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CALIFORNIA WATER ASSOCIATION

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

After the deadliest wildfire season in California's history, residents and water utilities throughout California welcomed the onset of winter rain and snow. In addition to the tragic loss of life, the 2018 wildfires destroyed thousands of homes and businesses, as well as water system infrastructures. California Water Association (CWA) member companies in the affected areas worked around the clock to ensure the continual flow of water for firefighters and response teams. The water utilities also have been working on recovery efforts in districts adversely affected by the Woolsey and Camp Fires in 2018, Tubbs Fire in 2017, and Erskine Fire in 2016.

At the same time, CWA has been monitoring progress on the California Water Plan Update 2018 and providing input on this and other statewide initiatives and regulations.

The following articles in this edition of On Tap highlight the efforts of CWA member companies as they work determinedly to provide their customers with safe, reliable, and high-quality water.

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To view *On Tap* in PDF format, [click here](#), or access the online version on CWA's website at www.calwaterassn.com.

QUESTIONS?

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Sincerely,

Keith Switzer
Golden State Water
2019-2020 CWA President

For Instant CWA News:



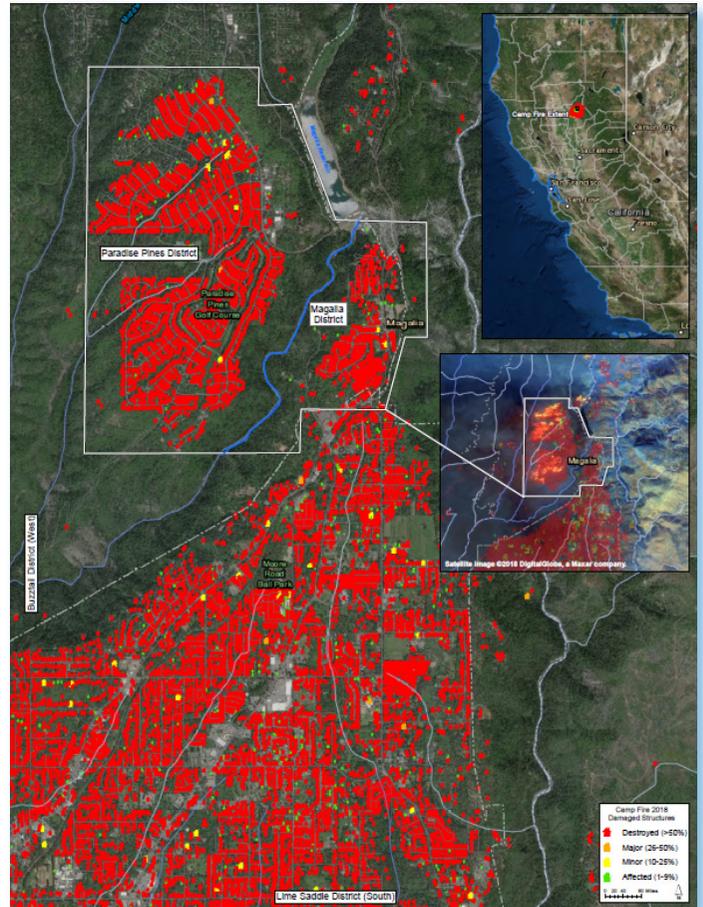
California
Water
Association



QUALITY & SERVICE FOCUS

DEL ORO WATER COMPANY RESPONDS SWIFTLY TO RAGING CAMP FIRE

As the Camp Fire raged through Del Oro Water Company's (Del Oro) districts of Paradise Pines, Magalia, Lime Saddle, and Buzztail in Butte County last November, the water utility's crews worked around the clock to ensure water was available for firefighters. All of Del Oro's districts are adjacent to the Town of Paradise, which suffered complete devastation. While the communities suffered the loss of more than 2,220 homes and businesses, damage to Del Oro's infrastructure was limited. Fortunately, all of the company's distribution and pumping facilities were functional within several days after the fire, and Del Oro was able to provide water to the firefighters throughout the fire, which helped to keep the devastation from being even worse than it was. Among the thousands who lost their homes and businesses in the Paradise area, three of Del Oro's office staff and three field personnel lost everything in the fire. Yet, they bravely continued to work despite the tremendous stress they faced in dealing with the catastrophic tragedy.



