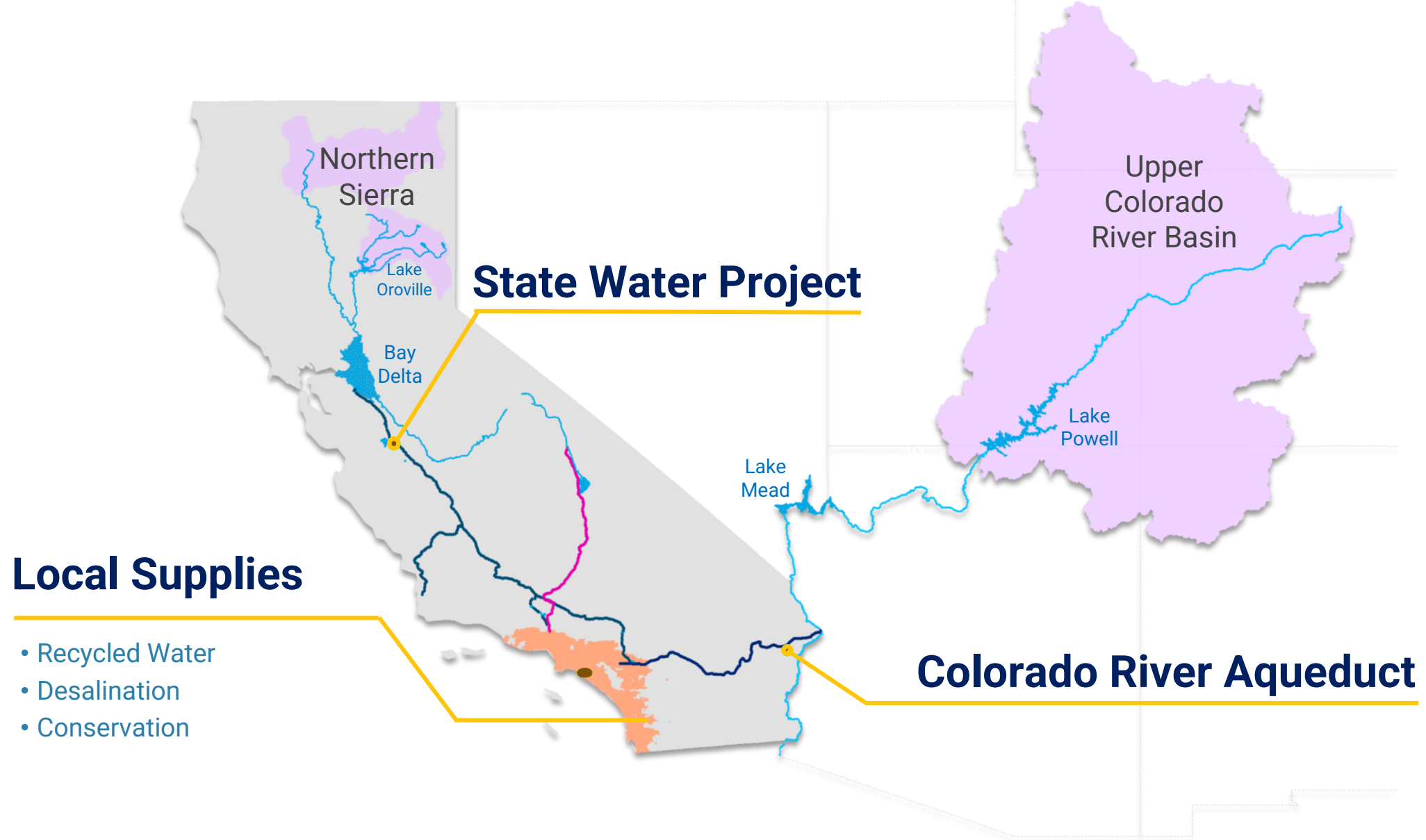
Meena Westford, Director of Imported Water
San Diego County Water Authority

