



SCV Water: A Once-in-a-Generation Opportunity

By Maria Gutzeit and Robert DiPrimio

“Exemplary water management for a high quality of life in the Santa Clarita Valley.”

That is the new vision statement for the Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency (SCV Water) – a new, modernized water provider that began serving our community on January 1, 2018.

As we look forward to this new era of water management, it is important we reflect on how we arrived at this historic moment.

SCV Water is the result of combining Castaic Lake Water Agency (CLWA), Newhall County Water District (NCWD), Santa Clarita Water Division (SCWD) and Valencia Water Company (VWC) into an entirely new public water district.

SCV Water was crafted over two years of public engagement where thousands of local residents expressed ideas, opinions and priorities. It was then formalized through the leadership of Senator Scott Wilk, who authored Senate Bill 634 to create the new agency. Governor Jerry Brown signed it into law on October 15, 2017.

The process was long, methodical and, at times, challenging. Yet it was a chance to deliver a modern, regional water solution for our customers, and we are pleased with the benefits the new agency will provide to the Valley, including:

- **Cutting Costs & Creating Savings:** The agency will save millions of dollars over time by creating economies of scale. Savings will be used to partially reduce future water rate increases, re-invest in water reliability and provide enhanced services.
- **Creating Fair & Equal Representation:** SCV Water has three evenly sized “electoral divisions.” This allows neighbors to elect neighbors to ensure all corners of the Valley have an equal voice on regional water management.
- **Stronger Water Resources and Watershed Management:** SCV Water creates better opportunities to fund and implement water resource, habitat restoration and water quality initiatives within the Upper Santa Clara River Watershed.
- **Local Jobs Program:** SCV Water will prioritize the hiring of vets and local residents when it begins to build new recycled water infrastructure.

Consistent Customer Experience

We understand that most customers simply want reliable, cost-effective and safe water delivered to their homes and businesses, so things like bill paying, rate structures, customer service, water service requests and other functions will not change in the immediate future. These changes will be phased in over time to avoid disruptions. Customers can also expect the same friendly faces to serve as their representatives.

To help introduce you to the new agency, customer lobbies at each division will include information welcoming you to your SCV Water. We invite you to stop by, say hello and tell us what you think. But this is just the start – we look forward to establishing a new era of customer engagement as we move forward.

Thanks to Our Customers

Water policy can be complex and boring. But our customers were patient, engaging and constructive throughout this process. You came with ideas on how to make SCV Water even more customer focused. You listened and asked thoughtful questions as we explained why we endeavored on this process. You made SCV Water better and we are grateful for your involvement.

SCV Water is our greatest achievement as public servants because it improves service to our customers. To witness public agencies put aside egos and seek to do things better was inspiring. This was not “politics as usual,” but rather an example of collaboration that proves we can still do big and great things when we work together.

It was a once-in-a-generation opportunity that we, as the Santa Clarita Valley, were able to set in motion. Today, we look forward to delivering on the promise of SCV Water in the future. Learn more at www.yourSCVWater.com.

###

During the SCV Water formation process, Robert J. DiPrimio and Maria Gutzeit served as president of the former Castaic Lake Water Agency and Newhall County Water District, respectively. They are elected water leaders and now serve as directors on the new SCV Water Board of Directors.