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# on tap



## CALIFORNIA WATER ASSOCIATION

Working Together.  
Achieving Results.

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For Instant CWA News:



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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is gratifying to look back at the accomplishments of the California Water Association (CWA) and its members during 2017, a year of transition from drought emergencies to floods and fires. Topping the list were CWA member companies' swift responses to wildfires throughout the state. Additional notable accomplishments included:

- Working to ensure the enactment of Assembly Bill 1671, a significant public health and safety measure, plus efforts in support of other measures designed to protect water customers and utility employees.
- Establishing a web safety interface for CWA member companies.
- Successfully representing customers' interests in key policy developments on lead testing in schools, water-use efficiency, low-income assistance, and safe and affordable drinking water.
- Sponsoring a report on contested government takeovers of investor-owned water companies (IOWC).
- Working with the State Water Board to resolve a significant water IOWC project review problem associated with the California Environmental Quality Act.
- Making major contributions to the California Public Utilities Commission's decisions on access to utility information, regulatory rules, and intervenor compensation.

The following articles in this edition of *On Tap* cover a few of these accomplishments as well as highlights of CWA's successful 76th Annual Conference in Monterey:

- California American Water Employees Take Action During Devastating Tubbs Fire
- Golden State Water Company Provides Support and Resources to Fight Sulphur Fire in Lake County
- City Council Approves California American Water's Acquisition of Bellflower Water System
- Protecting Your Water Service at CWA's 76th Annual Conference
- Save the Date for CWA's Spring Conference

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

As we prepare for 2018, CWA will continue to address legislation and regulations affecting long-term water conservation policies, low-income customer assistance, and safe and affordable drinking water, while monitoring changes to the state policy on consolidation. As always, CWA's emphasis will remain on what's best for our members' customers and employees.

Thank you for the time and energy you devoted to CWA during 2017 to make the Association successful and valued by its members and stakeholders.

Sincerely,

Lawrence M. Morales  
East Pasadena Water Company  
2017-2018 CWA President

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## CALIFORNIA AMERICAN WATER EMPLOYEES TAKE ACTION DURING DEVASTATING TUBBS FIRE

The Tubbs Fire that ravaged Sonoma County in October destroyed more than 5,000 structures and claimed 22 lives. More than 600 homes in California American Water's (CAW) Larkfield-Wikiup district were lost, which is nearly one-third of CAW's customer base.

CAW's employees, many of whom were evacuated during the fire, worked around the clock amid the destruction to maintain adequate water pressure in the lines for firefighters. They also worked closely with the American Red Cross to ensure emergency water supplies were provided to customers who were without water.

After the fires subsided, CAW moved quickly to restore water service to surviving homes. Service was restored for most customers within a week of the fire's outbreak.

The fire also created significant customer service and billing challenges. To relieve the burden on affected customers as much as possible, CAW pre-closed accounts for properties destroyed in the fire and implemented goodwill credits.



*California American Water employee checks valves and meters in a Larkfield neighborhood that was destroyed by the Tubbs Fire.*



*The remains of a California American Water storage and pump facility in Larkfield following the Tubbs Fire.*

Further assisting in recovery efforts, CAW partnered with the American Water Charitable Foundation to provide a \$100,000 grant to the Redwood Credit Union Community Fund North Bay Fire Relief for fire victims.

Much work remains to rebuild, repair, and replace infrastructure damaged or destroyed during the fire. CAW's employees in Larkfield are determined to do their part to bring the community back – a determination that is matched by the town's residents, agencies, and elected officials.

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

CALIFORNIA AMERICAN WATER EMPLOYEES TAKE ACTION DURING DEVASTATING TUBBS FIRE

...CONTINUED

In his overall assessment, CAW President Richard Svindland praised the efforts of his employees during the fire. "I cannot adequately convey just how admirably they performed during this crisis," Svindland said. "Whether it was our Larkfield field staff working among the first responders in the opening days of the fire turning off services to preserve pressure and adequate fire flow or the water quality team who worked around the clock to restore folks' water. During the course of several days, some employees worked 20-plus-hour shifts amid dramatic devastation and loss of life. This event will be studied for years to come, providing invaluable lessons for future disasters. One thing I've learned already is that the devastation would have been a lot worse if not for the actions of our local staff."