Serving a Vibrant Region

- ✓ Established in 1944
- ✓ 22 member agencies
- ✓ 34 Board members
- ✓ 3.3 million people
- ✓ \$262 billion economy
- ✓ ~250 employees



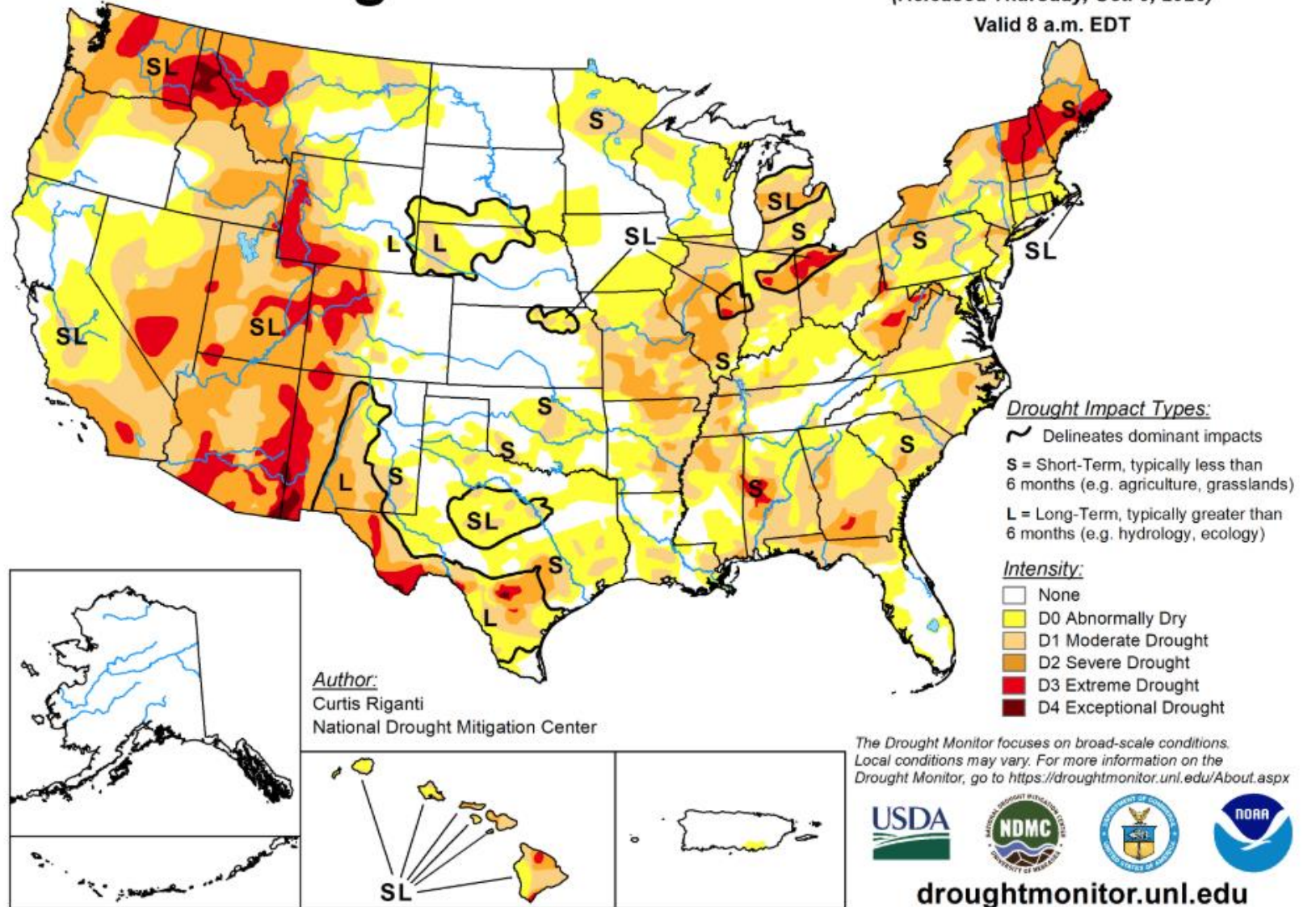
Ain't No Mountain High Enough



Future of Climate Change in the Southwest

U.S. Drought Monitor

October 7, 2025
(Released Thursday, Oct. 9, 2025)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

