AGENDA

18700 Ward St.
Fountain Valley, CA 92708
(714) 378-3200

COMMUNICATIONS AND LEGISLATIVE LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETING
WITH BOARD OF DIRECTORS*
ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
November 5, 2026 12:00 p.m. - Conference Room C-2

*The OCWD Communications and Legislative Liaison Committee meeting is noticed as a joint meeting with the Board of Directors for the purpose of strict compliance with the Brown Act and it provides an opportunity for all Directors to hear presentations and participate in discussions. Directors receive no additional compensation or stipend as a result of simultaneously convening this meeting. Items recommended for approval at this meeting will be placed on the **November 18** Board meeting Agenda for approval.

This meeting will be held in person. As a convenience for the public, the meeting may also be accessed by Zoom Webinar and will be available by either computer or telephone audio as indicated below. Because this is an in-person meeting and the Zoom component is not required, but rather is being offered as a convenience, if there are any technical issues during the meeting, this meeting will continue and will not be suspended.

Computer Audio: You can join the Zoom meeting by clicking on the following link:
https://ocwd.zoom.us/j/99465334409

Telephone Audio: (213) 338 8477

Webinar ID: 994 6533 4409

Teleconference Sites:
10382 Bonnie Drive, Garden Grove
1454 Madison Steet, Tustin
1037 Sherwood Lane, Santa Ana
19 Cannery, Buena Park
6148 Baja, Anaheim
303 W Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton
* Members of the public may attend and participate at all locations.

ROLL CALL

ITEMS RECEIVED TOO LATE TO BE AGENDIZED

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt resolution determining need to take immediate action on item(s) and that the need for action came to the attention of the District subsequent to the posting of the Agenda (requires two-thirds vote of the Board members present, or, if less than two-thirds of the members are present, a unanimous vote of those members present.)

VISITOR PARTICIPATION

Time has been reserved at this point in the agenda for persons wishing to comment for up to three minutes to the Board of Directors on any item that is not listed on the agenda, but within the subject matter jurisdiction of the District. By law, the Board of Directors is prohibited from taking action on such public comments. As appropriate, matters raised in these public comments will be referred to District staff or placed on the agenda of an upcoming Board meeting.

At this time, members of the public may also offer public comment for up to three minutes on any item on the Consent Calendar. While members of the public may not remove an item from the Consent Calendar for separate discussion, a Director may do so at the request of a member of the public.

CONSENT CALENDAR (ITEM NO. 1)

All matters on the Consent Calendar are to be approved by one motion, without separate discussion on these items, unless a Board member or District staff request that specific items be removed from the Consent Calendar for separate consideration.

1. MINUTES OF COMMUNICATIONS AND LEGISLATIVE LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETING HELD OCTOBER 8, 2026

   RECOMMENDATION: Approve minutes as presented

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

2. STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

   RECOMMENDATION: Agendize for November 18 Board meeting: Support ACWA's Vision for Our Water Future Initiative

3. FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

   RECOMMENDATION: Agendize for November 18 Board meeting: Take a support position on H.R. 4144 the Groundwater Rise and Infrastructure Preparedness Act of 2025

4. MULTIPURPOSE CENTER FEASIBILITY STUDY AMENDMENT OR SITE SELECTION

   RECOMMENDATION: Agendize for November 18 Board meeting: Committee to select one of the following options:

   1. Authorize an additional $40,000 under the agreement with MOCA to fully evaluate both sites; OR

   2. Select a preferred site for MOCA to complete the feasibility study under the original scope of work

5. OC WATER SUMMIT LOCATION AGREEMENT AND BUDGET INCREASE

   RECOMMENDATION: Agendize for November 18 Board meeting:

   1. Authorize the General Manager to execute an agreement with the Westin South Coast Plaza to host the OC Water Summit on May 21, 2027

   2. Approve a $100,000 increase to the FY 2026-27 budget to host the 2027 OC Water Summit within the current fiscal year

CHAIR DIRECTION AS TO WHICH ITEMS IF ANY TO BE AGENDIZED AS A MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE NOVEMBER 18 BOARD MEETING

DIRECTOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/REPORTS

GENERAL MANAGER'S ANNOUNCEMENT/REPORT

ADJOURNMENT

COMMUNICATION AND LEGISLATIVE LIAISON COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Van Tran – Chair
Roger Yoh – Vice Chair
Steve Sheldon
Valerie Amezcua
Erik Weigand

Cathy Green
Fred Jung
Dina Nguyen
Natalie Meeks
Denis Bilodeau

Agenda Posting: In accordance with the requirements of California Government Code Section 54954.2, this agenda is posted in the window of the guard shack at the main entrance of the Orange County Water District, 18700 Ward Street, Fountain Valley, CA and on the OCWD website: www.ocwd.com not less than 72 hours prior to the meeting date and time above. All written materials relating to each agenda item are available for public inspection in the office of the Assistant District Secretary. Backup material for the Agenda is available at the District offices for public review and can be viewed online at the District's website: www.ocwd.com.

Accommodations to the Disabled: Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons with a disability who require a disability-related modification or accommodation in order to participate in a meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, may request such modification or accommodation from the District Secretary at (714) 378-3234, by email at cfuller@ocwd.com by fax at (714) 378-3373. Notification 24 hours prior to the meeting will enable District staff to make reasonable arrangements to assure accessibility to the meeting.

Availability of Agenda Material: As a general rule, agenda reports or other written documentation that has been prepared or organized with respect to each item of business listed on the agenda can be reviewed at www.ocwd.com. Copies of these materials and other disclosable public records distributed to all or a majority of the members of the Board of Directors in connection with an Open Session agenda item are also on file with and available for inspection at the Office of the District Secretary, 18700 Ward Street, Fountain Valley, California, during regular business hours, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. If such writings are distributed to members of the Board of Directors on the day of a Board meeting, the writings will be available at the entrance to the Board of Directors meeting room at the Orange County Water District office.

MINUTES OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
WITH COMMUNICATIONS AND LEGISLATIVE LIAISON COMMITTEE
ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
OCTOBER 8, 2026 12:00 p.m.

Director Tran called the Communications and Legislative Liaison Committee meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. in the District Conference Room C-2. Public access was also provided via Zoom webinar. The Secretary called the roll and reported a quorum as follows:

Committee Members	
Van Tran	
Roger Yoh	(arrived 12:02 p.m.)
Steve Sheldon	(arrived 12:02 p.m.)
Valerie Amezcua	
Erik Weigand	(arrived 12:05 p.m.)
Alternates	
Cathy Green	
Fred Jung	(absent)
Dina Nguyen	(arrived 12:02 p.m.)
Natalie Meeks	(absent)
Denis Bilodeau	

OCWD Staff
John Kennedy – General Manager
Gina Ayala – Director of Public Affairs
Chris Olsen – Executive Director of Engineering/Water Resources
Mehul Patel – Executive Director of Operations
Michelle Diaz – Communications Specialist
Dani Berch – Senior Communications Specialist
Crystal Nettles – Principal Communications Specialist
Jeremy Jungreis – General Counsel
Leticia Villarreal – Assistant District Secretary

CONSENT CALENDAR

The Consent Calendar was approved upon motion by Director Green, seconded by Director Amezcua and carried [4-0] as follows*:*
Ayes – Tran, Amezcua, Green, Bilodeau

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the September 3, 2026 Communications/Legislative Liaison Committee meetings are approved as presented.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

2. State Legislative Update

Legislative consultants provided an update on items of interest to OCWD.

3. Federal Legislative Update

OCWD's federal advocate and staff provided an update on funding for OCWD's projects and other items of interest to OCWD.

4. Multipurpose Center Feasibility Study Site Selection

Executive Director of Engineering and Water Resources Chris Olsen recalled that the District has been working with MOCA Systems (MOCA) on a feasibility study to evaluate various options and locations for a new multipurpose center on the OCWD campus. He stated that MOCA has completed the two potential site location evaluations on campus for the build and noted that Site 1 is located near the old lab facility, more central to the tour route with minimal impact on staff. He reported that Site 2 is located south of the Lab Building and across from the Administrative Building and could affect views of the Lab Building. It would also have more impact on parking spaces during

construction including eliminating parking spaces when complete. The Committee agreed that based on the information provided, both sites should be thoroughly evaluated before making a final decision.

Upon motion by Director Yoh, seconded by Director Sheldon and carried [5-0], the Committee recommended for approval at the October 21 Board meeting: Committee agreed to authorize MOCA Systems, Inc. to prepare an amendment proposal for Board approval to evaluate both suggested locations, allowing the Committee to thoroughly assess each site before making a final recommendation on location.

