



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Fall 2013

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST ERIN BROCKOVICH

Fighting for clean water is difficult but worth it

By Michelle Nava



It's been more than two decades since Erin Brockovich began her famous fight in the California desert town of Hinckley, where Pacific Gas & Electric Company had been contaminating the drinking water for about 30 years with a cancer-causing toxin known as hexavalent chromium.

Aside from learning about the alarming number of people in town with cancer, she saw that the local water had turned green, and in some cases purple - an effect, scientists now know, of significant exposure to hexavalent chromium, also known as chromium-6.

"I saw fish and animals with two heads. Trees were dying. I didn't have to be a scientist to know something was wrong. Polluted water was killing everything, we need clean water," said the activist portrayed by Julia Roberts in the 2000 hit movie *Erin Brockovich*, who was the keynote speaker at the San Gabriel Valley Water Forum held Oct. 3 at the Pomona Fairplex.

Brockovich shared with more than 300 attendees, including water professionals, that it doesn't take an advanced degree to find solutions to polluted water, only a huge dose of stick-to-itiveness. "For me, every one of you is already an Erin Brockovich by putting yourself out there and not burying your head in the sand. Fighting for clean water may be difficult but it's worth it," she said.

Along with Brockovich, more than a dozen water experts, including the head of the State Water Quality Control Board, discussed groundwater contamination and other top water issues in California.

"Hundreds of millions dollars have been spent on treatment facilities, and we're hard at work removing harmful pollutants from our drinking water."

- Kenneth Manning, Executive Director, San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority

removed from local drinking water sources, all agreed there is much to do and all agencies must find a way to better communicate with one another, as well as with the public and businesses.

"A Balancing Act" was the theme of the forum, and a timely one, water experts acknowledged.



While the debate continues on how stringently chromium-6 and other contaminants need or can be

Important as it is to rid contaminants from the water, it is equally imperative to "look at whether it is economically and feasibly realistic to do so," said Steven Eli, an environmental lawyer and an elected member of the Inland Empire Utilities Agency Board of Directors.

In some cases, he said, the treatment creates even more hazardous waste, so agencies have to weigh the options. "It's not always just a simple 'Let's treat it,'" Eli said.

What is crucial, Eli said, is protecting this valuable resource by recycling and not wasting water. "It's a limited resource," he said. "We're one major disaster away from not being able to get water from Northern California. We need to find a way to make the most of what we have."

The threat of an earthquake or other catastrophe to the San Francisco Bay Delta, which supplies water to about one-third of the state, was also discussed during the forum.

Kenneth Manning, executive director of the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority, talked about cleanup efforts under way in the San Gabriel Valley, which has the nation's largest Superfund site.

"We're decades away from where we should be, but we're making progress," Manning said. "Hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent on treatment facilities, and we're hard at work removing harmful pollutants from our drinking water."

There is definitely light at the end of the tunnel, said Felicia Marcus, chairperson of the State Water Resources Control Board and an appointee to President Barack Obama's Commission on Environmental Cooperation-Joint Public Advisory Board.

"As messy as this is, I'm optimistic," said Marcus. "And people should know our tap water is the envy of the world." ◊



Felicia Marcus, Chair State Water Resources Control Board

Sustainability: Thinking about tomorrow, today

The idea of sustainable living includes worthy, practical, daily – sometimes simple – acts like recycling and conservation. But the concept of sustainability actually encompasses much more.



Chris Lancaster

Sustainability takes the long-term approach – not only what’s good for us today, but well into the future when the world belongs to our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. If we merely satisfy our own needs in the moment, but think nothing of the future, where will that leave generations to come?

Sustainability is a balancing act between what society, the economy and the environment need right now to be robust and healthy, and what those three key areas will require to ensure that future generations have the resources they need to not only survive, but thrive.

Sustainability – responsible resource management in harmony with nature – will help us ensure that we continue to have clean air, water, food and natural resources to protect and promote our health and that of the whole planet.

We deserve it, and as stewards of the environment, we owe it to our heirs.

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (METRO) and Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), working closely with regional agencies and the 88 cities of the county, have created regional sustainability planning policies to pursue these healthful goals.

METRO is transforming our transit system and working with community leaders to create transit-oriented developments in which people have near immediate access to public transportation to balance the needs of work and daily life.