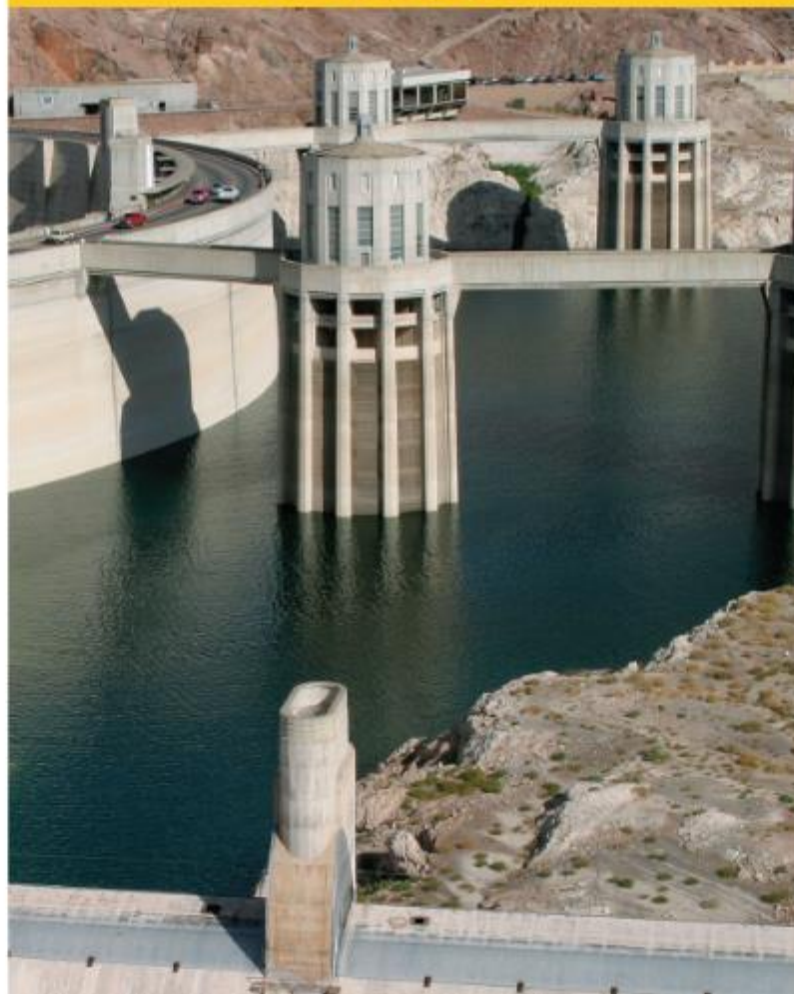


Severe and sustained drought conditions continue to impact critical storage reserves in the Colorado River Basin.

1983



2003



TODAY



Day Zero: When Cities Ran Out of Water

Around the world, water insecurity has tested cities .

City / Region	When	What Happened	Why It Happened	Lesson for San Diego
Cape Town, South Africa	2018	Nearly hit 'Day Zero' — taps almost shut off	Multi-year drought, limited storage, delayed projects	Diversify supply early; invest before crisis
Chennai, India	2019	Reservoirs went dry; millions reliant on tankers	Failed monsoons, groundwater depletion	Dependence on rainfall = vulnerability
São Paulo, Brazil	2014–15	Reservoirs fell to 5%; citywide rationing	Drought + delayed response	Transparent data + flexible management matter
Jackson, Mississippi (USA)	2022	Days without safe running water	Infrastructure collapse, underfunding	Maintenance and redundancy save systems
Flint, Michigan (USA)	2014–ongoing	Water unsafe to drink for years	Contamination from poor governance	Quality failures destroy trust
Sana'a, Yemen	2000s–present	Aquifer nearly exhausted	Over-pumping + conflict	Protect long-term sustainability of sources