Ayes: Tran, Yoh, Sheldon, Weigand, Green

INFORMATIONAL ITEM

5. Children's Water Education Festival Update

Communications Specialist Michelle Diaz provided an update on the 2027 Children's Water Education Festival (Festival). She stated the Festival would take place on April 14 and 15 at Oak Canyon Park and currently has 4,998 students registered. She indicated that Thursday's date of the 15th had reached full capacity. She emphasized that this is the 30th anniversary of the festival and staff are exploring the idea of an anniversary student contest. Ms. Diaz added that staff continues outreach efforts and coordination with Disneyland Resort, James Events Productions and WEROC.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 12:56 p.m.

_____
Van Tran, Chair

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AGENDA ITEM SUBMITTAL

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Communications/Leg. Liaison Cte.
Board of Directors

From: John Kennedy

Staff Contact: G. Ayala/A. Harasty

Budgeted: N/A
Budgeted Amount: N/A
Cost Estimate: N/A
Funding Source: N/A
Program/Line-Item No.: N/A
General Counsel Approval: N/A
Engineers/Feasibility Report: N/A
CEQA Compliance: N/A

Subject: STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

SUMMARY

Orange County Water District (OCWD) staff and consultants will provide a status update on items of interest to OCWD and discuss a visit to Sacramento to continue and build OCWD's relationships with the Orange County delegation and key legislative committee staff.

Attachments:
- Joe A. Gonsalves and Son – Edelstein Gilbert Robson & Smith October Report
- ACWA's Vision Policy Framework

RECOMMENDATION

Agendize for November 18 Board meeting: Support ACWA's Vision for Our Water Future Initiative.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Please see attached "Joe A. Gonsalves and Son – Edelstein Gilbert Robson & Smith November Report" for a state legislative update.

ACWA's Vision for Our Water Future Initiative

The initiative is to elevate water as a top priority for California's next governor, legislative leadership, and state officials. This initiative outlines a clear, solutions-focused framework to secure a resilient and reliable water system that meets the needs of California's economy, communities and environment. It is backed by the members of the largest statewide coalition of public water agencies in the nation. Please see attached "ACWA's Vision Policy Framework". ACWA requested its members send them a letter of support to help amplify the effort.

The Vision for Our Water Future priorities calls on state leaders to:
- Elevate water as a statewide priority through sustained leadership and coordinated action.
- Ensure safe and reliable water remains affordable through stable funding partnerships and streamlined investment delivery.

- Strengthen and modernize California's water infrastructure, including both built and natural systems.
- Improve regulatory, operational and scientific frameworks to support efficient project delivery and adaptive water management.

ACTIVITIES

October 21	Director Cathy Green, John Kennedy, and Alicia Harasty hosted Karla Nemeth, Executive Director of the Association of California Water Agencies for a briefing of OCWD and a tour of the GWRS

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

February 2027	OCWD consultants recommend OCWD's board president, general manager and legislative affairs liaison meet with the Orange County delegation and key legislative committee staff in Sacramento to meet newly elected officials and educate them on OCWD's operations and to update existing legislators on OCWD's activities and legislative priorities.

EDELSTEIN GILBERT ROBSON & SMITH LLC

Joe A. Gonsalves & Son
Anthony D. Gonsalves
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TO: ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

FROM: JOE A. GONSALVES AND SON
EDELSTEIN GILBERT ROBSON & SMITH LLC

SUBJECT: LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

DATE: October 27, 2026

October is a quiet month in Sacramento, especially in an election year when legislators are home in their district.

Nevertheless, there are a few developments worth noting.

Revenues Outpace Expectations, So Do Expenditures
According to the State Controller's Office, revenues exceeded expectations in September by $2.9 billion. This continues a multi-year trend of revenues exceeding expectations, largely due to increased capital gains as the AI boom continues.

However, the Controller's Office also notes "higher revenues do not tell the whole story. State spending is also exceeding projections, and we cannot lose sight of the fiscal challenges ahead." In fact, through September, total year-to-date disbursements were $11.8 billion above estimates in the 2026-27 Budget Act.

While this one report does not spell disaster for the state's finances, it does foreshadow one of the biggest issues the incoming Governor will face. The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) has warned that while the state is experiencing bumper revenues, it has built a multi-year budget that is dependent on using the state's limited reserves. Earlier this year they cautioned that a recession could trigger a $100 billion deficit.

SEIU Strikes
On October 21, thousands of state employees participated in a one-day strike organized by Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1000.

The union's contract expired in June and negotiations remain unresolved. While SEIU is seeking higher wages and other benefits related to healthcare contributions, much of the debate hinges on Governor Newsom's return to work policy. SEIU employees want more "flexibility" in their return-to-office policies. They felt strongly enough about it to return-to-work for a strike.

Mediation is scheduled to resume on October 30.



Setting the Vision

The Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) represents approximately 470 public water agencies that collectively deliver approximately 90 percent of the water used by Californians — in their homes, on their farms, and for their businesses.

Water agencies are being proactive and are on the front lines of the state's most pressing challenges — from droughts, floods, and wildfires to aging infrastructure and the need for more housing. Meaningful progress requires state partnership with local water suppliers to achieve common goals. Bold leadership from the governor is critical to setting a unified direction, accelerating action, and delivering results to prepare California for the future. Action is needed now.

Why Water Matters

Water is the foundation upon which California is built. This State is the world's fourth-largest economy, the nation's breadbasket, a global technology leader, and home to extraordinary ecosystems. None of it functions without water.

Water is not a single-sector issue. It is the backbone every other sector depends on. It determines where homes can be built, whether farms can produce, how businesses operate and grow, and whether species can survive a changing climate. A safe, reliable, and affordable water supply is one of the most important investments California can make.

ACTION IS NEEDED NOW

1. **Lead on Water**
2. **Protect Affordability**
3. **Deliver Critical Infrastructure**
4. **Modernize Water Management**

California Thrives With Water

- **Housing:** California must plan for 2.5 million new homes in the next decade. Every unit requires a reliable water supply.
- **Agriculture:** California agriculture is 12% of the state's economy, contributing $60 billion; employing over 400,000 people; and producing more than half of the nation's fruits, nuts, and vegetables. Both surface and groundwater are fundamental to California's agriculture sector.
- **Economy:** California's $4 trillion economy spans technology, innovation, manufacturing, trade, and tourism. Every dollar of it depends on a reliable water supply.
- **Environment:** California's extraordinary ecosystems — its rivers, wetlands, and floodplains — depend on the same water system managed by local water suppliers. A thriving California requires managing water to sustain both communities and ecosystems.
- **Public Health:** Water suppliers are California's first line of public health defense, delivering safe, clean drinking water to every community in the state.
- **Climate Resilience:** Climate whiplash — the swing between extreme droughts and extreme floods — is increasing, snowpack is diminishing, and wildfires are growing more severe. Water suppliers are modernizing, but they cannot do it alone.

Building A Modern System

Securing California's water future requires more than incremental fixes. It demands a fundamental shift in how the State leads, invests, and operates. The Vision for Our Water Future provides an essential framework for ensuring a resilient and reliable water system.

Funded, built, and managed for extreme conditions, our modern water system is resilient, coordinated, and flexible — meeting the needs of California's communities, economy, and environment.

- **Anchored by Backbone Infrastructure:** The State Water Project and Central Valley Project form the foundation of the statewide water system. These assets capture and manage California's highly variable hydrology and move water where and when it is needed.
- **Strengthened by Regional Resiliency:** Regional and watershed-based partnerships strengthen local water reliability under changing hydrologic conditions and during emergencies through coordinated planning, interconnected infrastructure, diversified supplies, and shared responsibility.
- **Delivered Locally:** Water is delivered by local suppliers, even when conveyed through or interconnected with statewide or regional systems. Local agencies set rates and policies — ratepayers fund approximately 85% of California's water system costs — while navigating structural constraints from Proposition 218, regulatory mandates, and permitting complexity.

Key Elements of A Modern Water System

- Designed and upgraded for the future
- Flexible and responsive to changing climate conditions
- Supported by aligned state permitting, regulatory, and investment frameworks
- Informed by technology, data, and science
- Grounded in long-term affordability

A modern water system must be resilient, coordinated, and flexible to meet California's evolving needs.



Vision for Our Water Future

VISION
FOR OUR WATER FUTURE

1 LEAD ON WATER

Recognize water as an essential resource and the infrastructure that underpins California's economy, housing growth, food production, environmental health, and community resilience. Sustained executive leadership is needed to improve water supply reliability, accelerate climate resilience, and ensure coordinated action across state government.

