



Alex Padilla
U.S. Senator

Robert Ferrante
LACSD Chief Engineer and General Manager

Pure Water Southern California Project Receives \$99 Million Federal Grant

By Elizabeth Smilor
Special Sections Writer

Henry Ford once said, “Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” Recently, federal, state and local leaders celebrated a big win accomplished through steadfast collaboration.

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton announced \$99.2 million in funding for Pure Water Southern California at an event held at the regional recycled water program’s demonstration plant in Carson. She was joined by California’s U.S. Senator Alex Padilla, U.S. Congresswoman Grace Napolitano, U.S. Congresswoman Nanette Díaz Barragán, California State Water Resources Control Board Chair E. Joaquin Esquivel and representatives from Metropolitan, the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts, and other water agencies and cities.

“Adequate, resilient and safe water supplies are fundamental to the health, economy and security of our communities and investments in water recycling and reuse are key to stretching limited water supplies and making systems more resilient to the effects of aridification in the American West,” Touton said. “Water recycling plays a critical role in improving water supplies. It’s an innovative and cost-effective tool that can help make our water supply more reliable, helping communities find new sources to meet their needs today, but most importantly to meet our needs in the future.”



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U.S. Senator Alex Padilla at grant announcement.



U.S. Congresswoman Grace Napolitano called Pure Water Southern California a “shining example” of the power of partnerships.

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The announcement was made at facilities recently renamed for notable leaders: The Grace F. Napolitano Innovation Center, named for the “water champion” retiring Rep. Napolitano, which is located at the A.K. Warren Water Resource Facility, formerly the Joint Water Pollution Control Plant, named for the L.A. County Sanitation Districts’ first chief engineer to mark the agency’s centennial last year.

“Our agency knows water is too precious to use just once. Along with our partners, Los Angeles County Public Works and the Water Replenishment District, in the early 1960s, we pioneered groundwater replenishment and that steady supply of groundwater has been going on ever since and growing,” said LACSD Chief Engineer and General Manager Robert Ferrante. “The project you’re seeing here is the next step in the evolution. With this allotment of money, we can start turning this program into a reality, ensuring a more sustainable and green future for generations to come.”



From left to right: Congresswoman Grace Napolitano, U.S. Senator Alex Padilla, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton, LACSD Chief Engineer and General Manager Robert Ferrante, Metropolitan Board Chair Adán Ortega Jr., and LADWP CEO and Chief Engineer Janisse Quiñones.



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Robert Ferrante
LACSD Chief Engineer
and General Manager

The funding comes from the newly established Large-Scale Water Recycling Program, funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which provides \$450 million over five years to large water recycling projects in the West. A total of \$179 million in grants was announced at the event on May 28. In addition to Pure Water Southern California, grant funds were awarded to large-scale recycling projects being developed by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, the city of Ventura, and the Washington County Water Conservancy District in Utah. Representatives for all the grant recipients were in attendance.

“This is a great day for the Western United States because our fates are interconnected because our water infrastructure is interconnected,” said Sen. Padilla, who along with other members of Congress advocated for the bill and funding. “As we grapple with the realities of climate

change, we know that no more are the days when we saw each other as competition. If we go by the way we used to think about water, there’s not enough water for anybody, so we have to figure out the way forward together.”

Metropolitan and the Sanitation Districts are partnering on the Pure Water project, which will take cleaned wastewater that is currently sent to the ocean and purify it using an advanced, multi-stage purification process to produce high-quality drinking water. If approved by Metropolitan’s board, at full scale, the program will produce 150 million gallons of water each day – enough to meet the demands of 500,000 homes – that will be delivered to groundwater basins, industrial facilities and two of Metropolitan’s water treatment plants.

“The Pure Water project is a shining example of what the partnership between local water agencies like the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts can accomplish,” said Rep. Napolitano (31st District). “Water instability and unpredictable drought cycles will affect us for years to come, and ensuring water security for our communities requires this type of collaboration between all, as well as a commitment to dedicate funding to support water recycling projects.”