Cornerstones of Climate Readiness

▶ Carlsbad “Bud Lewis” Desalination Plant

- ▶ Owned and operated by Channelside Water Resources
- ▶ 48,000-56,000 acre-feet/year
- ▶ Largest, most advanced seawater desalination facility in North America



▶ Colorado River Water Transfers

- ▶ Imperial Valley to San Diego Water Transfers
- ▶ Lining of the All-American Canal
- ▶ 277,000 acre-feet/year



California’s Recent Drought Restrictions

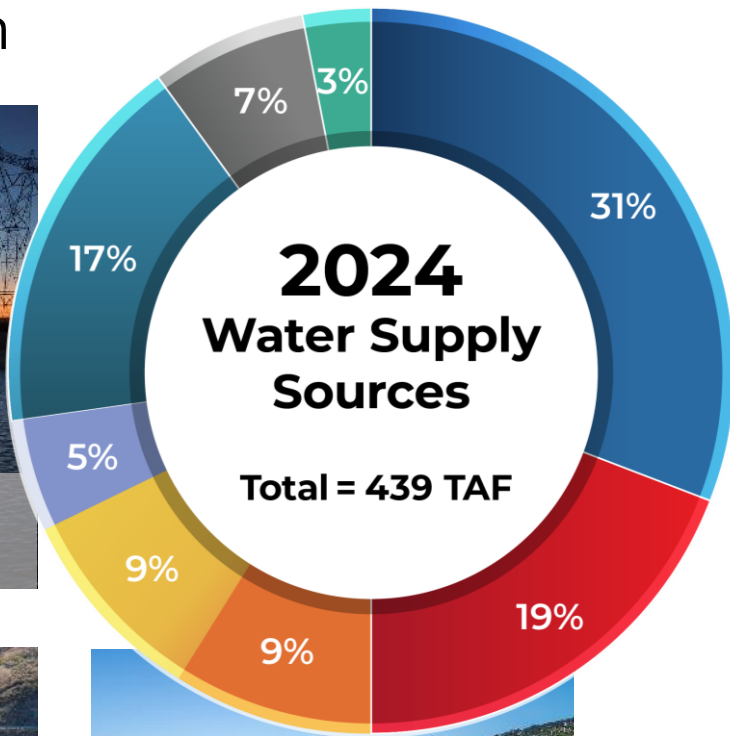
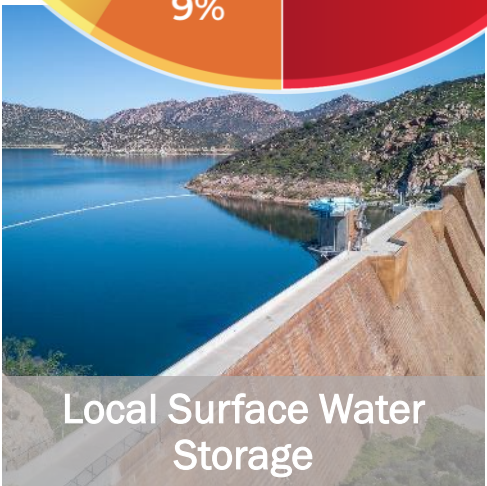
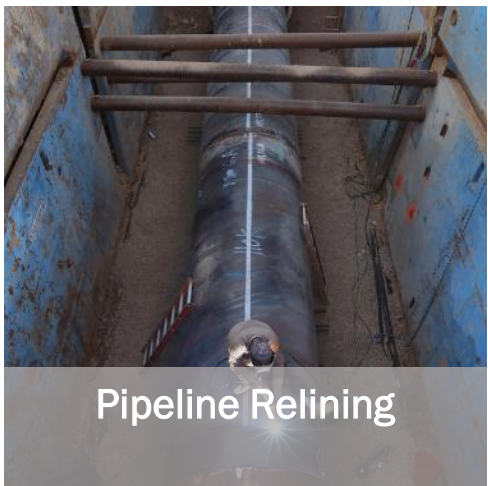
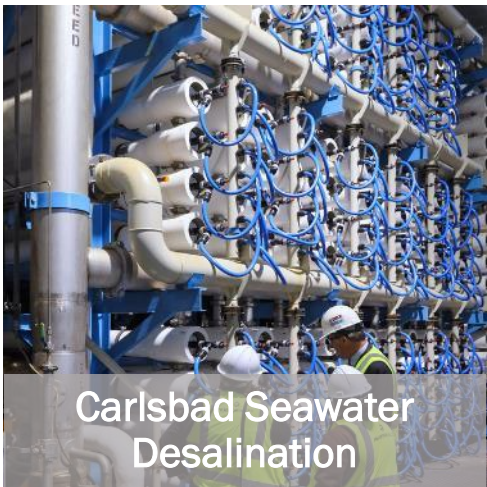
Recurring droughts have forced statewide conservation and restrictions.