Camp Fire Map Showing Damage in Del Oro Water Company's Paradise Pines, Magalia, Lime Saddle, and Buzztail Water Districts

By **January 9, 2019**, Del Oro was fully operational in all four districts it serves, and the company is still serving more than 3,000 returning residential and business customers. Del Oro, working in conjunction with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), evaluated the burned service areas after the fire was contained to determine whether organic chemicals, such as benzene, were present. On January 10, samples were taken at 12 state-approved testing stations throughout Paradise Pines, Magalia, and Lime Saddle. The SWRCB issued an **advisory** on January 11 indicating water was flowing throughout the affected systems and “consumers should feel safe drinking their water unless they detect odors reminiscent of plastic or fuel.”

Although no state-mandated order prohibited customers from drinking Del Oro's water, the utility alerted customers with a cautionary warning: “If you detect odors or smells similar to plastic, gasoline, or vinyl in your water, please report it to Del Oro immediately and do not use the water for drinking, cooking, or oral hygiene. Use bottled water instead or an alternate source of water.” Customers detecting an odor were and continue to be advised to thoroughly flush their water lines for at least five minutes. If the odor persists, they should call the Division of Drinking Water at 530-224-4873 or fill out the **form** on Del Oro's website, which also includes updates at <http://www.delorowater.com/deloro/15-announcements/83-paradise-camp-fire-status.html>.

QUALITY & SERVICE FOCUS

CAL WATER ASSISTS PARADISE IRRIGATION DISTRICT AFTER DEADLY CAMP FIRE

After the onset of the Camp Fire in Paradise on November 8, 2018, California Water Service (Cal Water), which provides water service to the neighboring cities of Chico and Oroville, offered assistance to the Paradise Irrigation District (PID). Ranked as the deadliest and most destructive wildfire in California's history and the world's costliest natural disaster in 2018, the Camp Fire raged for 17 days through 153,336 acres causing at least 86 fatalities and destroying more than 18,000 structures.

When the PID requested Cal Water's assistance in repairing and rebuilding the local water distribution system through a mutual aid agreement facilitated by the California Utilities Emergency Association and California Office of Emergency Services, Cal Water sent teams, resources, and equipment from across the state.

In an online post, Cal Water's President and Chief Executive Officer Martin A. Kropelnicki said, "We will bring whatever resources are necessary to aid Paradise and help with the relief efforts."

The Camp Fire had a devastating impact on Cal Water's family with a number of its employees and retirees from Paradise losing their homes in the fire.

Kropelnicki further expressed in his post, "Our thoughts and prayers remain with everyone impacted by this devastating fire; Cal Water and our employees are committed to supporting the community and are eager to lend a helping hand to their friends and neighbors."



Martin A. Kropelnicki with Cal Fire team inspecting damage after the Camp Fire.



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QUALITY & SERVICE FOCUS

CAL WATER ASSISTS PARADISE IRRIGATION DISTRICT AFTER DEADLY CAMP FIRE...CONTINUED



Following the fire, local crews inspected the damage caused by indirect heat from the Camp Fire, which melted aluminum and tires on equipment located in Cal Water's yard near the fire. 📸

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

CAL WATER EXPRESSES GRATITUDE TO CHP OFFICERS

When the devastating Woolsey Fire started in Ventura County on November 9, 2018, California Water Service's (Cal Water) top priority was to keep water flowing for the firefighters and residents in its Westlake District service area. As the fire threatened Cal Water's facilities and storage tanks, as well as thousands of homes and businesses, crews and equipment from the utility's East Los Angeles and Rancho Dominguez districts were dispatched to the Thousand Oaks Emergency Operations Center to provide assistance.

As the fire spread rapidly due to unusually high winds, a section of Highway 101 was closed, and evacuees and morning commuters found themselves in massive traffic jams that impeded the emergency response teams. Acting quickly, California Highway Patrol (CHP) officers escorted Cal Water's crews and equipment to critical locations, which reduced response times and greater risk to the water system infrastructure. As a result, Cal Water and the firefighters were able to maintain access to water as the latter worked tirelessly to protect homes and businesses in the community.