- **Set a Bold Water Agenda (First 100 Days):** Establish a focused statewide water agenda aligned with this Vision for Our Water Future.
- **Appoint Leaders to Deliver Results:** Appoint and empower leaders to deliver measurable outcomes.
- **Unify State Agencies:** Direct state agencies to align under unified statewide water priorities and jointly advance implementation in partnership with local, regional, and federal water managers. Designate a cabinet-level water policy executive, reporting directly to the Governor, to align agencies and organize state resources to implement California's water priorities.

2 PROTECT AFFORDABILITY

Ensure safe and reliable water remains affordable by strengthening sustained state investment and funding partnerships with local, regional, and federal agencies to address rising infrastructure, climate, and regulatory costs. California's ratepayers fund more than 85% of the system. Without predictable investment, these costs will increasingly fall on households, businesses, and farmers.

- **Secure Sustainable Water Funding:** Create a reliable sustainable state funding source for water infrastructure that provides predictable, long-term investment. This funding should support critical water infrastructure projects, environmental needs, and California's Human Right to Water while leveraging federal, regional, and local investment.
- **Accelerate Funding:** Improve funding programs and coordination so investments reach projects faster — reducing administrative delays, lowering project costs, and accelerating infrastructure delivery.
- **Integrate Investments Across Sectors:** Align state investments and integrate water infrastructure funding across energy, housing, and climate and hazard mitigation to advance multi-benefit projects and maximize federal, state, and regional investment.



3 DELIVER CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Future-proof California's critical water infrastructure to ensure reliable supplies in the face of climate change, growing economic and community demands, and escalating emergency risks. This requires strengthening the statewide water system, including both built and natural infrastructure, while advancing regional resilience to maximize systemwide reliability.

- **Strengthen the State's Water Backbone:** Upgrade, repair, and optimize California's essential backbone infrastructure — the California State Water Project and Central Valley Project.
  - **Modernize and Protect Infrastructure:** Advance a durable Delta conveyance solution, strengthen Delta levees, safeguard critical infrastructure from subsidence and seismic risk, and upgrade system technologies — including Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations, snowpack measurement, and remote monitoring control.
  - **Improve Coordinated Operations:** Integrate operations of the California State Water Project and Central Valley Project to increase system flexibility, expand the storage and movement of water, and enhance water supply reliability.
- **Safeguard Colorado River Water Supplies:** Protect California's Colorado River allocation, consistent with the State's legal entitlements and the efforts of the Colorado River Board of California.
- **Empower Regional Water Solutions:** Champion regional and watershed-based solutions. State policy should empower regions with the tools, flexibility, and investment needed to advance regional planning, partnerships, and projects that diversify water supplies, strengthen system connectivity and operational efficiency, and restore ecosystem functions to ensure reliable water supplies.

4 MODERNIZE WATER MANAGEMENT

Improve California's regulatory and operational systems so water projects can move forward reliably and efficiently, infrastructure can be operated more flexibly, and agencies can respond more rapidly to changing conditions. California's regulatory framework should deliver clear, coordinated decisions grounded in the best available science, while maintaining environmental protections, public transparency, and California's existing water rights priority system.

- **Improve Permitting Performance:** Enhance the clarity, coordination, and efficiency of state permitting processes to accelerate infrastructure and operational improvements; eliminate avoidable costs; and ensure state and local agencies deliver timely, accountable results.
  - **Integrate Permit Requirements:** Integrate requirements and processes across regulatory agencies to eliminate redundancy and inconsistency.
  - **Enhance Regulatory Certainty:** Establish transparent procedures, clear criteria for permit approval, and accountable timelines for agency decisions — developed in direct partnership with water suppliers.
  - **Streamline Pathways:** Create efficient pathways to advance multi-benefit, climate-resilient water supply projects.
- **Modernize Water Operations:** Advance operational approaches that reflect changing climate realities to improve water supply reliability across environmental, agricultural, and urban sectors. This may include coordinated reservoir management, flexible diversion rules tied to real-time hydrology, accelerated groundwater recharge and conjunctive use, expanded water transfers, and other adaptive strategies.
- **Strengthen Water Data and Science:** Invest in integrated, science-based statewide data systems and technology that improve transparency, inform real-time decisions, and strengthen regulatory and operational performance to increase efficiency and better manage water resources.

VISION
FOR OUR WATER FUTURE

Vision for Our Water Future is an initiative of the Association of California Water Agencies, representing approximately 470 public water agencies in California.

ACWA
Association of California Water Agencies

www.acwa.com/vision

AGENDA ITEM SUBMITTAL

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Communications/Leg. Liaison Cte.
Board of Directors

From: John Kennedy

Staff Contact: G. Ayala/A. Harasty

Budgeted: N/A
Budgeted Amount: N/A
Cost Estimate: N/A
Funding Source: N/A
Program/Line-Item No.: N/A
General Counsel Approval: N/A
Engineers/Feasibility Report: N/A
CEQA Compliance: N/A

Subject: FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

SUMMARY

The Orange County Water District's (OCWD) federal advocate and staff will brief the committee on funding for OCWD's projects and legislation of interest to OCWD.

Attachments:
- ENS Resources November Update
- Federal Bill Matrix
- H.R. 4144 the Groundwater Rise and Infrastructure Preparedness Act of 2025

RECOMMENDATION

Agendize for November 18 Board meeting: Take a support position on H.R. 4144 the Groundwater Rise and Infrastructure Preparedness Act of 2025

Please see attached "ENS Resources November Update," for current updates on federal items of interest to OCWD.

Bill Number	Brief Description	Recommendation
H.R. 4144 the Groundwater Rise and Infrastructure Preparedness Act of 2025 Rep. Kevin Mullin D-CA-15 Rep. Andrew Garbarino R-NY-02	The bill requires the U.S. Geological Survey to map future groundwater rise along coastal areas and conduct a study on its impacts to infrastructure and public health.	Support

H.R. 4144 the Groundwater Rise and Infrastructure Preparedness Act of 2025

H.R 4144 was introduced by Representative Kevin Mullin (D-CA-15) and Representative Andrew Garbarino (R-NY-02) as a bi-partisan bill in 2025. Congressmember Dave Min's staff (D-CA-47) asked if OCWD would support the bill as he recently became a co-sponsor.

OCWD's legislative consultant (Eric Sapirstein) does not know of any entities opposed to the bill at the time of this writing. This bill is endorsed by American Coastal Coalition, American Planning Association, Association of State Floodplain Managers, National State Geographic Information Council, National Resources Defense Council, One Shoreline, Restore America's Estuaries, San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR), and Save the Bay.

According to the authors of the bill, in coastal regions throughout the United States, rising sea levels and extreme rainfall are causing groundwater levels to rise, creating problems for which few communities are prepared. Higher groundwater tables and saltwater intrusion can damage infrastructure, spread underground contamination, increase flooding risk, and contaminate freshwater supplies. The potential exposure and cost could exceed that of hazards from sea level rise alone.

Despite these risks, few governments and private entities are paying attention. State and regional adaptation plans, as well as FEMA flood maps, do not account for groundwater rise. This is particularly concerning since groundwater rise could render levees and seawalls ineffective.

To address these gaps, the Groundwater Rise and Infrastructure Preparedness Act will direct the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to:

1. Map and forecast future groundwater rise: USGS would develop maps that depict groundwater rise through 2100 for all coastal areas in the continental United States. The bill also directs the USGS to recommend improvements in research infrastructure for more accurate forecasting.

2. Study the impacts to infrastructure and public health: USGS would partner with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to examine the effects of groundwater rise on infrastructure (e.g., roads, utilities, sewers) and public health (e.g., pollutants and drinking water) and provide recommendations for mitigation strategies.

ACTIVITIES

October 15	Alicia Harasty met with James Black, District Director, Office of Congressman Min to discuss a future sea water barrier in Seal Beach
October 26	Emma Consoli**,** Legislative Assistant, Office of U.S. Congressman Derek Tran met with Alicia Harasty for a general OCWD briefing and tour of the GWRS

TO: Alicia Harasty

FROM: Eric Sapirstein

DATE: October 27, 2026

SUBJECT: Washington Update

Just one week before the mid-term elections and federal activities over the past weeks continued to be limited to setting the agenda for the Lame Duck Session while the House and Senate remain on recess. Both the House and Senate return to work November 9 when the Lame Duck Session is scheduled to begin. The only true legislative action since our last update, was an agreement reached by key Senate committees to reform the federal permitting processes under the Clean Water, Federal Energy Power, National Environmental Protection, and Endangered Species Acts.