Drought Period	Statewide Action	Notes
2012–2016	Mandatory conservation orders (2014–2017)	First-ever statewide restrictions; lifted in 2017
2020–2024	State of emergency (2021) → restrictions (2022, 2024)	Intensifying droughts tied to climate change
Ongoing trend	Local and regional restrictions vary	Frequent drought cycles now part of planning

☀️ California’s droughts are no longer rare — they are recurring realities shaping long-term water planning.

Strategic Investments in Supply Reliability

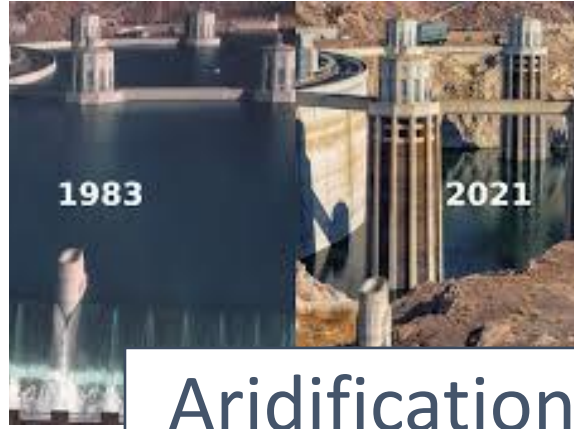
\$3 billion in new infrastructure creates water security for region



