



SCV Water: Looking to 2018 and Beyond

By Bill Cooper, President, Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency

The launch of the Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency (SCV Water) on January 1 marked an historic moment for our community. SCV Water is now poised to bring greater transparency, stronger water management, reduced costs and increased savings to our customers across the Valley.

With the formation of the new agency behind us, it is now time to get to work on behalf of our approximately 300,000 customers. And our board of directors and professional staff are tremendously ready, willing and eager to deliver on the promise of SCV Water.

So what will your new water agency be looking at in the next year?

Well, this year promises to be a blend of confronting chronic statewide challenges as well as exciting new opportunities brought by a new era of water management in the Santa Clarita Valley.

Confronting the Potential Return of Drought: 2018 is looking dry...really dry! A recent study found that the Sierra snowpack, which is the primary source of our imported water supplies, was at just three percent of normal! That is a daunting number and threatens last year's wet-weather gains.

It is too early to tell what this will mean for our region, but we are better equipped to address our local needs because of SCV Water. As one water agency, we can advocate for policies and laws that help – not hinder – our community. We can work in unison to secure state funding and grants to address our local concerns.

Prioritizing Customer Outreach: Customer outreach was the cornerstone of the formation of SCV Water and it will continue into the future. SCV Water will be open, transparent and accessible. A new ratepayer advocate is part of this commitment and will be established in the coming months. This is an unprecedented concept that will ensure customers always understand and have a voice in key policies of SCV Water.

Making Valencia Water Co. a Public Entity: Valencia Water Co. will soon become a part of SCV Water, a public water agency. While well run, VWC has always been a private company without an elected body. Our Board is taking immediate action on January 9 to initiate the process of making VWC a public agency, as required by the legislation that formed SCV Water. This has been a long-term, customer-focused goal and we are making it a reality ahead of schedule.

Fast-tracking Recycled Water: Today, recycled water accounts for just a fraction of a percent of our total water use in the Santa Clarita Valley. But SCV Water is thinking big about recycled water. In fact, our goal is to increase recycled water use by 2,000 percent over the next 15-17 years.

That process will accelerate in 2018 as the new agency establishes the economies of scale needed to achieve this major expansion of local, sustainable and cost-effective recycled water supplies. Importantly, SCV Water is crafting a plan this year to ensure that local veterans and residents are hired first when the construction of approximately \$200 million of infrastructure needed for recycled water begins.

These are among the “big picture” challenges, goals and opportunities we are looking at for SCV Water in its inaugural year. But we are equally excited about the day-to-day service that we are privileged to provide to our customers. Our professional and expert staff is here for our customers, serving you today and into the future.

Please visit www.YourSCVWater.com website to learn more about your new agency.

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Bill Cooper is the inaugural president of SCV Water. He was a director of the former Castaic Lake Water Agency and was first elected to office in 1993.