The following summarizes the status of pending legislative matters of interest to the Orange County Water District.

Designation of PFAS as a Hazardous Substance

As updated previously, an August judicial decision affirmed that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has authority to designate PFAS as a hazardous substance under CERCLA. The decision means that the water sector's liability exposure for potential cleanup litigation is in place due to CERCLA's strict liability regime. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce did not seek

an appeal of the decision within the 45 day deadline. Therefore, the designation is formally in place. The remaining avenue to challenge the agency's designation is an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. Any appeal would need to be made by November 16, 2026. Whether the U.S. Chamber of Commerce would file an appeal is an open question.

Fiscal Year 2027 Appropriations

Passage of the twelve spending bills before the expiration of the Continuing Resolution (CR) on December 11 is unlikely given the numerous disputes over funding levels between Congress and the Administration. If this outlook holds, a second CR would be necessary to extend funding to avoid a government shutdown. It is also possible that the Senate and House would package several bills into "minibuses" to move as many bills as possible to the president for enactment. The outstanding spending bills would likely be addressed in January. If this approach is relied upon, EPA and USBR budgets could be included in the measure because of the number of congressionally directed funding the measures these bills traditionally carry that Members would like to see enacted.

Permitting Reform: Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act of 2026

The Senate Committees on Energy and Natural Resources and Environment and Public Works leadership reached a negotiated agreement to modernize the federal Clean Water, Endangered Species, and Federal Power Acts' permitting provisions The key rewrites to the Clean Water and Endangered Species Acts' permitting provisions include:

- Mandating ten year NPDES permits replacing the current five year term;
- Imposing statutory deadlines for the finalization of NEPA Environmental Impact Statements and Environmental Assessments, related Record of Decision(s), and requiring internet portals for reviews of status;

- Reducing the timeframe for ESA consultations to expedite reviews;
- Limiting judicial challenges to studies to entities that submitted "substantive" public comments;
- Limiting federal agency ability to change or overturn permits issued to nonfederal projects;
- Broadening the use of categorical exclusions from reviews if project received reviews under state or tribal environmental reviews;
- Preventing utilities from imposing costs of grid expansion on ratepayers related to data center construction; and
- Limiting the water quality certification to the project's impact and any project waiver or certification is deemed that the project meets water quality requirements.

The bill is slated for a Senate cloture vote that would, if passed, allow for floor debate the week of November 9. If Senate passage occurs, the House would be forced to either accept the Senate bill or modify the measure. If the latter occurs, it is questionable whether time would exist to secure final passage through the Senate before Congress adjourns for the year some time in December. While the measure is anticipated to pass the Senate, significant opposition from the states (including California) and environmental groups over the streamlining of environmental reviews and limitations on judicial challenges to permit approvals could jeopardize final passage.

Lame Duck Session Outlook

When Congress returns after the mid-term elections on November 9, the Lame Duck Session agenda will be significant. Whether the session is more promise than performance will depend on the election returns. Which party controls the Senate and House and by what margins will likely dictate how much legislating can be accomplished. Nonetheless, the known legislative issues include a number of "must do" measures including:

- Fiscal Year 2027 spending bills;
- Water Resources Development Act;
- Permitting Reform;
- Farm Bill;
- Data Centers/AI restrictions;
- PFAS Liability Protections; and
- Omnibus Public Lands Bill (water supply).

November 2026 OCWD Federal Bill Matrix

Summary of Pending Legislation and Regulations

FEDERAL - 119TH CONGRESS

H.R. 4144

Groundwater Rise and Infrastructure Preparedness Act of 2025

○ No Priority ○ No Stance

AI Summary: The bill requires the U.S. Geological Survey to map future groundwater rise along coastal areas and conduct a study on its impacts to infrastructure and public health.

Introduced: 06/25/2025

Sponsor: Rep. Kevin Mullin CA-15

Latest Actions:

06/25/2025 - Referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources.

06/25/2025 - Introduced in House

Committees: House Natural Resources Committee

FEDERAL - 119TH CONGRESS

H.R. 3717

Golden Mussel Eradication and Control Act of 2025

○ No Priority ○ No Stance

AI Summary: The bill establishes a demonstration program to prevent, monitor, and eradicate the golden mussel in U.S. waters, including the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and authorizes $15 million annually from 2026 to 2030 for implementation.

Introduced: 06/04/2025

Sponsor: Rep. Josh Harder CA-09

Latest Actions:

09/10/2026 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries.

06/05/2025 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment.

06/04/2025 - Referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Nat...

Committees: House Natural Resources Committee, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee, House Natural Resources Committee Water, Wildlife and Fisheries Subcommittee

FEDERAL - 119TH CONGRESS

S. 5368

Water Cyber Shield Act of 2026

○ No Priority ○ No Stance

AI Summary: The Water Cyber Shield Act of 2026 establishes cybersecurity requirements for drinking water and wastewater systems, mandating risk assessments and emergency response plans. It authorizes $300 million annually from 2027 through 2032 to assist these systems in building resilience and mitigating vulnerabilities.

Introduced: 08/07/2026

Sponsor: Sen. Adam Schiff CA

Latest Actions:

08/10/2026 - POLITICO Pro - A pair of Democratic senators on Monday unveiled legislation to fortify the cybersecurity of U.S. water...

08/07/2026 - Read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

08/07/2026 - Introduced in Senate

Committees: Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

Why it matters: S. 5368 would impose new mandate on the water sector to address perceived cybersecurity deficiencies in facility operations and preparedness against attacks. Penalties for failure to comply with mandates provided. Enforcement of program mandates would be with USEPA, but states could seek delegation of authority.

Outlook: S. 5368 could be considered during the Lame Duck Session; perhaps added to WRDA given the Senate WRDA provisions addressing water infrastructure. However, it also likely that action on the measure would be delayed until next year when a new Congress convenes.

FEDERAL - 119TH CONGRESS

S. 4603

Golden Mussel Eradication and Control Act of 2026

○ No Priority ○ No Stance

AI Summary: The bill establishes a demonstration program to prevent, monitor, and eradicate the golden mussel in affected U.S. waters, including the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and authorizes $15 million annually from 2026 to 2030 for implementation.

Introduced: 05/20/2026

Sponsor: Sen. Adam Schiff CA

Latest Actions:

05/20/2026 - Read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

05/20/2026 - Introduced in Senate

Committees: Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

Why it matters: S.4603 is the Senate approach to the investigation and mitigation efforts to address the invasive Golden Mussel that threatens wastewater and water agencies' infrastructure. S. 4603 is similar to H.R.3717 introduced by Harder (D-CA).

Outlook: Senate action on the bill is considered highly likely either as a stand alone measure or incorporation into a broader Water Resources Development Act or Clean Water/Safe Drinking Water Acts reauthorization.

FEDERAL - 119TH CONGRESS

H.R. 9497

Water Resources Development Act of 2026

Pro Title: WRDA Revisions

○ No Priority ○ No Stance

AI Summary: The Water Resources Development Act of 2026 authorizes improvements to U.S. rivers and harbors, establishes new offices within the Corps of Engineers for inland navigation, water supply, technical assistance, and alternative delivery methods, and includes provisions for contaminated sediment remediation, categorical permissions, and electronic permit tracking.

Introduced: 06/29/2026

Sponsor: Rep. Sam Graves MO-06

Latest Actions:

09/17/2026 - Received in the Senate.

09/16/2026 - Motion to reconsider laid on the table Agreed to without objection.

09/16/2026 - On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended Agreed to by the Yeas and Nays: (2/3 req...

Committees: House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee

Why it matters: The House WRDA bill is a limited measure focusing exclusively on USACE programs and projects unlike the Senate version. The House bill will likely be modified as part of a House Senate conference, but will retain environmental infrastructure authorizations, including OCWD's authorization.

Outlook: WRDA is considered one of a handful bills that Congress must pass before the end of the year. Therefore, it is highly likely a final bill will be sent to the president for enactment.

FEDERAL - 119TH CONGRESS

S. 4949

Water Resources Development Act of 2026

○ No Priority ○ No Stance

AI Summary: The Water Resources Development Act of 2026 authorizes improvements to U.S. rivers and harbors, promotes water resource conservation, and includes provisions for studies, deauthorizations, and infrastructure development across multiple regions.

Introduced: 07/13/2026

Sponsor: Sen. Shelley Moore Capito WV

Latest Actions:

07/15/2026 - POLITICO Pro - The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee unanimously approved legislation Wednesday to authori...

07/15/2026 - Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 457.

07/15/2026 - Committee on Environment and Public Works. Reported by Senator Capito with an amendment in the nature ...