As an expression of gratitude, Cal Water hosted an appreciation luncheon in mid-December to honor the CHP officers who provided assistance during the fire, specifically Captain Salvador Suarez, Sergeant Giovanni Bembi, and Officers Gina Jojola, Myra Sanchez, and Ray Martinez. Cal Water also provided financial support to the CHP's [Explorer Program](#) and [11-99 Foundation](#) as a further expression of appreciation. The ongoing partnership between Cal Water and the CHP, whether through emergency operations support or the annual CHiPs for Kids Toy Drive, exemplifies their commitment to improving the quality of life in the communities they serve. 🇺🇸



Attendees at the luncheon honoring CHP officers.



Cal Water President & CEO Martin Kropelnicki (center) with Officers Ray Martinez and Myra Sanchez, two of the officers who assisted Cal Water crews during the Woolsey Fire.



Cal Water representatives, including President & CEO Martin Kropelnicki and Vice Presidents Timothy Treloar and Gerald Simon, with CHP officers and CHP Explorers.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

LARKFIELD BEGINS RECOVERY EFFORTS AFTER DEVASTATING TUBBS FIRE



The Larkfield-Wikiup neighborhood in Santa Rosa after the Tubbs Fire.

More than a year after the [Tubbs Fire](#) was contained on October 31, 2017, the Santa Rosa community of [Larkfield-Wikiup](#), which is served by California American Water (Cal Am), is gradually being rebuilt. Among the most destructive wildfires in California history, the Tubbs Fire destroyed nearly 600 structures in Larkfield-Wikiup and damaged water mains, fire hydrants, and other critical infrastructure.

To date, Cal Am crews have completed substantial [recovery work](#), including removing debris and installing a temporary pump system and new electric service at the utility's Upper Wikiup tank site; repairing water mains; removing 570 damaged meters and cap services; replacing 46 fire hydrants and installing nine new hydrants; and replacing and upgrading 450 service laterals and meter boxes for fire sprinkler flow. Cal Am also has provided temporary water service for owners and builders.

Once Pacific Gas and Electric is able to fully restore power to the area, Cal Am will demolish and remove a 48,000-gallon tank; replace and upgrade 120 additional service laterals; construct a permanent pump station with a hydro-pneumatic tank and emergency generator at Upper Wikiup; and pave water service trenches. 🇺🇸



Destruction caused by the Tubbs Fire in Larkfield-Wikiup.



Rebuilding begins in Larkfield-Wikiup.



Before - Damage caused by the Tubbs Fire.



After - Repairs completed by Cal Am crews.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

RECOVERY EFFORTS PROGRESS SLOWLY AFTER DESTRUCTIVE ERSKINE FIRE

The [Erskine Fire](#), California's second-largest wildfire in 2016, caused two fatalities, destroyed 309 buildings, and scorched 47,864 acres in Kern County. Almost two and a-half years after the fire was fully contained on July 11, 2016, recovery efforts continue to progress slowly.

Of California Water Service's (Cal Water) more than 5,200 customers in its Kern River Valley District, hardest hit were those in South Lake, Squirrel Valley, and Mountain Mesa near Lake Isabella. Although there was no damage to Cal Water's pump stations, a few water main breaks were caused by heavy firefighting equipment driving throughout the area. And with the loss of electricity during the fire, the utility had to rely on auxiliary power for approximately 14 days.

Only about 20 percent of the charred region has recovered since July 2016. Some Cal Water customers are living in mobile homes or in FEMA trailers, while several have elected to sell their land. On a positive note, one developer is building eight rental duplexes in South Lake, and [Mennonite Disaster Service](#), a volunteer network that responds to those affected by disasters, has constructed a new single-family dwelling.



