



San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority: Advocating for Clean Groundwater for 1.4 Million Residents



"Our coordination of this cleanup has made a difference in protecting and restoring this vital groundwater basin and our efforts will continue to ensure a clean, safe and reliable water supply."

Randy Schoellerman
Executive Director
WQA

In the past year, several factors have reaffirmed the vital role of the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority in the ongoing cleanup of the groundwater basin. We have received additional funding, an extension of the agency, and proposed regulatory standards to address emerging contaminants as our mission of basin restoration and the prevention of future contamination continues.

For a second consecutive year, we received \$10 million in federal funding thanks to the efforts of our U.S. Representatives and Senators. 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 are currently pursuing additional federal funds for fiscal year 2024. This funding helps the WQA leverage funding from the state and lessens the burden on local ratepayers. In addition to seeking federal and state funding for the cleanup, the WQA garners funds from the parties responsible for the groundwater contamination.

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.

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 nearly 2 million acre-feet of water. An acre-foot 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.

As Congresswoman Grace Napolitano recently said: "Without the WQA, this cleanup wouldn't have come this far." We appreciate this recognition, but also know our job is not done. This fact

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Congresswoman
Grace Napolitano

Board Members



Mark Paulson
Chairman
Representing the
San Gabriel Valley
Municipal Water District.



Lynda Noriega
Vice Chairwoman
Representing water
producers, California
Domestic Water Company



Valerie Muñoz
Secretary
Representing cities
without pumping rights.



Robert Gonzales
Treasurer
Representing cities
with pumping rights.



Ed Chavez
Board Member
Representing
Upper San Gabriel Valley
Municipal Water District.



Robert DiPrimio
Board Member
Representing water
producers, San Gabriel
Valley Water Company



Bob Kuhn
Board Member
Representing Three
Valleys Municipal
Water District.



On previous 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 Muñoz; 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.

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was highlighted by the decision of the California State Legislature in 2022 to extend the life of the Authority to July 1, 2050. Prior legislation extended us to July 1, 2030, but we and local stakeholders recognized that we have certain financing and projects agreements that go beyond 2030.

Both the changing climate and the emergence of new groundwater contaminants illustrate the continued need for the WQA for a resilient and sustainable future. Today, a lot of focus is on PFAS (per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances) widely used long-lasting chemicals that break down very slowly.

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.

PFAS, considered "forever" chemicals because they remain in the environment, were compounds produced mainly by the 3M and DuPont companies and used by them and a variety of other manufacturers to produce everything from Teflon for pots and pans to Scotchgard for fabric protection.

On March 17, the WQA filed a lawsuit against 3M, DuPont and other companies seeking to recover the costs of cleaning up PFAS from the Main San Gabriel Basin. It is part of our mission to pursue responsible parties for the cost of the cleanup and PFAS has been detected in numerous wells. By joining hundreds of other cities, states and water agencies in filing suit against these companies, we are fulfilling our mandated role.

Our coordination of this cleanup has made a difference in protecting and restoring this vital groundwater basin and our efforts will continue to ensure a clean, safe and reliable water supply. ○



Learn more about your water and the
WQA's efforts to keep it safe and clean.

Visit www.wqa.com



Our History in the San Gabriel Basin

After severe groundwater contamination was detected in the San Gabriel Basin and the EPA designated four Superfund sites in the area, a plan of action was needed. The WQA has coordinated the cleanup efforts since its creation more than 30 years ago. As a result, 1.9 million acre-feet of water has been treated, thus making the region less dependent upon imported water.

2023 WQA Secures \$10M in Federal Funding for the San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund for Fiscal Year 2023.

2022 WQA Secures \$10M for the San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund and AB 2163 extends the WQA's sunset date to July 1, 2050.

2021 WQA secures \$35.3M in Prop. 68 funding.

2020 WQA secures additional \$2.2M in Prop. 1 funding.

2019 Construction begins on the first reverse osmosis treatment system in the San Gabriel Valley.

2018 WQA advocates for the passage of Proposition 68.

2014 WQA acquires the General Discharge Permit needed to continue the cleanup.

2012 WQA secures \$10 million in state funding for four projects.

2009 WQA obtains additional \$50 million for WQA Restoration Fund. H.R. 910, which established the San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund to facilitate groundwater cleanup, became Public Law 106-554.

2002 The first 15-year BPOU project agreement is executed.

1999 WQA spearheads legislation for \$75 million in federal funding.

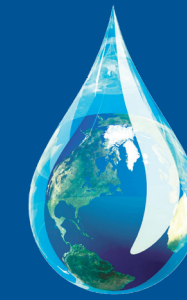
1995 WQA's first treatment facility is completed in Monrovia.

1994 WQA adopts a consensus approach to integrating water supply and cleanup programs.

1993 WQA is established by the California State legislature.

1983 The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) declares four Superfund sites in portions of the Main San Gabriel Basin.

1979 Groundwater contamination is first detected in the San Gabriel Groundwater Basin.



CLEANUP BY THE NUMBERS

1,960,580

Acre-feet of groundwater treated in San Gabriel Basin as of March 31, 2023.

325,851

The amount of water in gallons in just one acre-foot.

7,572

The number of times you could fill the Rose Bowl with the 1.9 million acre-feet of treated water.

209,807

The amount in pounds of contaminants removed as of March 31, 2023.

23

The number of elephants equal to the weight of the contaminants removed.

30

Years WQA has been coordinating the cleanup effort.

33

Active groundwater treatment facilities in the San Gabriel Basin.

8

New treatment plants are under construction.