



# WQA Recognizes Efforts of Congresswomen

## *Chu and Napolitano Continue to Advocate for Much-Needed Federal Funds*

**By Elizabeth Smilor**  
*Special Sections Writer*

Legislative leadership is essential to the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority's (WQA) ongoing cleanup of the San Gabriel groundwater basin. Congresswomen Grace Napolitano and Judy Chu championed \$20 million in long-awaited federal funds in the past two years and are seeking another \$10 million in 2024.

"The WQA is critically important to the future of the San Gabriel Valley because it is cleaning up the water in the very important water basin. The San Gabriel Basin is a huge asset that was contaminated by the industries of the past," said Congresswoman Judy Chu, whose 28th District includes parts of the San Gabriel Valley, including Alhambra, Monterey Park, Rosemead, San Gabriel, Pasadena and Claremont. "The WQA has been able to get funds from the polluters and the state. It was a long time coming to get federal funds."

There are 33 active groundwater treatment plants in the San Gabriel Basin. The WQA has coordinated cleanup efforts that have resulted in the treatment of more than 1.9 million acre-feet of water. An acre-foot

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**Congresswoman  
Judy Chu**

is equal to 325,551 gallons. Though variable, about 200,000 acre-feet of water is pumped from the Basin annually and used as domestic supply. "Without the WQA, this cleanup wouldn't have come this far. They've helped tremendously in remediating the San Gabriel Basin that provides 90 percent of water to 1.4 million people downstream, of which more than 400,000 are in disadvantaged communities. Clean water is important for them," said Congresswoman Grace Napolitano, whose 31st District covers much of the San Gabriel Valley from Monrovia to La Verne to La Puente.

The WQA was established by the State Legislature in 1993 to develop, finance, and implement groundwater treatment programs in the San Gabriel Basin after contaminants were identified in the late 1970s.

The federal funds were appropriated into the San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund (Restoration Fund) following more than a decade without federal funds. Congress has authorized \$125 million for the Restoration Fund, of which \$94.5 million has been appropriated and allocated to cleanup projects by the WQA.

“We appreciate the commitment to the Basin cleanup that Congresswomen Napolitano and Chu have demonstrated with their continuous support for funding the San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund,” said WQA Executive Director Randy Schoellerman. “Their involvement on these issues has helped to highlight the importance of cleaning up the Basin.”

The federal funds help the WQA leverage funding from the state, he added. In addition to seeking federal and state funding for the cleanup, the WQA garners funds from the parties responsible for the groundwater contamination. This funding helps to lessen the burden on local ratepayers.

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**Congresswoman Grace Napolitano**

has to continue. We will see water rates go up without the funds for the cleanup because the San Gabriel Valley would have to increase its reliance on imported water, which is more expensive.”

The WQA has awarded the first two \$10 million federal allocations to 17 diverse and vital projects that address a wide spectrum of contamination issues. The WQA received 23 applications for a combined capital cost of \$201 million.

“There is quite a ways to go on the cleanup, so it’s very much on my agenda to continue advocating for federal funding,” said Congresswoman Chu.

The emergence of PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), a group of more than 4,000 synthetic harmful chemical compounds, has

Napolitano recognizes that there are remediation sites without funding from a responsible party and that the burden on cities is too great.

“Federal funding is vital because there are still 33 active groundwater projects left. In the last three years, we’ve been able to get \$20 million for the San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund and have requested \$10 million for 2024,” said Congresswoman Napolitano. “The monitoring, cleanup and treatment

increased the anticipated time and cost of the cleanup. On March 14, the U.S. EPA announced the proposed National Primary Drinking Water Regulation, which would establish legally enforceable levels called Maximum Contaminant Levels for six PFAS compounds in drinking water.

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**Randy Schoellerman  
WQA Executive Director**

manufacturers to produce everything from Teflon for pots and pans to Scotchgard for fabric protection.

“The WQA is doing a great job and their efforts continue to be necessary as emerging contaminants such as PFAS are a major concern,” said Congresswoman Napolitano.

The California Legislature has extended the life of the WQA to July 1, 2050. ○



On opposite page, Congresswoman Grace Napolitano, front left, and Congresswoman Judy Chu, front right, present \$10 million in federal funding from the San Gabriel Basin Restoration fund to the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority for groundwater cleanup. With the Congresswomen from the WQA are, from left to right: Board of Directors Vice Chairwoman Lynda Noriega; Board Treasurer Robert Gonzales; Board Chairman Mark Paulson; Board Secretary Valerie Munoz; Executive Director Randy Schoellerman; and Public Outreach Coordinator Stephanie Moreno. Above, a treatment plant at South Pasadena’s Wilson Reservoir is one of 33 active facilities.



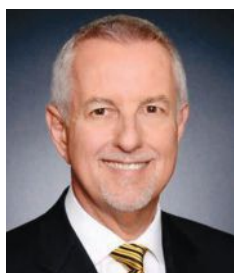
Water Quality Authority

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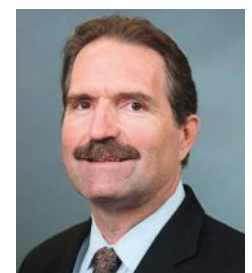
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