A generator destroyed in the Tubbs Fire.



A California American Water employee takes a refreshment break next to a burned van during an asset assessment tour.



All that is left of a home in Larkfield following the devastating Tubbs Fire in Sonoma County.



A car collection destroyed in Larkfield.

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

**GOLDEN STATE WATER COMPANY PROVIDES SUPPORT AND RESOURCES TO FIGHT SULPHUR FIRE IN LAKE COUNTY**

*Lake County Sulphur Fire. (Photo by Kurt Jensen)*

**R**egions throughout California are rebuilding after destructive wildfires wreaked havoc on communities across the state. In Lake County, the Sulphur Fire destroyed more than 100 homes in Golden State Water Company's (GSWC) service area and posed a major threat to the water system as fires burned toward GSWC's surface water treatment plant. Thanks to the tireless efforts of firefighters and other emergency personnel, as well as employees in the area and additional staff dispatched from throughout the state, GSWC was able to preserve the integrity of its Clearlake water system and maintain water service for firefighting and customer use.

Internal and external communications were crucial to ensuring the safety of customers, employees, and emergency personnel on the ground, while the fire posed a threat to local communities. GSWC initiated several communications tactics to inform customers about appropriate public health information, including reverse 9-1-1 calls, social media updates, local news reports, town hall meetings, and communications through the Lake County Sheriff's Emergency Notification System. In addition, GSWC worked closely with the Clearlake Emergency Operations Center to ensure effective coordination and communication with the city. Because of the open communication lines, GSWC staff in Clearlake was equipped with the resources needed to respond to the fires in a safe and effective manner.

Shortly after being alerted of the dangers posed by the Sulphur Fire, GSWC issued a precautionary boil water notice to approximately 500 customers because of the possibility of contaminants entering the system due to a temporary loss of pressure in parts of the Clearlake system. The decision to issue the notice was made after consulting with the Division of Drinking Water, and the notice was lifted three days later after test results showed the water was safe.

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

**GOLDEN STATE WATER COMPANY PROVIDES SUPPORT AND RESOURCES TO FIGHT SULPHUR FIRE IN LAKE COUNTY...CONTINUED**

A widespread power outage throughout the city of Clearlake created additional hurdles. Because of this, GSWC activated an interconnection with Highland Mutual Water Company to supplement water stored in system reservoirs to provide water to customers in the area. GSWC coordinated with local agencies to get generators and fuel onsite within 18 hours of the outage to continue producing water and maintaining long-term operations. A second temporary portable booster was installed between the Clearlake system and Konocti Water District to provide additional water for firefighting.

While no GSWC facilities were damaged by the fire, dozens of customers experienced tremendous loss. To help ease the burden, GSWC proactively closed the accounts of affected customers and adjusted water bills to absolve any balances due at the time of the fire.

GSWC is committed to helping the Clearlake community get back on its feet and is working with the Department of Drinking Water and the Environmental Protection Agency Region 9 to monitor and provide support to the impacted areas. 🌍



*Damage from the Sulphur Fire. (Photo by Jim Rexrode)*

QUALITY & SERVICE FOCUS

CITY COUNCIL APPROVES CALIFORNIA AMERICAN WATER'S ACQUISITION OF BELLFLOWER WATER SYSTEM

On November 13, 2017, the Bellflower City Council voted unanimously to approve California American Water's (CAW) \$17 million acquisition of the city's water system, which voters approved in 2016. CAW and the city have moved forward in seeking the required approval from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).

In an online article, Bellflower Mayor Ron Schnabegger said, "CAW has a goal of providing reliable and efficient water services to customers in Los Angeles County. The company's commitment to its customers, working safely and being a model of environmental protection is consistent with the city's philosophy. The city is pleased residents will have excellent water service from CAW."

Serving approximately 10 percent of the city and more than 1,800 customers, the Bellflower water system is located less than 20 miles from CAW's Los Angeles County district operations center. After the acquisition is final, CAW plans several upgrades to the system's infrastructure, including replacing or upgrading water mains that are near the end of their useful lives. Additionally, the new customers will have access to CAW's low-income ratepayer assistance program as well as conservation programs, including rebates and free water-saving devices.