METRO is also pursuing the creation of alternatives for getting around, including rail and bus improvements, as well as electric vehicles.

Public and private agencies and organizations are creating events that promote healthier lifestyles – allowing people to get out of their cars to walk or try riding bicycles.

No doubt these are amazing times – a renaissance in thinking and action, in support of healthful communities and transportation choices.

In a region with more than 9.6 million people who have a long love affair with cars, it will take time to create new solutions that work for all of us. But the work is important and under way.

I hope the inspiring stories in this section make you share my growing enthusiasm for sustainability and the options that smart, careful, forward-thinking planning will give us. ◦

Best Wishes,
Chris Lancaster
Publisher, Civic Publications Inc

City of Industry Assists EPA with Superfund Site Cleanup

By Amy Bentley

City of Industry is helping with a long-running effort to clean up polluted groundwater in the City of Industry and La Puente areas, assisting private companies and the United States Environmental Protection Agency to locate a water treatment facility in City of Industry.

The Puente Valley Superfund Site in City of Industry is one of four Superfund sites in the San Gabriel Valley. Groundwater contamination in the Valley, primarily volatile organic compounds (VOCs), was first detected in 1979. The San Gabriel Basin aquifer, where the contaminated groundwater is located, provides 92 percent of the domestic water supply used by San Gabriel Valley businesses and residents.

The San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority (WQA) is coordinating the cleanup effort. The California Legislature established the WQA 20 years ago to develop, finance and implement groundwater treatment programs in the San Gabriel Basin, the nation’s largest Superfund Site.

“City of Industry has been wonderful to work with in this process of finding a suitable solution and cleaning up the groundwater in the Puente Valley,” said WQA Board Chairman Louie Aguiñaga.

The Puente Valley Superfund Site interim cleanup approach is groundwater extraction and treatment, meaning the contaminated water will be extracted and piped to treatment facilities for cleaning. The extracted groundwater will be treated to remove the VOCs before it’s put in pipes and served to customers in the region. The goal of the interim cleanup is to protect and clean up the local water supply as well as prevent contaminants from migrating to other areas within the basin. A final cleanup plan is at least 10 years down the road.

The City of Industry recognizes its need to support those businesses within the city and their efforts to clean up the underlying aquifers by permitting the installation of extraction wells, piping and treatment sites.

To date 76 responsible parties have been identified and these companies are expected to fund the cleanup. To move the cleanup process forward, extraction wells have been installed in various areas and more will be installed over the next three years as the EPA works to refine and complete its investigation.

“City of Industry has been wonderful to work with in this process of finding a suitable solution and cleaning up the groundwater in the Puente Valley.”

*– Louie Aguiñaga, Chairman
San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority*

zones, where VOC levels exceed drinking water standards. The EPA also continues to negotiate settlement agreements with a small number of remaining responsible parties. The Puente Valley contamination stems primarily from industrial sites that operated in City of Industry during the last half of the 20th century. Those companies mishandled the materials and allowed the contamination to migrate into the aquifer over time.

City of Industry has been following the process for many years. City officials are helping Northrop Grumman find a suitable location in the city for a treatment facility to clean the intermediate zone. The EPA expects all the systems to be up and running in 2016.

While the EPA, Northrop Grumman and Carrier Corp. are leading the way, City of Industry continues to support the cleanup in any way possible with the goal of seeing it to completion. ◦



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AT HOME, WORK AND SCHOOL



PICK UP ON THE **GREEN** THREE R'S

REDUCE

waste from the start,
buy in bulk and use up
what's on hand.

REUSE

everyday items at home,
work and school.

RECYCLE

at curbside and donate older
but still useful items.

Foothill Transit Adds New Buses and a Fresh, New Look

By Amy Bentley



Foothill Transit riders will notice something different about their buses this fall: a fresh, clean exterior that shows off Foothill Transit's commitment to environmental sustainability.

Unlike most other transit agencies, which allow flashy, colored ads to be placed on their buses, Foothill Transit has never allowed paid advertising messages to clutter the exterior of its buses. Foothill Transit buses are painted in fresh, bright white with blue striping and kept clean with constant maintenance. Ads on bus interiors are reserved for local government agencies and non-profit organizations only.

Foothill Transit's entire fleet will use only cleaner, alternative fuels, mostly compressed natural gas.