Committees: Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

Why it matters: WRDA is a must pass bill to authorize U.S. Army Corps of Engineers programs and projects. As such it serves as a vehicle to address environmental infrastructure project authorizations. Because the S. 4949 includes provisions to renew USEPA's water infrastructure programs like the SRF program and makes changes to eligible project activities including funding of PFAS treatment infrastructure needs, the bill is considered the only legislative pathway to address water infrastructure needs this session.

Outlook: Final passage of a compromise bill is expected during the Lame Duck Session and then sent to the president. Authorization of future OCWD water infrastructure projects is expected to remain in the final legislation.

FEDERAL - 119TH CONGRESS

H.R. 2766

○ No Priority ● Support

AI Summary: The bill requires the Office of Management and Budget to issue guidance recognizing special districts as local governments for federal financial assistance eligibility, with agencies required to implement and report on compliance within specified timeframes.

Introduced: 04/09/2025

Sponsor: Rep. Pat Fallon TX-04

Latest Actions:

03/18/2026 - Ordered to be Reported (Amended) by the Yeas and Nays: 32 - 8.

03/18/2026 - Committee Consideration and Mark-up Session Held

04/09/2025 - Referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

Committees: House Oversight and Government Reform Committee

FEDERAL - 119TH CONGRESS

H.R. 3184

PFAS Alternatives Act

○ No Priority ○ No Stance

AI Summary: The bill establishes a research and training program to develop PFAS-free turnout gear for firefighters, supporting innovation and safer protective equipment through grants and partnerships.

Introduced: 05/05/2025

Sponsor: Rep. Debbie Dingell MI-06

Latest Actions:

05/06/2025 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment.

05/05/2025 - Referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and in addition to the Committee on Transp...

05/05/2025 - Referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and in addition to the Committee on Transp...

Committees: House Science, Space and Technology Committee, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee

FEDERAL - 119TH CONGRESS

H.R. 6075

Water Infrastructure Modernization Act of 2025

○ No Priority ○ No Stance

AI Summary: The Water Infrastructure Modernization Act of 2025 reauthorizes a pilot program for alternative water source projects by defining intelligent water infrastructure technology and expanding grant uses to include engineering, design, construction, and implementation of advanced digital and monitoring technologies.

Introduced: 11/18/2025

Sponsor: Rep. Rob Bresnahan PA-08

Latest Actions:

11/19/2025 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment.

11/18/2025 - Referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

11/18/2025 - Introduced in House

Committees: House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee

FEDERAL - 119TH CONGRESS

H.R. 6626

PFAS Accountability Act of 2025

○ No Priority ○ No Stance

AI Summary: The PFAS Accountability Act of 2025 establishes a federal cause of action and medical monitoring remedy for individuals significantly exposed to PFAS, holding manufacturers accountable and encouraging research into their health effects.

Introduced: 12/11/2025

Sponsor: Rep. Madeleine Dean PA-04

Latest Actions:

12/11/2025 - Referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, fo...

12/11/2025 - Referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, fo...

12/11/2025 - Introduced in House

Committees: House Energy and Commerce Committee, House Judiciary Committee

FEDERAL - 119TH CONGRESS

H.R. 7845

DROUGHT Act of 2026

○ No Priority ○ No Stance

AI Summary: The DROUGHT Act of 2026 modifies the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act to limit federal assistance for drought-affected water projects to 90% of total project costs, prioritizing projects in severely drought-affected states or counties, low-income areas, or those providing significant public health, environmental, or water reliability benefits.

Introduced: 03/05/2026

Sponsor: Rep. Scott Peters CA-50

Latest Actions:

03/06/2026 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment.

03/05/2026 - Referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Ene...

03/05/2026 - Referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Ene...

Committees: House Energy and Commerce Committee, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee

FEDERAL - 119TH CONGRESS

H.R. 1267

Water Systems PFAS Liability Protection Act

● High Priority ● Support

AI Summary: The Water Systems PFAS Liability Protection Act exempts water and wastewater treatment facilities from CERCLA liability for releases of certain perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, provided they comply with applicable laws and regulations.

Introduced: 02/12/2025

Sponsor: Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez WA-03

Latest Actions:

02/12/2025 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment.

02/12/2025 - Referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation an...

02/12/2025 - Referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation an...

Committees: House Energy and Commerce Committee, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee

Why it matters: H.R. 1267 represents a marker bill to allow for the House to consider the issue of water sector CERCLA liability due to the USEPA's action to designate PFAS as a hazardous substance under CERCLA that exposes water

agencies to potential liability simply because water supplies contain PFAS and treatment residuals that must be disposed of could become subject to third party efforts to attach responsibility for cleanups.

Outlook: Both the House and Senate Members with jurisdiction over CERCLA are have expressed concerns over the potential for water sector liability. Committee consideration of legislation to provide liability protections for water sector could be considered as part of a larger water bill renewing the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water Acts later this spring.

FEDERAL - 119TH CONGRESS

H.R. 2344

Water ISAC Threat Protection Act

○ No Priority ○ No Stance

AI Summary: The bill establishes a program to enhance drinking water and wastewater system preparedness and resilience by supporting participation in the Water Information Sharing and Analysis Center, offsetting associated costs, and improving threat monitoring and response tools.

Introduced: 03/25/2025

Sponsor: Rep. Jan Schakowsky IL-09

Latest Actions:

03/25/2025 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment.

03/25/2025 - Referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Ene...

03/25/2025 - Referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Ene...

Committees: House Energy and Commerce Committee, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee

Why It Matters: The bill would renew the core federal program that promotes collaboration between the federal government and the water sector to support improved understanding of cyber threats.

Outlook: Since many of the provisions of H.R. 2344 are included in the Senate WRDA legislation (S. 4949), it is anticipated that the House will negotiate on H.R. 2344 with the Senate as part of any final agreement to pass WRDA 2026.

FEDERAL - 119TH CONGRESS

H.R. 3898

PERMIT Act

○ No Priority ○ No Stance

AI Summary: The PERMIT Act amends the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to streamline water quality standards, improve transparency in criteria development, reduce regulatory burdens, and enhance permitting efficiency for infrastructure and agricultural projects.

Introduced: 06/11/2025

Sponsor: Rep. Mike Collins GA-10

Latest Actions:

12/15/2025 - Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

12/11/2025 - Motion to reconsider laid on the table Agreed to without objection.

12/11/2025 - On passage Passed by the Yeas and Nays: 221 - 205 (Roll no. 330).

Committees: House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

Why it matters: H.R. 3898 is important because it provides for a comprehensive reform of Clean Water Act permitting and compliance mandates. The bill would, if enacted, statutorily provide an explicit exemption for groundwater recharge from being subject to Waters of the U.S. regulation. It would also mandate ten year NPDES permits.

Outlook: H.R. 3898 is pending in the Senate. It will become part of any final House Senate permit reform bill that is agreed upon by both chambers during the Lame Duck Session. However, if agreement cannot be reached on permit reforms for all projects (i.e., clean energy and fossil fuel projects) the prospects for final passage of H.R 3898s' provisions decrease.

FEDERAL - 119TH CONGRESS

S. 3590

Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Act of 2026

○ No Priority ○ No Stance

Summary: The bill would provide limited renewal of expired provisions addressing natural disasters and cybersecurity programs. Under the bill, $50 million would be authorized to support large water agencies' projects to respond to natural disaster resilience needs and cybersecurity threat reduction efforts.

Introduced: 01/07/2026

Sponsor: Sen. Lisa Blunt Rochester DE

Latest Actions:

01/07/2026 - Read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

01/07/2026 - Introduced in Senate

Committees: Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

Why it matters: S. 3590 represents a water sector directed resilience initiative that stands in addition to general cybersecurity legislation that is pending. As introduced, the bill would renew several federal assistance programs for small and large water and wastewater agencies to address climate related impacts to infrastructure and cyber attacks on such systems. The legislation enjoys support from the water sector including AMWA, ACWA, CASA, AWWA and NACWA.

Outlook: The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works is unlikely to consider the legislation given the approval of WRDA 2026 that contains provisions addressing water infrastructure resilience within WRDA 2026.

FEDERAL - 119TH CONGRESS

S. 322

Improving Atmospheric River Forecasts Act

○ No Priority ● Support

AI Summary: The bill establishes a program to enhance atmospheric river forecasts through improved modeling, data assimilation, and reconnaissance, aiming to reduce economic and human losses via more accurate and actionable warnings.