“Pending approval by the CPUC,” said CAW President Richard Svindland in a press release, “this acquisition will provide residents with access to a long-term, reliable water supply for years to come. We are proud to serve our new Bellflower customers and ensure their water quality meets or surpasses state and federal standards.”

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POINTS OF INTEREST

**PROTECTING YOUR WATER SERVICE AT CWA'S 76TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE**



"Aquamen and Water Women: Protecting Your Water Service" was the theme of California Water Association's (CWA) 76th Annual Conference in Monterey on November 7. After welcoming the conference attendees, CWA First Vice President Keith Switzer, who is also Vice President, Regulatory Affairs for Golden State Water Company, served as master of ceremonies for the rest of the day.

Lawrence Morales, President, East Pasadena Water Company and CWA President, followed Switzer with a review of CWA's accomplishments during the past year, which included successful legislative and regulatory initiatives that served customers' interests, supporting CWA members' drought management efforts, strengthening the collective voice of regulated water utilities through effective communications, and advancing work on supplier diversity, the Low-Income Oversight Board, and small company assistance.



*California Water Association First Vice President Keith Switzer, Vice President, Golden State Water Company, opens CWA's 76th annual conference.*



*Attendees listen as CWA President Lawrence Morales, President, East Pasadena Water Company, reviews the Association's 2017 accomplishments.*

The keynote address given by Senate Majority Leader Bill Monning (D-Carmel) focused on "Legislative Solutions to California's Pressing Water Challenges." He gave a comprehensive summary of his pending bill, Senate Bill 623, which would establish the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund and provide a consistent source of funding for all Californians to secure access to safe drinking water. The bill would enable eligible applicants to seek funding for a variety of needs, including repairing, replacing or treating contaminated or failing drinking water sources, principally for disadvantaged communities in the state.

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POINTS OF INTEREST

**PROTECTING YOUR WATER SERVICE AT CWA'S 76TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE...CONTINUED**

During the mid-morning, Phil Jones, Phil Jones Consulting, formerly Washington Utilities and Transportation Commissioner, as well as National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners President, spoke about "Protecting Everything and Everybody: Cyber Security and Water Utility Service." He outlined the cyber challenges facing all utilities today and pointed out a number of opportunities to which utilities can avail themselves for assistance, including federal resources such as the Environmental Protection Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He also encouraged the attendees to fully understand their utilities' risk profiles, the proficiency of their SCADA systems, the types of penetration testing they must undertake, and the sophistication of their Incident Response Planning.

"Today's Water Use and the Next Generation of Savings from Conservation" was the topic of the presentation by Amy Vickers, President, Amy Vickers & Associates, Inc., a nationally recognized water conservation and efficiency expert, engineer, and author. Vickers summarized the nation's water-use report card, which includes statistics on water-use demands and losses. She also discussed the future savings potential for residential indoor and outdoor water use and concluded with an overview of trends impacting future water use, including home and building trends, landscaping trends, and the increasing participation of children in the "Children and Nature Network," a Minneapolis-based movement designed to instill an active appreciation of nature in children's everyday lives.

George Soneff, Partner, Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP followed Vickers' presentation by sharing "News from the Legal Front." He covered several recent and ongoing utility eminent domain cases, including Golden State Water Company's recent victory against the City of Claremont.



*Conference Keynote Speaker California State Senator Bill*



*Former Washington Utilities and Transportation Commissioner and former National Association of Regulatory Utilities Association President Phil Jones addresses the many cyber-security threats facing water utilities at CWA's 76th Annual Conference.*

