



## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### OCWD RECOGNIZED AS UTILITY OF THE FUTURE TODAY

**FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif.** (September 25, 2019) — The Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District) has been honored with the designation of Utility of the Future Today (UotFT), which celebrates the achievements of water utilities that transform from the traditional wastewater treatment system to a resource recovery center and lead in the overall sustainability and resilience of the communities they serve.

The presentation was made during an awards ceremony on September 24 at WEFTEC 2019—Water Environment Federation's (WEF) 92<sup>nd</sup> annual technical exhibition and conference. OCWD received a UotFT flag to display proudly at its facility, and a certificate in honor of the recognition.

Utility of the Future Today was launched in 2016 by the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA), WEF, The Water Research Foundation (WRF) and the WaterReuse Association, with input from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

"The Orange County Water District is extremely proud of this new designation," said OCWD President Vicente Sarmiento. "Our agency has pioneered groundwater management for more than 80 years and water reuse for nearly 40 years. OCWD's Board of Directors and staff take on the water challenges of today and prepare to meet the region's water demands for generations to come. Solid science and state-of-the-art technologies guide our decisions."

To meet the challenges of groundwater depletion, seawater intrusion from the Pacific Ocean, and unreliable surface water supplies, OCWD, with the Orange County Sanitation District, created the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS), which came online in 2008. It is the world's largest advanced water purification project of its kind— purifying wastewater and providing 100 million gallons of near-distilled quality water each day. The GWRS is considered the gold standard for both indirect and direct potable reuse projects and is replicated in several U.S. cities, in Singapore and in Australia.

According to the awarding agencies, there are 43 utilities across the U.S. recognized this year that recover resources from wastewater, engage in their community, form unique partnerships, and build an internal culture of innovation. A total of 118 utilities have been recognized since the program started.

"Each of the Utility of the Future Today honorees represent a transformational approach to utility management that results in a ripple effect of benefits," said WEF Executive Director Eileen O'Neill. "We are delighted to celebrate their impact and proud to recognize their leadership in water sector innovation."

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### **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, and follow @OCWD on Instagram.

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