

# PRESS RELEASE



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## Orange County Water District and Orange County Sanitation District Receive Mercury Award

**FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif.** (April 23, 2019) — The Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District) and the Orange County Sanitation District (OCSD) received a Silver Mercury Award for their Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS) Bottled Water Campaign. The International Mercury Awards competition honors the best in public relations, public affairs and corporate communications.

The GWRS Bottled Water Campaign spanned a year and included a Hollywood media kick-off event, a California bottled water tour, the GWRS 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary Winter Fest celebration as thanks for local support, and the garnering of the Guinness World Records™ title for the most wastewater recycled to drinking water in 24 hours.

The two agencies collaborated on the creation of the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS), the world's largest advanced water purification project for drinking water. Since it came online in 2008, it has produced 282 billion gallons of near-distilled quality water that was added to the Orange County Groundwater Basin and later pumped by 19 cities and water agencies to supply 77 percent of the water needs for 2.5 million people in north and central Orange County. The GWRS currently produces 100 million gallons per day of water.

“The GWRS Bottled Water Campaign drew tens of thousands of peoples’ attention to state and local water needs and provided knowledge about water reuse as a viable new source of drinking water,” said OCWD President Vicente Sarmiento. “OCWD and OCSD were the first to bottle advanced recycled water in the Western Hemisphere. Since bottling, people from as far away as Spain and England have been able to sample reused water for themselves. The GWRS is paving the way for other projects like it around the world and we believe that support begins with tasting and seeing the water.”

“Educating people that wastewater is a resource is critical to the success of water reuse projects,” said OCSD Chairman David Shawver. “This project has helped Orange County create a reliable water supply and we look forward to the project’s final expansion in 2023, which will bring total water production to 130 million gallons a day—enough water for one million people. At that time, we can proudly say that we have met OCSD’s 100 percent recycling goal.”

The annual International Mercury Award is named for the Roman god who was the messenger of the other gods and symbolizes the spirit of the message communicated. Judging is based on the values of

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creativity, effectiveness, performance, and success. Visit <https://www.mercommawards.com/mercury.htm> for more information about the award.

### **About Orange County Water District (OCWD)**

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 77 percent 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](http://www.ocwd.com), like @OCWaterDistrict on Facebook, follow @OCWDWaterNews on Twitter, follow Orange County Water District on LinkedIn, and follow @OCWD on Instagram.

### **About Orange County Sanitation District (OCSD)**

OCSD is a public agency that provides wastewater collection, treatment, and recycling for approximately 2.6 million people in central and northwest Orange County. OCSD is a special district that is governed by a 25-member Board of Directors comprised of 20 cities, four special districts, and one representative from the Orange County Board of Supervisors. OCSD has two operating facilities that treat wastewater from residential, commercial and industrial sources. For more information, about the Orange County Sanitation District visit [www.ocsd.com](http://www.ocsd.com) or call (714) 962-2411.

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