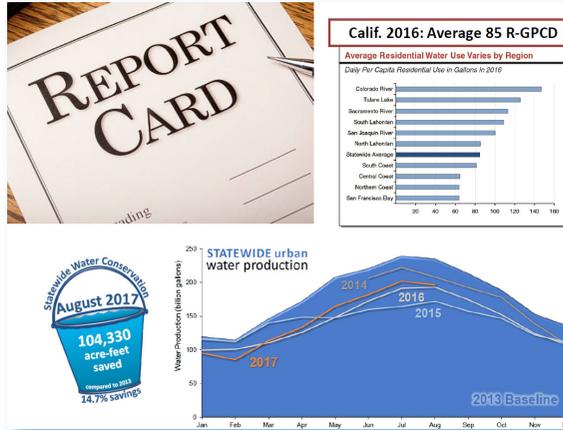


*Amy Vickers, President, Amy Vickers & Associates, Inc., and author of the seminal book on water conservation in the United States, Handbook of Water Use and Conservation (WaterPlow Press, 2001) speaks to the next generation of savings from conservation at CWA's 2017 Annual Conference.*

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POINTS OF INTEREST

PROTECTING YOUR WATER SERVICE AT CWA'S 76TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE...CONTINUED



Lawn and Landscape Trends 2017

- Low-water lawn alternatives, low maintenance, backyard vegetable gardens – DPG.Design, California Landscape Design Trends for 2017
- Lawn reimagined, natural materials, and hyperlocalism –Garden Design
- Vertical gardens, green living walls, green roofs, natural is in, sustainability is key –Zillow
- “front yard patios have become contagious” –Star Tribune (Minneapolis), July 2017



George Soneff, Partner, Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP, brings the audience up to date on the latest judicial decisions in utility eminent domain cases at CWA's 76th Annual Conference in Monterey.

Author and humorist Ron Culberson entertained attendees during lunch with a presentation based on his book, *Do It Well. Make it Fun. The Key to Success in Life, Death and Almost Everything in Between*. Culberson described the two-step process – “Do it Well” and “Make it Fun” – for achieving greater success in work and life. He shared ideas on how to energize boring meetings, defuse office conflict, make project management fun, and more.



Ron Culberson, Author, Humorist, Speaker, delighted the audience at CWA's 2017 Annual Conference with his enlightening presentation on success in the workplace.

The early afternoon began with presentations by Cindy Messer, Chief Deputy Director, California Department of Water Resources, and Joel Ledesma, Deputy Director, State Water Project, Department of Water Resources, focused on “Protecting Our Water Supply.”

Messer provided an update on [California WaterFix](#), a multi-faceted upgrade to California's aging water system supported by engineers, scientists, water experts, businesses, and environmental groups. The proposed upgrade includes two tunnels, three intakes, and more natural flows in the California Delta to improve water supply reliability, restore the ecosystem, and adapt to climate risks, including levee failures, rising sea levels, and earthquakes. Messer shared the permitting milestones achieved in 2017 and outlined next steps in the permitting process.

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POINTS OF INTEREST

PROTECTING YOUR WATER SERVICE AT CWA'S 76TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE...CONTINUED



Cindy Messer, Chief Deputy Director, Department of Water Resources, and Joel Ledesma, Deputy Director, State Water Project, Department of Water Resources, updated the audience at CWA's 2017 Annual Conference on two critical issues the water industry faced in 2017 – the California WaterFix and the repairs to the Oroville Dam.

IMPORTANT FOR CALIFORNIA

WATER SUPPLY RELIABILITY	ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION	CLIMATE RISK ADAPTATION
<p><b>25 MILLION PEOPLE</b> and thousands of businesses</p> <p>from the Bay Area to San Diego rely on water from the Delta</p>	<p><b>MORE THAN 3 MILLION ACRES OF FARMLAND</b> rely on water from the Delta</p>	<p><b>DELTA FISH AND WILDLIFE</b> depend upon a healthy Delta ecosystem</p>
		<p><b>LEVEE FAILURES</b> <b>RISING SEA LEVELS</b> <b>EARTHQUAKES</b></p> <p><b>NATURAL RISKS AND CLIMATE CHANGE</b> threaten the reliability of the existing system</p>

Part of the state's overall water management portfolio

Ledesma described the events leading up to the February 2017 Oroville spillway crisis as well as the collaborative response by various local agencies, including California Water Service. He gave an in-depth report on the progress of the ongoing spillway emergency recovery project.



