



NEWS RELEASE

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ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT'S PFAS PILOT PROJECT RECOGNIZED AS EXEMPLARY PROGRAM BY ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA WATER AGENCIES

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif. (May 14, 2021) — At the Association of California Water Agencies' (ACWA) 2021 Virtual Spring Conference and Exhibition, the Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District) received the Clair A. Hill Agency Award for Excellence, which recognized the District for launching the nation's largest per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) pilot testing program.

Every year, ACWA identifies exemplary programs that demonstrate success in creatively addressing water industry issues, leadership in broad water-related issues, and excellence in agency management and operations.

"This award highlights our regional leadership and comprehensive approach to proactively and swiftly address PFAS that have been detected in local groundwater supplies," said OCWD President Steve Sheldon. "Our staff have done an outstanding job responding to this critical water quality issue by implementing projects like the PFAS pilot testing program. As always, we are committed to sharing our research results and best practices with the broader water industry so that everyone can benefit from this exemplary program."

The District accelerated efforts to address PFAS following a lowering of the state's health advisory levels for two legacy PFAS chemicals, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), in February 2020. This action prompted water agencies who pump water from the Orange County Groundwater Basin to take dozens of wells out of service and rely on more expensive imported water for their primary drinking water supply. Despite playing no role in releasing PFAS into the environment, public water systems must find ways to remove it from drinking water supplies.

As part of the first phase of its pilot program, OCWD has successfully completed more than a year's worth of testing and data collection where 14 different types of granular activated carbon and ion exchange products, as well as novel adsorbents, have been tested to determine the most cost-effective and best treatment solution to remove PFAS in the groundwater supply.

The District recently began the second phase of the pilot program that will test new treatment media.

“By working collaboratively with all our member agencies, we look forward to advancing this important work so that we can fully utilize our local groundwater basin that provides 77% of the water supply for 2.5 million people in Orange County,” added Sheldon.

OCWD, cities and retail water agencies in Orange County take seriously the duty to provide reliable high-quality drinking water to residents throughout Orange County and will continue to meet and exceed all state and federal drinking water standards and regulations. OCWD and 10 of Orange County’s public water agencies have filed a lawsuit to ensure PFAS costs are borne by the companies that developed and manufactured PFAS, and not by ratepayers.

To learn more about how OCWD is addressing PFAS in Orange County, please visit the [District’s website](#) or watch the [District’s Award Acceptance Video](#) that was displayed during the ACWA Spring Conference.

About Orange County Water District

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% 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.

About ACWA

The Association of California Water Agencies is the largest statewide coalition of public water agencies in the country. Its 430 public agency members are collectively responsible for 90% of the water delivered to cities, farms and businesses in California. ACWA’s mission is to help members promote the development, management and use of good quality water at the lowest practical cost and in an environmentally responsible manner. For more information, please visit www.acwa.com.

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