Introduced: 01/29/2025

Sponsor: Sen. Alex Padilla CA

Latest Actions:

01/29/2025 - Read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. (Sponsor introductor...

01/29/2025 - Introduced in Senate

Committees: Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee

Why It Matters: The legislation would further clarify the use of advanced forecasting of atmospheric rivers relying intelligent water technologies and digitalization of the data to provide water managers and the public with improved understanding of the impacts of such events. The bill would include the authorization of the use of federal planes to better inform on the nature and intensity of such storm events.

Outlook: Prospects for Senate committee consideration and action are uncertain. However, the bill could become part of a larger water resources bill that might be developed during the final months of the 119th Congress.

FEDERAL - 119TH CONGRESS

S. 3738

MORE WATER Act

○ No Priority ● Support

AI Summary: The MORE WATER Act reauthorizes the large-scale water recycling and reuse program, establishes a Water Conveyance Improvement Program, and provides funding for projects that deliver water supply, safe drinking water for low-income communities, and environmental benefits.

Introduced: 01/29/2026

Sponsor: Sen. Alex Padilla CA

Latest Actions:

09/17/2026 - Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 652.

09/17/2026 - Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Reported by Senator Lee with an amendment in the nature of ...

07/29/2026 - Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Ordered to be reported with an amendment in the nature of a...

Committees: Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Water and Power Subcommittee

Why it matters: S. 3738 would extend the authorization of the expiring large water recycling projects ($500 million or greater) program. Authorized funding would be $450 million and the program would be extended until 2032. It would also modify the the Title XVI program increasing federal cost share to $50 million, providing $550 million funding authorization and extending program to 2032. A new program authorizing $250 million to support environmental and habitat restoration projects would be available to support the Great Salt Lake and other inland lakes (priority on Central Utah Project.

Outlo0k: The legislation was approved by the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. It is now positioned to be debated by the Senate either as a standalone bill or as part of an end of session omnibus water bill for the western U.S.

FEDERAL - 119TH CONGRESS

S. 4153

Forever Chemical Regulation and Accountability Act of 2026

○ No Priority ○ No Stance

AI Summary: The Forever Chemical Regulation and Accountability Act of 2026 establishes a phased approach to eliminate nonessential uses and environmental releases of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, with scientific review and public input guiding essential use designations.

Introduced: 03/19/2026

Sponsor: Sen. Dick Durbin IL

Latest Actions:

03/19/2026 - Read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works. (text: CR S1370-1380)

03/19/2026 - Introduced in Senate

Committees: Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

FEDERAL - 119TH CONGRESS

S. 1118

Water Intelligence, Security, and Cyber Threat Protection Act of 2025

○ No Priority ○ No Stance

AI Summary: The Water Intelligence, Security, and Cyber Threat Protection Act of 2025 establishes a program to enhance drinking water and wastewater system preparedness by supporting participation in the Water Information Sharing and Analysis Center, offsetting associated costs, and improving threat monitoring and response tools.

Introduced: 03/25/2025

Sponsor: Sen. Ed Markey MA

Latest Actions:

03/25/2025 - Read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

03/25/2025 - Introduced in Senate

Committees: Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

FEDERAL - PROPOSED RULE

Rescission of Regulatory Determinations and Removal of Related Provisions for Four PFAS Substances (PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA (GenX), ...

Office of Water | Environmental Protection Agency

The proposed rule would rollback the Biden era rulemakings to implement drinking water standards for several addtional PFAS family chemicals and rely upon a hazard mixture instead of a chemical by chemical drinking water standard as required by the Safe Drinking Water Act. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is expected to repropose the rules taking into account statutory requirements and current science. EPA is proposing to rescind its regulatory determinations to regulate four per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)—perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS), perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), hexafluoropropylene oxide dimer acid and its ammonium salt (HFPO-DA, commonly known as GenX chemicals), and mixtures of these three PFAS plus perfluorobutane sulfonic acid (PFBS)—under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). The EPA is also proposing to rescind all associated regulatory provisions currently codified in the EPA's 2024 PFAS National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (NPDWR) exclusive to these PFAS that were promulgated pursuant to the regulatory determinations that the EPA is now proposing to rescind, including the final Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) that would have required monitoring, and where necessary, treatment by public water systems (PWSs). This proposed action is necessary to correct the unlawful procedure under which these regulations were promulgated. Under the EPA's prior interpretation, the EPA proposed and finalized regulatory determinations and regulations for these PFAS simultaneously and in tandem. Under the best reading of the statute, the EPA is not authorized to take such actions simultaneously and therefore, the Agency proposes to rescind those regulatory determinations, Maximum Contaminant Level Goals (MCLGs) and associated portions of the 2024 PFAS NPDWR. The EPA is seeking public comment on this proposal.

Last Updated: 05/20/2026

Comments Due: 07/20/2026

Legal Authority: 42 U.S.C. 300f

Docket: EPA-HQ-OW-2025-0654

RIN: 2040-AG53

CFR: 40 CFR 469

FEDERAL - NOTICE

Draft Guidance for Reducing Risk From Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctane Sulfonic Acid (PFOS) in Biosolids; Establ...

Environmental Protection Agency

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is making available a draft memorandum that would, if finalized, provide guidance to operators of wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) and related facilities, landowners and farmers, State and Tribal water agencies, and the public on ways to reduce potential risks posed by perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS) in biosolids, as well as seeking feedback on potential next steps. The EPA is soliciting public comments on the draft memorandum and next steps for 60 days. This draft guidance memorandum does not have the force and effect of law, nor does it bind the public in any way. This draft guidance memorandum cannot be relied on by any person in litigation against the United States. The intent of draft guidance memorandum is to provide non-binding or voluntary recommendations for how to mitigate risks from PFOA and PFOS in sewage sludge and biosolids based on information currently available to the EPA.

Last Updated: 07/06/2026

Comments Due: 09/04/2026

Docket: EPA-HQ-OW-2026-2509, FRL-13318-01-OW

I

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4144

To require the Director of the United States Geological Survey to map future groundwater rise and conduct a study on its potential impacts to infrastructure and public health, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 25, 2025

Mr. MULLIN (for himself and Mr. GARBARINO) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

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A BILL

To require the Director of the United States Geological Survey to map future groundwater rise and conduct a study on its potential impacts to infrastructure and public health, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as ''the Groundwater Rise and Infrastructure Preparedness Act of 2025''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Sea level has risen 5 to 6 inches over the last 30 years along the United States Coastline and is expected to rise by an additional 8 to 15 inches by 2050.

(2) The response of shallow, coastal groundwater levels to sea level rise will vary across different areas, complicating efforts by State, local, and Tribal policymakers to plan for the future.

(3) Groundwater rise presents multiple threats to infrastructure and human health, such as increased flooding and soil liquefaction risk, destabilization of underground infrastructure and building foundations, contamination of drinking water, damage to sewage systems, and mobilization of underground contamination, but there has not been a national assessment of these potential impacts.

SEC. 3. GROUNDWATER RISE.

(a) NATIONAL GROUNDWATER RISE FORECAST.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director shall establish a program to carry out the following:

(A) Develop maps of groundwater rise for all coastal areas in the continental United States, building upon existing and prior coastal

groundwater mapping efforts, that depict future groundwater rise with decadal projections through 2100, and associated changes in flooding risk and saltwater intrusion.

(B) Identify priority areas that are at increased risk of flooding due to groundwater rise.

(C) Make recommendations to Congress regarding the resources and improved research infrastructure that may be needed to develop the following:

(i) More accurate projections of average future groundwater rise and saltwater intrusion due to sea level change.

(ii) Extreme event projections that account for tides, seasonal rainfall, and storms.

(2) WEBSITE.—The Director shall establish a public website that displays the maps developed pursuant to paragraph (1), as well as other relevant information critical for use by community planners and emergency managers.

(3) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Direc-

tor $5,000,000 for fiscal years 2025 and 2026 to carry out this subsection.

(b) GROUNDWATER RISE IMPACT STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than six months after the completion of the activities under subsection (a), the Director, in consultation with the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and heads of other Federal agencies with relevant expertise, shall seek to enter into an agreement with the National Academies to conduct a two-phase study on the potential impacts of groundwater rise on infrastructure and public health.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The study under subsection (a) should, at a minimum—

(A) consider the results of the groundwater rise forecast developed in accordance with subsection (a); and

(B) provide recommendations for actions by the executive branch and Congress to mitigate the potential impacts of groundwater rise.

(3) PHASE I STUDY ON IMPACTS TO INFRASTRUCTURE.—The phase I study under paragraph (1) should, at a minimum, consider the following:

(A) The potential exposure of infrastructure in shallow coastal areas to groundwater rise, including roads, buildings, underground utility lines, parking structures, sewers, water distribution pipes, and storm drains, and the costs associated with such.

