

# THE FUTURE OF WATER IN THE SANTA CLARITA VALLEY

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For Immediate Release

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During the past year, representatives of Newhall County Water District (NCWD) and Castaic Lake Water Agency (CLWA) have been meeting to settle ongoing litigation and in this process have discussed the potential to combine the two water providers into one new local water agency. While nothing is final, we think it is time to inform you, our customers, of this potential change, and to seek your input.

Our goal is to increase collaboration while strengthening water resource management.

In early 2015, we embarked on a collaborative process in an attempt to find common ground. These early talks led to consensus on several guiding principles:

- Enhance integrated water strategy and management
- Value an inclusive, open and transparent public process for water management
- Make ratepayer value and multiple stakeholder benefits a priority
- Listen to each other and work collaboratively; seek to understand opinions, especially opposing points of view
- Identify and prioritize issues that are important and worthy to address first

Negotiations continued in earnest throughout 2015. A team of leaders from each agency met several times per month to analyze specifics and talk through core issues. These discussions ultimately led to significant progress.

In December, representatives from each agency reached an agreement in principle on specific goals and conditions that, if met, could lead to new regional water governance in the Santa Clarita Valley. These foundational goals include:

- **THINK REGIONALLY:** A public agency would be created that would merge the functions of CLWA with the three major retail water providers: NCWD, the Santa Clarita Water Division and Valencia Water Co. The new successor water resource management agency would provide both local and imported water supply services to the Santa Clarita Valley
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- Sustain and improve the level of service customers have come to know and trust from their current water providers
- **PROTECT FINANCES:** Customers from a current water provider that carries little or no debt must not assume the financial debt of another water provider
- **END LITIGATION:** Resolve current legal disputes – and corresponding costs – between agencies
- **ENHANCE WATER RELIABILITY:** Together, the new public agency must integrate water resource management and strategies to enhance regional reliability
- **INCREASE EFFICIENCY:** Over time, achieve efficiencies through economies of scale

While this is an important milestone, it simply marks the continuation – not the conclusion – of our process. The road before us remains long and requires intense regional collaboration, significant public engagement, potential legislative action and continued negotiations among all stakeholders. Nevertheless, it could lead to fundamental changes to how water services are provided and governed in the Santa Clarita Valley.



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**WHAT THIS MEANS FOR CUSTOMERS**

First and foremost, customers can expect service to continue unchanged for the foreseeable future.

**BUT WE DO NEED YOUR HELP**

Public engagement is a major part of this process and we will need your input on critical issues. As progress continues, we anticipate public forums and numerous additional opportunities to engage in the process.

**LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE**

Our path to this point has not been easy, nor is it complete. But we've chosen this process in hopes of resolving disputes amicably and increasing collaboration among our regional water providers on behalf of all Santa Clarita Valley residents. Our commitment to you is to continue these good-faith discussions in hopes of achieving a beneficial outcome moving us forward, together. In the meantime, we sincerely appreciate your patience, support and, most of all, involvement.