Foothill Transit's Executive Board decided it's time for the buses to sport a fresh new exterior look. New buses that will hit the road this fall will still be white but sport a new blue and green wave along the sides as a nod to the local environment's prominent foothills.

"We went through more than 150 designs and all of them focused on keeping that bright white base intact while applying a color flash with an active look to it," said Felicia Friesema, Foothill Transit's Director of Marketing and Communications.

"We wanted to have something that evoked a sense of place and incorporated a new color to our scheme, and that also said something about our push toward a green fleet and our commitment to sustainability. We want the buses to evoke a sense of community, caring for the environment and hills in motion,"

she explained. "The community has a natural pride of ownership in its transit system. We want our customers to be as proud to ride in our buses as they would be to ride in their own cars."

Foothill Transit purchased 64 new buses this year that are scheduled to begin delivery and service this fall. More new buses will be delivered throughout the fall and all should be in service by the end of January, Friesema said.

Foothill Transit maintains a fleet of 314 buses. Older buses will be retired as the new ones come in and the last diesel bus will retire at the end of this year. Once the last diesel bus retires, Foothill Transit's entire fleet will use only cleaner, alternative fuels, mostly compressed natural gas (CNG). Older buses also will be repainted by 2014.

Foothill Transit operates 35 bus lines in the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys that serve 14 million riders per year. As another part of Foothill Transit's pledge to help the environment, Foothill Transit was the first transit agency nationwide to roll out zero-emission, all-electric, fast-charge Ecoliner buses. Foothill Transit also installed solar panels at its two operations yards to cut electricity use. ◻



Visit www.foothilltransit.org



Did You Know? A New Park & Ride opened October 7th in City of Industry, the first such lot owned outright by Foothill Transit. Amenities at the new Park & Ride include security cameras, emergency call boxes on every floor, energy-efficient LED lighting, and 18 electric vehicle charging stations powered by solar panels (coming soon). Line 493 customers will have reserved Foothill Transit spaces. Foothill Transit partnered with City of Industry to open the new lot located at the Industry Metrolink Station, 500 Brea Canyon Road.



UPPER SAN GABRIEL VALLEY
MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

WHERE SOLUTIONS *flow*

It's Fall ... Time to Reduce Outdoor Water Use

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR SPRINKLERS!

Did you know? In California, landscaping can take up as much as 50% of water use in commercial spaces and as much as 70% of the water used by homeowners.

LEARN YOUR CONTROLLER

- Look up your controller's manual online if you do not have one.
- Note how many programs and start times are available.
- Look for leaks, broken heads and/or runoff.



LEARN ABOUT YOUR ZONES AND GROUP PLANT TYPES

- If possible, assign a heavier watering schedule (or zone program) to water loving plants and a lighter watering schedule to drought tolerant plants.
- Utilize 3 minute start times in the early morning with an hour in-between for soaking.
- Lawns generally need watering two days a week in spring, and three days a week in summer.



KEEP YOUR SPRINKLER SYSTEM UP-TO-DATE

- Install a smart sprinkler timer that will adjust to changing conditions.
- Create a custom watering schedule and regularly adjust your sprinkler timer to a budget suggested by the published water index.
- Use rotating sprinkler nozzles for lawn and groundcovers.

QUICK TIPS FOR A WATER SAVING GARDEN

Choose the right plants for a dry climate. Select plants with moderate to low water needs.

LAWN TIPS

- Raise the lawnmower blade to mow higher and help the lawn grow deeper roots.
- Consider reducing total lawn areas by adding beds with drought tolerant plants.



SOIL CONDITIONING

- Prior to planting, amend your soil to keep it healthy and able to both absorb and hold water.

Visit usgvmwd.org for more information.



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For Metro, a sustainable future begins with partnerships

By Pam O'Connor, Los Angeles County Transportation Authority (METRO) Board Member



With every project and program we undertake, from expanding transit to rethinking smart highways, we employ innovation and imagination to connect people and places, create community value and conserve resources.

We are collaborating with cities to design streets and communities, so that it is easy to walk, bike, and take transit. We have ongoing partnerships with universities, nonprofit organizations and businesses to incorporate leading research and cutting-edge, green technologies into the design and implementation of the transportation system.

During the next 20 years, Metro's work will revolutionize our transportation network providing the foundation for more sustainable communities and lifestyles.