(B) Changes in soil liquefaction risk during earthquakes due to projected groundwater rise.

(4) PHASE II STUDY ON IMPACTS TO PUBLIC HEALTH.—The phase II study under paragraph (1) should, at a minimum, consider the following:

(A) The potential of groundwater rise to mobilize below-ground contamination and the associated risks to human health.

(B) An evaluation of drinking water supplies and agricultural areas that will be threatened by groundwater rise and associated saltwater intrusion.

(5) REPORT.—Not later than three years after initiating the study under paragraph (1), the Direc-

tor shall submit to Congress a report summarizing the findings of such study.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) DIRECTOR.—The term ''Director'' means the Director of the United States Geological Survey.

(2) GROUNDWATER RISE.—The term ''groundwater rise'' means the upward movement of the shallow, coastal water table due to short or long-term fluctuations in sea level.

(3) NATIONAL ACADEMIES.—The term ''National Academies'' means the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

○

AGENDA ITEM SUBMITTAL

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Communications/Leg. Liaison Cte.
Board of Directors

From: John Kennedy

Staff Contacts: G. Ayala/D. Berch

Budgeted: No
Budgeted Amount: $0
Cost Estimate: $40,000
Funding Source: Gen. Reserves
Program/Line Item No.: N/A
General Counsel Approval: N/A
Engineers/Feasibility Report: N/A
CEQA Compliance: N/A

Subject: MULTIPURPOSE CENTER FEASIBILITY STUDY AMENDMENT OR SITE SELECTION

SUMMARY

MOCA Systems, Inc. (MOCA) is conducting a feasibility study for a new multipurpose center on the OCWD campus. Under the current scope, MOCA evaluated two potential sites and recommended Site 1 to pursue the remaining evaluation. At its October 8, 2026 meeting, the Committee directed staff to request a cost estimate from MOCA to fully evaluate both sites. MOCA estimates the additional work at $40,000. Staff request that the Committee either authorize the amendment to evaluate both sites or select a preferred site for the study to proceed under the original scope of work at no additional cost.

Attachment: MOCA Proposal for Amendment No. 1

RECOMMENDATION

Agendize for November 18 Board meeting: Committee to select one of the following options:

1. Authorize an additional $40,000 under the agreement with MOCA to fully evaluate both sites; OR

2. Select a preferred site for MOCA to complete the feasibility study under the original scope of work.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

MOCA evaluated two sites on the OCWD campus:

Site 1 sits within the plant, in the parking lot of the former laboratory building near the Water Production and Maintenance Building. This location would bring visitors into the center of campus, close to the GWRS.

The latest iteration of Site 2 sits in the administrative parking lot, next to the Lab Building. This location would place visitors at one end of campus and would require

removing parking stalls. The building would also need to fit with the architecture of the Administrative Building and could affect views of the Lab Building.

MOCA continues to strongly recommend Site 1 based on overall function, cohesion with nearby buildings, staff impact and safety.

At its October 8, 2026 meeting, the Committee directed staff to request a cost estimate from MOCA to fully evaluate both sites. MOCA estimates the additional work at $40,000, which would increase the agreement total from $143,400 to $183,400. Staff present two options for the Committee's consideration:

Option 1 – Evaluate both sites. The Committee would recommend that the Board authorize an additional $40,000 under the MOCA agreement, and MOCA would complete the full study for both sites. This would give the Board more information before selecting a site but would increase the study cost.

Option 2 – Select a preferred site. The Committee would recommend Site 1 or Site 2 to the Board, and upon Board approval, MOCA would complete the original scope of work for that site within the current agreement. This option would maintain the initial study budget.

Selecting a site at this stage does not commit OCWD to a future project or construction.

Staff expect MOCA to complete the study by summer 2027. The Tour Ad Hoc Committee will continue to meet throughout the study, and staff will update the Board as needed.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS

4/15/26, R26-4-65: Award of a Professional Services Agreement to MOCA Systems, Inc. for a Multipurpose Center Feasibility Study for an amount not to exceed $143,400.

12/17/25, R25-12-207: Authorize issuance of Request for Proposals for a Multipurpose Center Feasibility Study

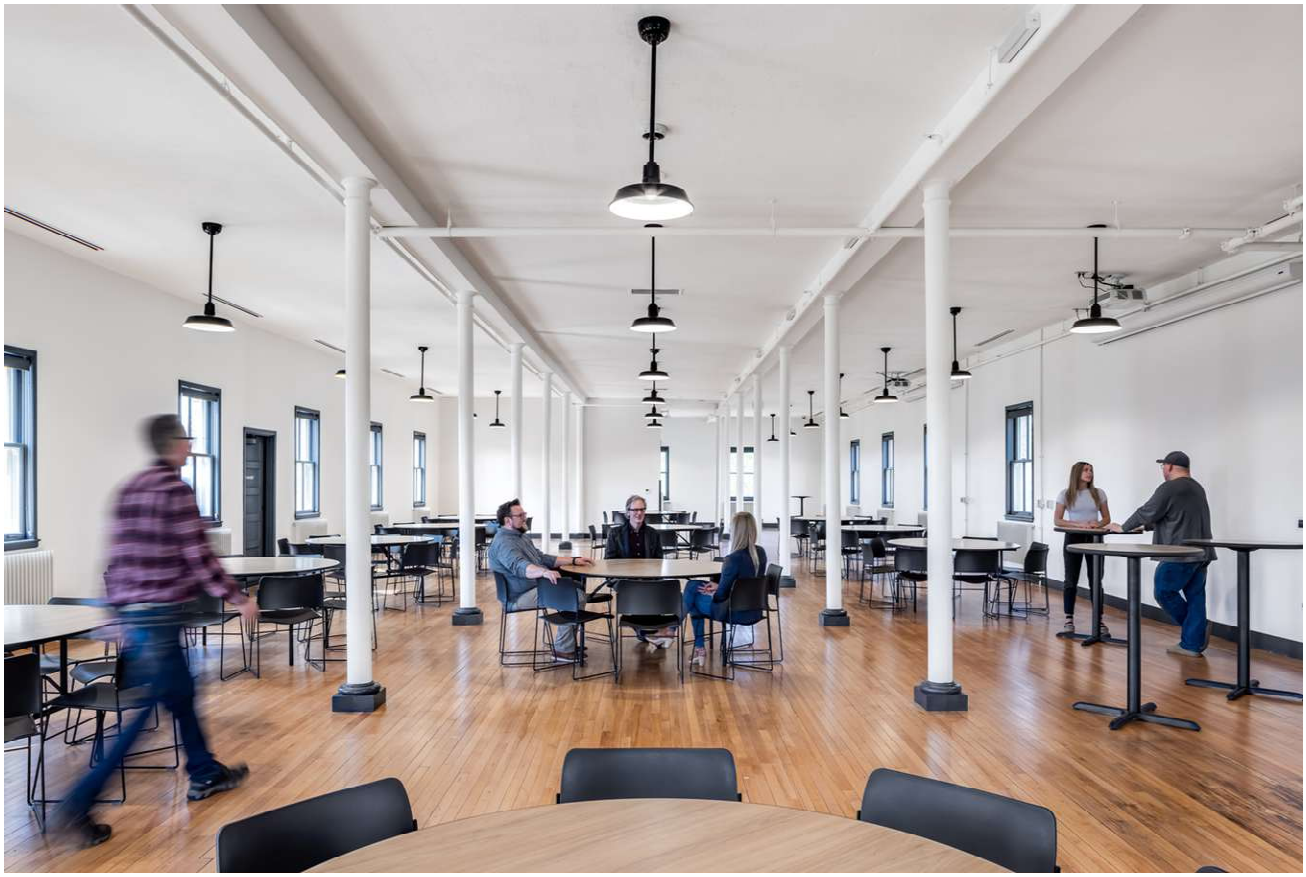
ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

PREPARED FOR
OC Water District
18700 Ward Street
Fountain Valley, CA 92708

PROJECT
Multi-Purpose Center
Feasibility Study,
Contract Amendment 1

PREPARED BY
MOCA Services

SUBMITTED ON
October 16, 2026



Plank Museum and Visitor's Center | St. Paul, Minnesota

MOCA SERVICES

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October 16, 2026

Chris Olsen
Executive Director of Engineering and Water Resources
Orange County Water District
18700 Ward Street
Fountain Valley, CA 92708
714.378.3232

RE: ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT – MULTI-PURPOSE CENTER FEASIBILITY STUDY – CONTRACT AMENDMENT 1

Dear Chris:

We sincerely appreciate the opportunity for MOCA Services (MOCA) to continue providing additional support to the Orange County Water District Multi-Purpose Center Feasibility Study Project. Per the Leg Com Committee meeting held on October 8, 2026, we are providing within this proposal the additional scope of services and fee proposal requested by the committee to include both Sites 1 and 2 within our complete Feasibility Study efforts.