Damaged Spillway

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POINTS OF INTEREST

PROTECTING YOUR WATER SERVICE AT CWA'S 76TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE...CONTINUED



Progress as of October 17, 2017

“Protecting Our Water Quality” was the topic of the presentation by John Albert, Chief Research Officer, [Water Research Foundation](#). After explaining the history of the foundation, Albert discussed research being conducted on current and emerging water contaminants such as opportunistic pathogens in premise plumbing. He highlighted potential removal mechanisms and best practices for communicating with customers about the risk of contaminants.



John Albert, Chief Research Officer, Water Research Foundation, addressed CWA's 76th Annual Conference on the latest technology developments in drinking water quality.

Near the end of the day, Mitch Tobin, Principal, [Sea to Snow Consulting/Waterpolls.org](#) presented “Insights on Customer Attitudes Toward Water.” He summarized the results of multiple national and regional customer surveys from recent years dealing with opinions on water supply, water quality and consumers’ knowledge about their own drinking water, including tap water and bottled water. On the plus side, one regional survey indicated that more than 80 percent of consumers consider conservation and water-use efficiency to be their civic duty and, nationally, more than two-thirds of Americans are willing to pay to fix water infrastructure.



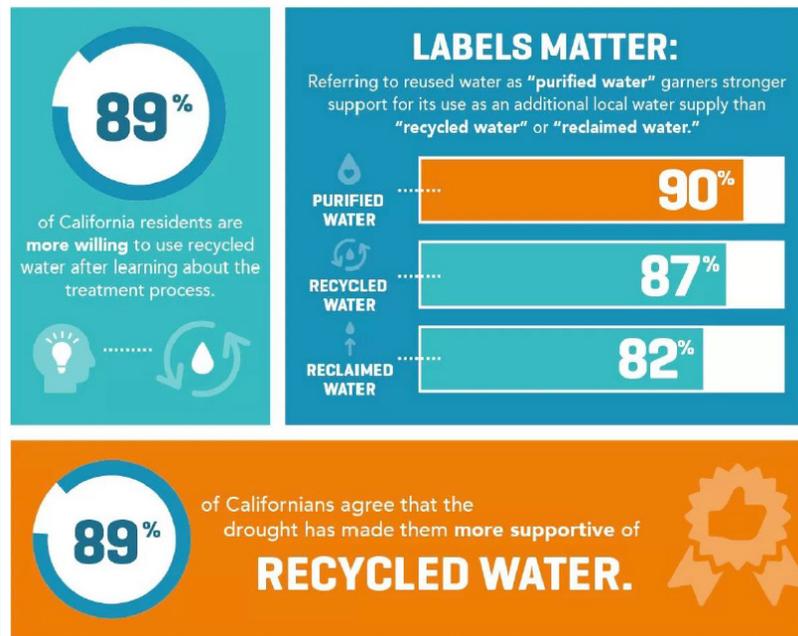
Mitch Tobin, Sea to Snow Consulting, provided a national and regional snapshot on consumer attitudes toward water and water utilities at the 2017 CWA Annual Conference.

Further, nearly three in five people in the Western United States think water is a good value. Given the extensive water infrastructure needs facing the country, customers, of course, are concerned about the level of future rate increases. Tobin noted that although water is less partisan than other issues, recent droughts and the Flint, MI water crisis have made consumers more sensitive to their own water situation, both from a supply reliability and a water quality standpoint. Tobin emphasized that communication and messaging are critical when it comes to customers’ views on recycled water.

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POINTS OF INTEREST

PROTECTING YOUR WATER SERVICE AT CWA'S 76TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE...CONTINUED



Steven Owen, Vice President, PERC Water, discussed an exciting new recycled water project in nearby Pacific Grove, CA, at CWA's 76th Annual Conference.

The conference concluded with a presentation by Steve Owen, Vice President, PERC Water, which centered on Pacific Grove's local water project. Owen gave an overview of the project, which will replace potable irrigation water with non-potable supplies for various municipal properties, including the Pacific Grove Municipal Golf Links and El Carmelo Cemetery.



CWA Executive Director Jack Hawks (R) presents a distinguished service award to retiring SouthWest Water Company Chairman and CEO Michael Quinn (L).

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POINTS OF INTEREST

SAVE THE DATE!

**CWA'S SPRING CONFERENCE!**

May 17, 2018

The Citizen Hotel, Sacramento, CA

