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OCWD Earns Sustain SoCal Sustainable Government of the Year Award

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif., Oct. 27, 2026 – The Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District) has been named Sustainable Government of the Year by Sustain SoCal, recognizing the District's leadership in environmental stewardship, sustainable water management and effective use of local resources.

"This recognition affirms the value of doing the work the right way," said OCWD President Denis Bilodeau, P.E. "For OCWD, that means balancing reliable water supplies, responsible stewardship and long-term value for the communities we serve."

OCWD manages the Orange County Groundwater Basin, which provides approximately 85% of the water used by 2.5 million people in north and central Orange County. The District captures stormwater and Santa Ana River flows for groundwater recharge, protects groundwater quality, manages habitat alongside active water operations, and operates the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS) in partnership with the Orange County Sanitation District.

The GWRS transforms highly treated wastewater into up to 130 million gallons of purified water each day to replenish the groundwater basin. Instead of wasting that resource, OCWD uses it to increase Orange County's local drinking water supply.

Environmental stewardship is built into OCWD's operations. The District has dedicated more than 1,100 acres to environmental preservation and manages approximately 465 acres of constructed wetlands in the Prado Basin that naturally improve water quality. Decades of habitat restoration and monitoring have also helped support recovery of the endangered least Bell's vireo, increasing from 19 documented territories in 1986 to more than 760 today.

"OCWD stands out for turning sustainability into measurable results," said Scott Kitcher, president and CEO of Sustain SoCal. "Its work demonstrates how a public agency can strengthen water reliability, use resources wisely and deliver meaningful environmental benefits, while also building strong public-private partnerships that help advance innovative solutions."

For Orange County residents, this work means a stronger local water supply, less reliance on more expensive imported water and long-term protection of the groundwater basin and surrounding environment.

For more information about OCWD, visit www.ocwd.com and follow @OCWaterDistrict on social media.

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