PROJECT UNDERSTANDING + ASSUMPTIONS

As an extension to our previous agreement, please see the enclosed proposed additional Scope of Services and Fee Proposal below, for the Orange County Water District Multi-Purpose Center located at 18700 Ward Street, Fountain Valley, CA 92708. We understand the objective of this additional service is to develop both project site options (Site 1 and Site 2) to the complete feasibility study level as outlined within the scope of services mentioned herein.

Within this proposal we are including:

- Scope of Services
- Exclusions
- Revised Project Schedule
- Fee Proposal

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Below is our proposed additional scope of services for the Project. We have outlined our scope of services which correlates to the fee proposal on subsequent pages. Refer to the Revised Project Schedule for further details. The following scope of services are included within this amendment:

- Study both Sites 1 and 2 to include a full feasibility study evaluation including:
    - Building Conceptual Design specific to each project site
    - Updated physical model to include both sites 1 and 2
    - Further detailed comparison between sites 1 and 2:
        - Cost impacts
        - Construction logistics and laydown impacts
        - Schedule impacts
        - Qualitative experience impacts / benefits, including vehicular circulation, visitor drop-off pedestrian circulation, views, tour route pathway, and convenience.
        - Parking impacts including location of replacement parking

Our proposal only assumes (1) one exhibit concept that will be integrated into each site option.

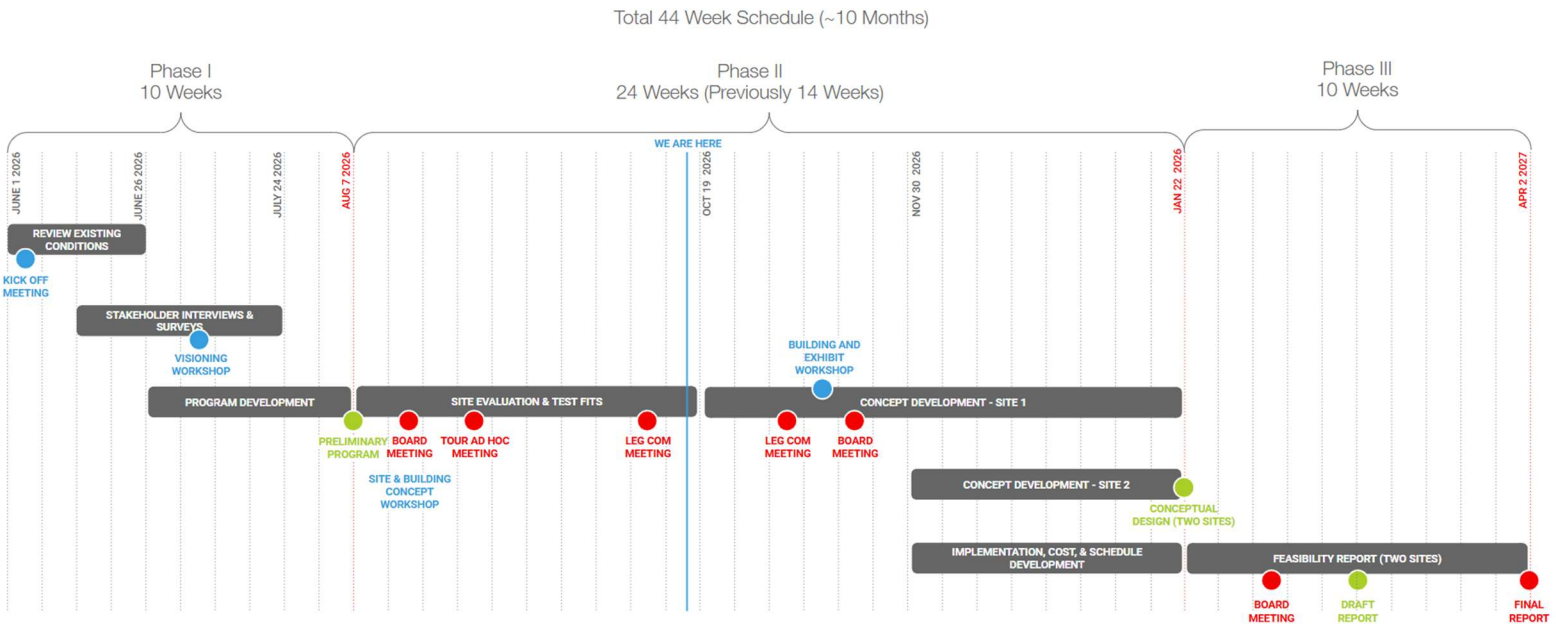
FEE STRUCTURE + PRICING

Additional Service Fee **$40,000**

	Houston Drum	Paul Brown	Min Pan	Anna Lim	Total
Hourly Rate	$250	$250	$200	$150	
Anticipated Hours	34	12	36	142	**224**
Total By Personnel	$8,500	$3,000	$7,200	$21,300	**$40,000**

REVISED PROJECT SCHEDULE

Total Duration **44 Weeks (Previously 34 Weeks)**



EXCLUSIONS

Unless otherwise agreed in writing, the following services are excluded but may be included at an additional cost:

- Architectural design beyond a conceptual level
- Owner's representative services (project and construction management)
- Procurement support and management
- Any service not specifically noted as included in the proposal above is considered excluded or an additional service.

We appreciate this opportunity and look forward to collaborating with you on this project. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any additional questions or requests.



Houston Drum, AIA, DBIA, LEED AP
Vice President
Houston.Drum@mocasystems.com
(760) 954-5884
MOCA Systems, Inc.

This proposal is valid for 90 days from the date noted above. Services may proceed upon written authorization.

ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE: _____ DATE: _____

AGENDA ITEM SUBMITTAL

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Communications/Leg. Liaison Cte.
Board of Directors

From: John Kennedy

Staff Contact: G. Ayala/C. Nettles

Budgeted: No
Budgeted Amount: $50,000
Cost Estimate: $150,000
Funding Source: 1012.51119
Program/Line Item No.: 9959
General Counsel Approval: N/A
Engineers/Feasibility Report: N/A
CEQA Compliance: N/A

Subject: **OC WATER SUMMIT LOCATION AGREEMENT AND BUDGET INCREASE**

SUMMARY

The OC Water Summit (Summit) ad-hoc planning committee has selected the Westin South Coast Plaza to host the 2027 Summit on Friday, May 21. An additional $100,000 is requested to accommodate the event, as the 2027 Summit will take place in the same fiscal year as the 2026 Summit and is not included in the current fiscal year budget.

RECOMMENDATION

Agendize for November 18 Board meeting:

1. Authorize the General Manager to execute an agreement with the Westin South Coast Plaza to host the OC Water Summit on May 21, 2027
2. Approve a $100,000 increase to the FY 2026-27 budget to host the 2027 OC Water Summit within the current fiscal year

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The OC Water Summit is an annual water supply conference co-hosted by the Orange County Water District (OCWD) and Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC). OCWD and MWDOC trade off leading planning efforts each year. OCWD is leading planning of the 2027 event.

The Summit ad-hoc planning committee unanimously selected the Westin South Coast Plaza to host the 2027 event on Friday, May 21. The Summit has been held at the Westin since 2023 and has consistently met the event's needs and received positive feedback in post-event surveys. An executed agreement is required to secure the venue for the 2027 Summit.

An additional $100,000 in budget authority is requested because the 2027 Summit will take place in the same fiscal year as the 2026 Summit. Under the established budgeting approach, $50,000 is budgeted when MWDOC leads the event, and $100,000 is budgeted when OCWD leads the event. These amounts are based on historical event expenses and reflect the total funding needed to cover Summit costs before sponsorship and registration revenue is received. The current fiscal year budget includes $50,000 for the 2026 Summit, led by MWDOC. An additional $100,000 is needed to accommodate the 2027 Summit, led by OCWD, bringing the total Summit budget for the fiscal year to $150,000.

The Summit budget covers venue rental, food and beverages, audiovisual and lighting services, printing and signage, décor, and speaker travel. The majority of expenses are offset by sponsorship revenue and attendee registration fees. Any remaining costs are shared equally by OCWD and MWDOC. As a result, OCWD's net cost for the event is substantially less than the gross amount budgeted.