Only the Swimming Pool Survived the Erskine Fire



Squirrel Valley Damage



Damage Caused by the Erskine Fire



FEMA Trailers



New Duplex Development



New Home Built by [Mennonite Disaster Service](#)

LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY UPDATE

CWA SUBMITS COMMENTS ON DE-ENERGIZATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE RULEMAKINGS



In response to [Rulemaking 18-12-005](#), the “Order Instituting Rulemaking to Examine Electric Utility De-Energization of Power Lines in Dangerous Conditions,” the California Water Association (CWA) submitted [comments](#) in advance of the [hearing](#) scheduled for February 19, 2019. The intent of the Rulemaking is to examine the California Public Utilities Commission’s (CPUC) rules allowing CPUC-regulated electric utilities to de-energize power lines in case of dangerous conditions that threaten life or property.

As best practices are considered, CWA urged the CPUC to take into account the impact of de-energization events on water utilities and the importance of maintaining water service during periods of emergency to meet fire-protection requirements, water quality, and customer needs. CWA advised the CPUC to focus on advance communication and coordination with all water utilities since disruption in water service can lead to unsanitary conditions and health risks. Additionally, the comments addressed the investments water utilities must make before the 2019 fire season begins on back-up generators, additional water storage tanks, booster pumps, enlarged/additional water pipelines, and other resources, as well as the cost of maintenance, service, and repairs. CWA also commented on the need for waivers by water utilities to use fossil-fuel-burning portable generators that conflict with California’s greenhouse gas emission-reduction goals.

In February, CWA also filed [comments](#) on [Rulemaking 18-04-019](#), the “Order Instituting Rulemaking to Consider Strategies and Guidance for Climate Change Adaptation.” The comments suggested that the definition of “adaptation” should be specific to the utility industry and the definition of “climate change adaptation” should be precise and meaningful. The comments also noted that “this proceeding should appropriately distinguish between the concepts of ‘adaptation’ and ‘resilience’ in the context of climate-change planning.” 

LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY UPDATE

CWA COMMENTS ON CALIFORNIA WATER PLAN UPDATE 2018

California Water Association's (CWA) January 21, 2019, [comment letter](#) to the Department of Water Resources addressed several aspects of the [Public Review Draft](#) (PRD) of the [California Water Plan Update 2018](#) (Update 2018). After discussing the prioritization of actions in the [Executive Summary](#), CWA's letter suggested revising the description in Chapter 1 on what the [Sustainable Groundwater Management Act](#) requires, as well as adding a paragraph on the uses of environmental water.



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF **WATER RESOURCES**

For Chapter 2, CWA recommended moving “Insufficient and Unstable Funding” to the category of “Critical Challenges,” and proposed adding an action under Goal 4 in Chapter 3 “to empower under-represented and vulnerable communities.” CWA's final comments related to Chapter 4, citing two reasons for questioning the recommendation to continue the same state cost-share proportion of 10 of total federal, state, and local expenditures on water resource management for the next five years. The letter noted:

1. Because the pressure on water bills continues to grow as a result of ongoing pressures for high-quality drinking water, capital improvements and related infrastructure requirements, and new regulations on drought planning, cyber security, disaster preparedness, water-use efficiency regulations, and water-quality compliance, state policymakers need to look at the taxpayer and not just the ratepayer for additional funding of statewide water management necessities.
2. Governor Newsom has proposed an \$8 billion increase in the state's budget without disturbing the rainy day fund. If state revenues do, indeed, have this kind of flexibility and surplus, and if water resource management needs and challenges are as imperative as spelled out in Update 2018, it is only reasonable that the state cost-share proportion be increased by a modest amount to reduce pressure on ratepayers, local agencies, and utilities.

CWA also suggested changing the narrative in Chapter 4's Scenario B on general obligation bonds to be more balanced between their benefits and drawbacks and revising Scenario B to allow more flexibility by reflecting the need to balance the reliance between taxpayers and ratepayers. The letter concluded by emphasizing the “hopes that Update 2018 will regain its position of prominence in state planning for water management.” 

LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY UPDATE

CWA FILES COMMENTS ON IMPLEMENTING A STATEWIDE LIRA PROGRAM

On February 1, 2019, the California Water Association (CWA) filed comments with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) on the draft Options for Implementation of a Statewide Low-Income (LIRA) Water Rate Assistance Program (report), a program mandated by Assembly Bills 685 and 401. The report outlines possible components for developing a successful program to help low-income households pay their water bills.