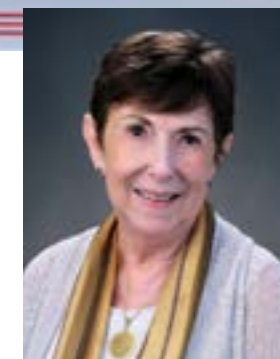
Metropolitan has 26 member agencies that provide water to 19 million people in six counties. LACSD serves 5.5 million people 78 cities and unincorporated areas across 850 square miles.

“Purified recycled water isn’t just a new supply of water, it is a climate-resilient one,” said Metropolitan Board

LACSD Chief Engineer and General Manager Robert Ferrante speaks.



Chair Adán Ortega Jr. “The projects we are developing are the foundation of a new and endless river. I think it will pass the test of time as the Hoover Dam of our time. Together with our communities, we’re positioning to be the winter and the spring that feed this river with care, allowing it to flow forever and ever. We’re building an endless river for the Southwest for this century and beyond.”



“It is critical as we look at the water needs of the future and the effects of climate change, that we look at more local, reliable and consistent sources for water.”

Cynthia Kurtz
Metropolitan Director

Metropolitan members are also advocating for including \$1 billion for recycled water projects in a proposed state climate bond measure that could go before voters in November.

“It takes partnerships and collaboration to develop a project the size, scope and importance of Pure Water Southern California. Metropolitan cannot do this alone. We need the support of our member agencies, like Inland Empire Utilities Agency (IEUA), which will benefit from this new sustainable, local water supply,” said Metropolitan Board Vice-Chair Michael Camacho who is an IEUA Director. “And it needs the support of state and federal partners, who recognize that the entire nation is better off when Southern Californian communities and businesses have reliable water. I want to

Metropolitan Board Chair Adán Ortega Jr. shown below and in event video.



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thank the Bureau of Reclamation for being our partner.”

Pure Water Southern California, which previously received \$87 million in state and federal funds as well as support from water districts in Arizona and Nevada, could begin construction in 2026, with operations and water delivery expected in 2032.

“This is a very big step forward for Southern California and for Metropolitan. It is critical as we look at the water needs of the future and the effects of climate change, that we look at more local, reliable and consistent sources for water. Recycling is certainly one of them,” said Metropolitan Board Director Cynthia Kurtz, representing the City of Pasadena. “Without the support of the state and federal governments with the cost, it becomes nearly impossible for even agencies as large as Metropolitan, and certainly for smaller agencies, to take on these projects.”

The Pure Water project is an important component in efforts to make Southern California more drought-proof, said Dr. Anthony R. Fellow, a Board Director at Metropolitan



“Pure Water will allow us to create a new source of pure drinking water, as we face challenges to meet the needs of Southern California.”

Dr. Anthony R. Fellow
Board Director at
Metropolitan and the
Upper San Gabriel Valley
Municipal Water District

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“Currently some 97% of rainwater in the San Gabriel Valley is recycled and finds its way back into the Upper District’s spreading grounds,” Fellow said. “However, most of Los Angeles’ stormwater currently travels to the Pacific Ocean. Pure Water will allow us to create a new source of pure drinking water, as we face challenges to meet the needs of Southern California.”

Fellow said he also supports state infrastructure improvements and strategies to store more water in the San Gabriel Groundwater Basin.

“These federal funds, alongside the more than \$80 million of state funds awarded last July, are very welcomed for a needed project that will serve some 500,000 people. Of course, we have a lot of challenges in providing water to Southern California,” Fellow said. “First, we are hearing calls from our neighboring states

to limit our use of Colorado River water. Second, we have a very valuable State Water Project which needs infrastructure improvements. Further, state and federal funds will be needed to improve California’s water infrastructure, but it is worth every penny. Without water we have no life.” ○



Listening from left to right: U.S. Senator Alex Padilla, LADWP CEO and Chief Engineer Janisse Quiñones, U.S. Congresswoman Grace Napolitano, Metropolitan Board Chair Adán Ortega and State Water Resources Control Board Chair E. Joaquin Esquivel.



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Michael Camacho
Metropolitan Vice-Chair and IEUA Director



U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton announces funding.



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