



Media Contacts:

Gina Ayala, (714) 378-3323 or gayala@ocwd.com
Jennifer Cabral, (714) 803-1905 or jcabral@ocsan.gov

GROUNDWATER REPLENISHMENT SYSTEM COMPLETION INCREASES WATER SUPPLY RELIABILITY FOR ORANGE COUNTY

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif. (April 14, 2023) – With a glass of purified water in their hands, officials gathered to toast and dedicate the completion of the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS). A joint project of the Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District) and the Orange County Sanitation District (OC San), the GWRS is the world’s largest indirect potable reuse facility.

This marks an incredible milestone of recycling 100 percent of OC San’s reclaimable wastewater flows and providing up to 130 million gallons of water a day (MGD), enough to serve one million people daily. Operational since January 2008, the GWRS began producing 70 MGD and increased production to 100 MGD after an initial expansion was completed in May 2015. To date, it has produced more than 400 billion gallons of water and counting.

“We are proud to make history once again with the completion of the Groundwater Replenishment System,” said OCWD Board President Cathy Green. “The GWRS is a premier example of vision, innovation, and collaboration – all which are key components of the project’s successes over the years, further cementing our pioneering role in water reuse.”

The GWRS takes highly treated wastewater that would otherwise be discharged to the ocean and purifies it using a three-step advanced treatment process consisting of microfiltration, reverse osmosis, and ultraviolet light with hydrogen peroxide. The result is high-quality water that is pumped to recharge basins in Anaheim where it naturally percolates into the Orange County Groundwater Basin (Basin) and becomes part of the drinking water supply for 2.5 million people in north and central Orange County. GWRS water is also sent to injection wells located along Orange County’s coast to create a seawater intrusion barrier that protects groundwater supplies.

“I commend the partnership and dedication of both agencies in completing the final expansion of this facility,” said OC San Board Chairman Chad P. Wanke. “Reaching this major milestone of recycling 100 percent of our reclaimable wastewater flows enhances our efforts to protect public health and the environment by reusing this valuable resource.”

In addition to reducing the volume of treated wastewater discharged into the ocean, GWRS water improves water quality in the Basin and offers a more cost-effective and energy-efficient alternative than importing water from northern California or the Colorado River. Over the years, GWRS water has become a primary source used to refill the groundwater basin and has enabled

OCWD's 19 cities and local water retailers to pump more water from the Basin and become more locally sustainable.

The completion of the GWRS reflects a decades-long effort by OCWD and OC San to invest in a more resilient water supply and builds upon its legacy of reusing a once wasted resource. The GWRS has garnered global attention for its innovative approach and use of technology and continues to serve as a blueprint for other agencies around the world. The success of GWRS was largely due to the early, proactive, and frequent outreach to the public and community stakeholders. To maintain its longstanding commitment to educate communities about water reuse, OCWD continues public outreach through an active speaker's bureau program, meetings and presentations, and facility tours.

For more information about the project, advanced water purification process, or educational opportunities, visit the [GWRS website](#).

The Orange County Water District is committed to enhancing Orange County's groundwater quality and reliability in an environmentally friendly and economical manner. The following cities rely on the groundwater basin, managed by OCWD, to provide 85% of their water demands: Anaheim, Buena Park, Costa Mesa, Cypress, Fountain Valley, Fullerton, Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, Irvine, La Palma, Los Alamitos, Newport Beach, Orange, Placentia, Santa Ana, Seal Beach, Stanton, Tustin, Villa Park, Westminster, and Yorba Linda. For more information about OCWD, please visit www.ocwd.com, like @OCWaterDistrict on Facebook, follow @OCWDWaterNews on Twitter, follow @OCWD on Instagram, and follow Orange County Water District on LinkedIn.

OC San is a public agency that provides wastewater collection, treatment, and recycling for approximately 2.6 million people in central and northwest Orange County. OC San is a special district that is governed by a 25-member Board of Directors composed of 20 cities, four special districts, and one representative from the Orange County Board of Supervisors. OC San has two operating facilities that treat wastewater from residential, commercial, and industrial sources. For more information on OC San please visit www.ocsan.gov. Follow @OCSanDistrict on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and Orange County Sanitation District on LinkedIn.

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