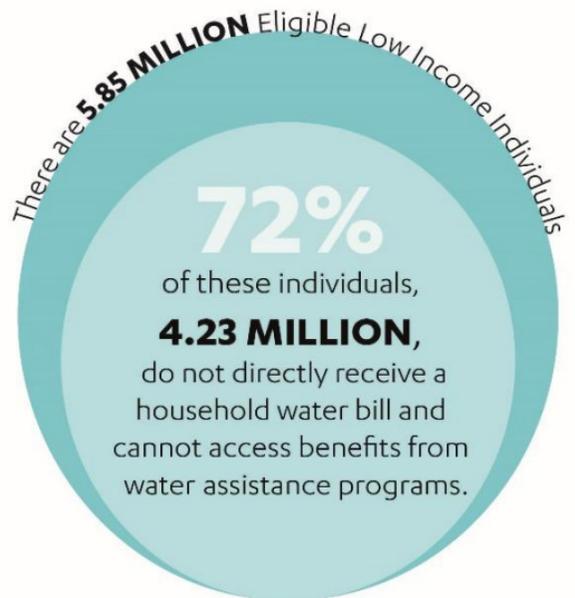
CWA's comments addressed options for the design, funding, and administration of a statewide LIRA program, based on the experience of its Class A water utility members that have had LIRA programs in their service areas for years.

CWA members are regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), which currently oversees LIRA programs for both regulated water and energy utilities. The letter supported discontinuing those programs if a single, statewide LIRA program is implemented, provided CWA members' concerns about the program design and customer messaging can be addressed. CWA also supported a monthly benefit to eligible households calculated as a percentage of a fixed consumption level and agreed that further examination of a tiered design for households in high-cost areas is warranted provided administering a tiered system is not overly burdensome to implement.

To fund the statewide program, CWA agreed with a progressive personal income tax option, combined with a bottled-water tax, but only if the customer surcharge that funds the current CPUC LIRA programs is discontinued.

CWA supported administering the LIRA program by distributing the benefits in a single, consistent manner such as through an eligible household's electric or gas bill since crediting water bills is unworkable for low-income households in multi-unit or multi-family dwellings that are not water utility customers. CWA considered the option of distributing the benefit through a food assistance program to be sub-optimal because of the associated administrative costs. CWA's letter concluded with a request to correct Appendix C relative to how two of the Class A Water utilities' LIRA programs are funded.

INDIRECT BILLING LEADS TO EXCLUSION OF MANY INCOME ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS FROM WATER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS



POINTS OF INTEREST

GENEVIEVE SHIROMA APPOINTED TO CPUC BY GOVERNOR NEWSOM

Genevieve Shiroma (D) of Sacramento was appointed as a Commissioner of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) by Governor Newsom in January, a position requiring Senate confirmation later in 2019. Shiroma has been a member of the Agricultural Labor Relations Board since 1999, serving as Chair since 2017. From 1990 to 1999, she was Chief of the Air Quality Branch at the California Air Resources Board and worked as an Air Quality Engineer from 1978 to 1990. Shiroma also served as the elected director of Ward 4 of the Sacramento Municipal Utility District from 1999 to 2018. The daughter of a farm worker, Shiroma grew up in San Joaquin County and earned a bachelor’s degree in Materials Science and Engineering from the University of California, Davis.



In her first week on the job, the CPUC’s monthly newsletter, Working for California, quoted Shiroma when she picked up the complete copy of the state’s Public Utilities Code as saying, “Here is the law that the CPUC is responsible for enforcing,” she said. “I’m going to plow through it because everything we do leads to this.”

CWA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PRESENTS AT NARUC WINTER POLICY SUMMIT.

In February, Executive Director Jack Hawks, California Water Association, gave a presentation on “California’s New Water Use Efficiency and Drought Planning Legislation: Implications for Regulators” at the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners’ Winter Policy Summit in Washington, D.C. Hawks provided an overview of California’s conservation regulations, including “Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life,” as well as water-use efficiency and performance standards and milestones achieved. He concluded his presentation by discussing drought planning, compliance, and enforcement.

**SAVE THE DATE
CWA’S 76th SPRING CONFERENCE**

**May 22-24, 2019
The Sawyer, Sacramento, CA**