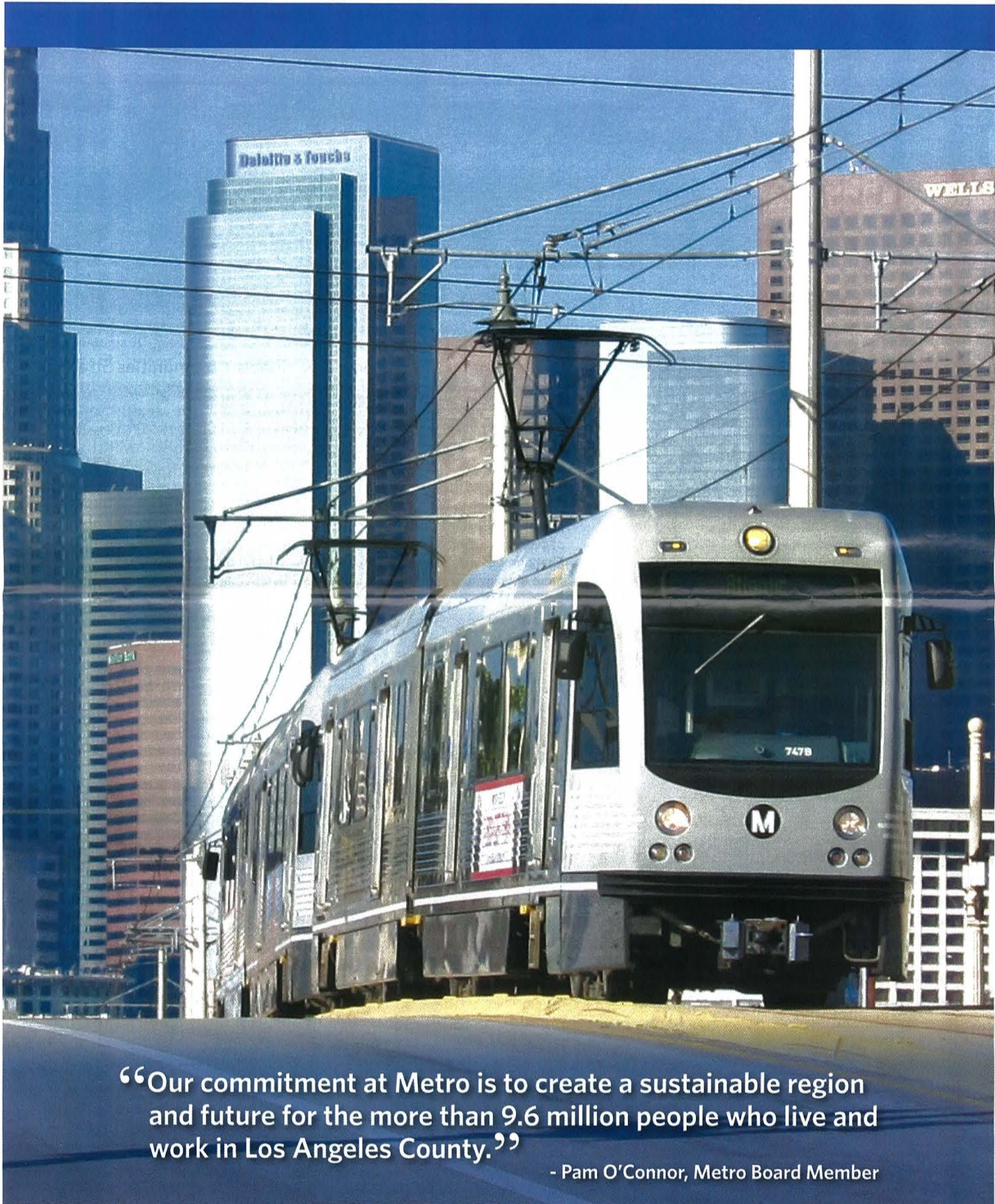
None of this, however, will happen without partnerships. We firmly believe that these relationships are a key to realizing the environmental benefits of the county's significant regional investment in transportation.

Continued on page 8



Plug-in electric vehicle station.

Photo provided by Metro



“Our commitment at Metro is to create a sustainable region and future for the more than 9.6 million people who live and work in Los Angeles County.”