Climate Change Threatens Water Affordability



Drought



Aridification



Flooding



Extreme Heat

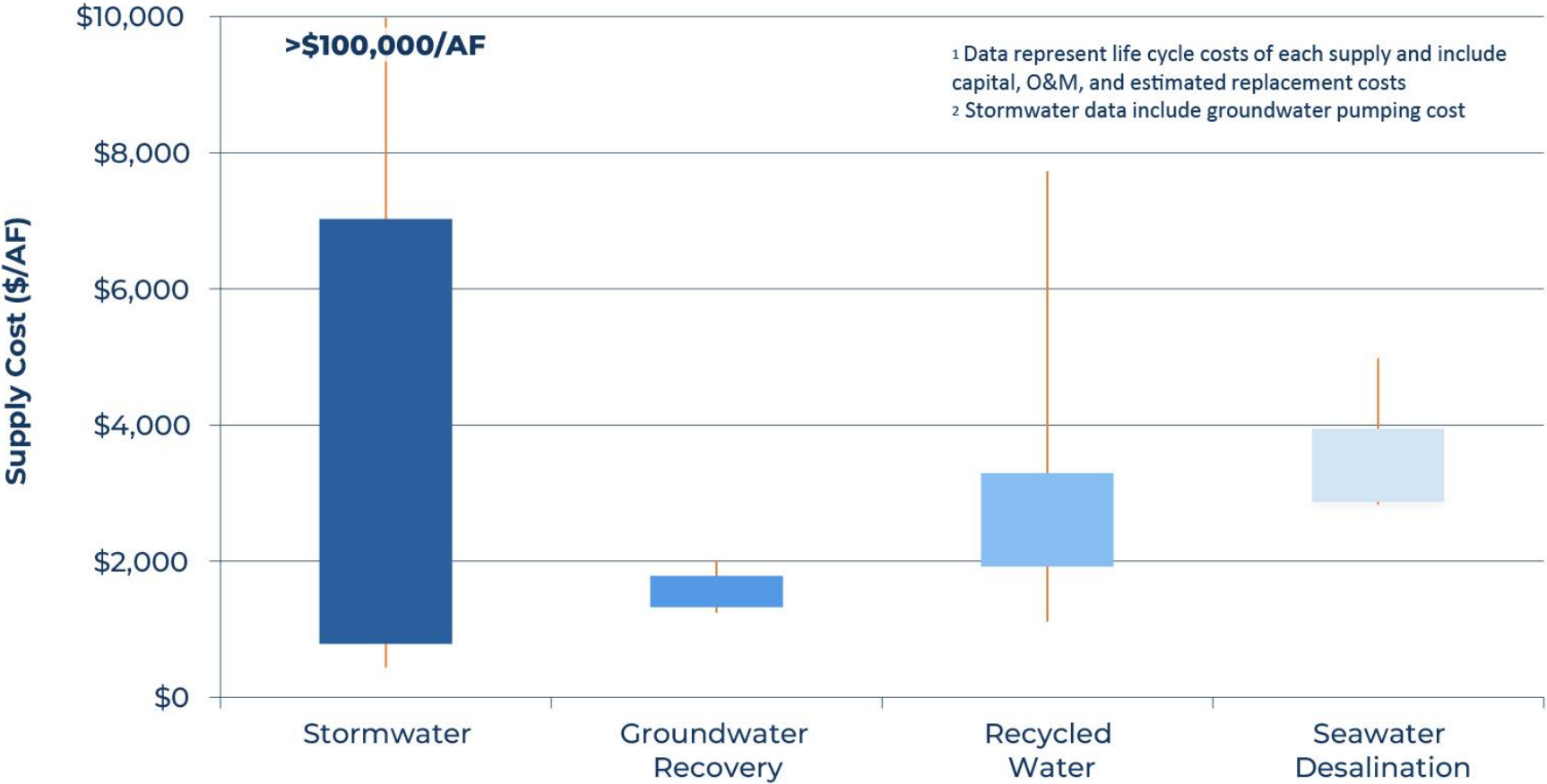


Sea Level Rise



Fire

Cost of New Water Supplies



Source: PureWater Southern California, 2023 data

Rising Tides.....

The San Diego Union-Tribune

Michael Smolens: Let's make a (water) deal!

San Diego County Water Authority opens negotiations to sell some of its surplus to a small district in southern Orange County. It's another step in a new direction for the agency.

THE ORANGE COUNTY
REGISTER

Ocean water from San Diego could stabilize south OC supply, boost desal

Moulton Niguel Water District will consider buying rights to water desalinated in Carlsbad. Deal could also help bail San Diego out of what some call a 'boondoggle.'

 **VOICE** of **SAN DIEGO**

Can the Ocean Save the Colorado River? San Diego Thinks so.

The Water Authority is both selling off its expensive desal water and trying to make more of it. Here's why.



Augmenting Water Supplies for the Southwest

- The Colorado River Compact (1922)
- 2007 Interim Guidelines Set to Expire
- No Existing Framework for transferring water between states
- Exchanges of Water among States set precedent
- Identified a near term demand for new imported supplies
- Post -2026 Guidelines



Next-Gen Solutions



Thank you!

“We can't solve problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.”

Albert Einstein



San Diego County
Water Authority