

# PRESS RELEASE



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## ORANGE COUNTY WATER AND SANITATION DISTRICTS BREAK GROUND ON PROJECT THAT RECYCLES 100% OF AVAILABLE WASTEWATER FLOWS INTO DRINKING WATER FOR 1 MILLION PEOPLE

**FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif. (November 8, 2019)** – Today, the Orange County Water District (OCWD) and Orange County Sanitation District (OCSD) celebrated the Final Expansion of the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS) with a groundbreaking ceremony attended by elected officials, project stakeholders and industry professionals.

The Final Expansion of the GWRS is the third and final phase of the project. The GWRS first began operating in 2008 producing 70 million gallons of water a day (MGD) and in 2015, it underwent a 30-MGD expansion. When the Final Expansion is completed in 2023, the plant will produce 130 MGD.

“Today marks an important milestone in Orange County’s water future,” said OCWD President Vicente Sarmiento. This is what we work for day in and day out—to provide a high-quality, reliable water supply to 2.5 million people in our service area. Total production will be enough water for 1 million people when the expansion is completed. The GWRS is vital to combatting climate change and sustaining Orange County’s water supplies and its thriving economy.”

The GWRS, the world’s largest water reuse project of its kind, is the result of decades of collaboration between OCWD and OCSD to overcome the stigma associated with these types of projects and bring water reliability to the region.

OCWD and OCSD see wastewater as a resource. Instead of discharging treated wastewater to the Pacific Ocean, OCSD treats it and produces water clean enough to undergo purification at the GWRS. This water is then purified at the GWRS using a three-step advanced process consisting of microfiltration, reverse osmosis and ultraviolet light with hydrogen peroxide. The result is high quality water that meets and exceeds state and federal drinking water standards. This purified water is then injected into a seawater barrier and pumped to recharge basins where it naturally percolates into the Orange County Groundwater Basin, managed by OCWD, and supplements Orange County’s drinking water supplies. Currently, GWRS water accounts for one-third of the water that is put into the basin.

“We are honored to partner with the Orange County Water District in ensuring strict source control of the wastewater and working to increase the amount of water sent to the GWRS,” stated OCSD Board Chairman,

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## GROUNDWATER REPLENISHMENT SYSTEM FINAL EXPANSION

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David J. Shawver. “We have made significant investments and are dedicated to the prudent use of public funds for this and all future projects benefiting our community.”

The Final Expansion requires a total treated wastewater flow from OCSD of approximately 175 MGD in order to produce 130 MGD of advanced purified recycled water. “This project will allow the region to recycle 100% of OCSD’s reclaimable flows, which will be yet another first in the industry,” added Shawver.

The GWRS is a financially responsible project that produces water at a lower cost than imported water. Funding for the Final Expansion includes \$135 million from the Environmental Protection Agency’s Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program and \$1.1 million in grants from the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation Title XVI Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) program.

“The Orange County Water District’s advanced system expansion will benefit the local community, the economy and the environment,” said United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Pacific Southwest Regional Administrator Mike Stoker. “We are honored to help fund this project and reduce borrowing costs through our WIFIA loan program.”

Additionally, the Final Expansion received the highest ratings for all North Orange County projects submitted through the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) program for Prop 1 grant funding managed by the California Department of Water Resources. The project is currently slated to receive \$3.6 million in grants through the IRWM program. The remaining \$186 million will be funded through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) Loan program.

For more information about the GWRS and the Final Expansion, please visit <https://www.ocwd.com/gwrs>.

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

### **About the Orange County Sanitation District**

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).

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