- Pam O'Connor, Metro Board Member



Sustainable Future

Continued from page 6

Encouraging Walking and Biking

Metro also collaborates with non-profit organizations in organizing and promoting events that encourage community biking and walking. Metro, for example, is delighted to promote CicLAvia, a nonprofit organization that creates and organizes street closure events. The streets are closed to vehicles for a portion of the day and transformed into large, open, safe public spaces for everyone – from bicyclists to pedestrians to stroller-pushing families.



The hope is that these events encourage more car-free events, which promote sustainable transportation, better public health, and improved public spaces.

Modeled after the weekly ciclovias that have been held in Bogota, Colombia for the last 30 years, they have been paid for with private and public funds from the CicLAvia organization, the city of Los Angeles, as well as individual and corporate donations.

There are plans to expand these events to other parts of the county, including Claremont/Pomona, the Southeast Cities Region, West Los Angeles, city of Long Beach, the San Fernando Valley and the San Gabriel Valley.

We are proud of the work we are doing to improve quality of life and foster more sustainable communities in Los Angeles County. And we believe that with continued partnerships we can together make even greater, innovative strides in the years to come.

Implementing the Regional Sustainable Communities Strategy

The Southern California Association of Governments, our region's Metropolitan Planning Organization, has adopted a transportation and land-use plan that will lead to a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions over the next 20 years. The 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) is the result of unprecedented collaboration between cities and transportation agencies.

The plan is built around Metro's significant investment in rail and reflects efforts underway by cities to realign their land-use plans to provide more housing and jobs near transit. The regional benefits of the plan include 500,000 jobs/year, the preservation of over 85 square miles of undeveloped land, and \$3,200 in annual household savings. That number will grow even larger as cities realign their land-use plans to provide more housing and jobs near transit consistent with market demand and regional goals outlined in the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS.

“We are proud of the work we are doing to improve quality of life and foster more sustainable communities in Los Angeles County.”

— Pam O'Connor, Metro Board Member

Supporting EV Innovation

Metro often partners and supports cities and local governments to implement sustainable transportation strategies. Currently, Metro is supporting the South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG) which has played a vital role in helping forge a more sustainable, region conducive for all transportation modes. The SBCCOG has helped to create a sustainability strategy to address smart-growth concepts with its member cities, and has been an advocate for Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEVs) as well as regional plans to support plug-in electrical vehicle readiness. On a related note, Metro invited the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD), Southern California Association of Governments, Port of Los Angeles, Port of Long Beach, Caltrans, and the Gateway Cities Council of Governments to form the Countywide Zero-Emission Trucks Collaborative, so that the local public sector agencies can increase regional competitiveness for grants, and to test and demonstrate zero emission trucks. Metro is looking for ways to partner with AQMD on their recently announced demonstration project consisting of three zero-emission trucks powered by an Overhead Catenary System. ◦



Electric plug-in.

Pam O'Connor is Mayor of Santa Monica. She chairs the Ad Hoc Sustainability Committee of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority and serves as chair of the Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority Board of Directors.

METRO: Innovation to promote sustainable living

Metro is using groundbreaking innovation as part of its commitment to sustainability.

The nation's third-largest public transportation agency is committed to a better environment and has subsequently taken measures beyond its massive public transit improvements to help create communities that promote sustainable living.

On Metro's website, for example, commuters and bicyclists can calculate how much carbon dioxide emissions can be saved by biking to work. According to the calculator, a 10-mile trip will save about half a gallon of gasoline and prevent 10 pounds of carbon dioxide from being emitted into the air.



Metro buses include bike racks for passengers combining transit and bicycling.

Metro is also coordinating with the Southern California Association of Governments, South Bay Cities Council of Governments and UCLA on regional plans for plug-in electrical vehicle readiness. ◦



Solar panel collectors at Metro facilities in downtown Los Angeles.

Exploring new solutions

Internally, the agency is committed to creating sustainable work sites, and installed solar panel collectors at facilities in Chatsworth, Sun Valley, Carson, El Monte and Downtown Los Angeles. This has significantly reduced Metro's energy costs by more than \$300,000 a year since 2010.

Moving forward, Metro continues to explore other renewable energy sources, including wind, flywheels and waste-to-energy technologies. The agency launched a \$30 million clean air bus technology pilot program earlier this year, which will eventually lead to the purchase of more than two dozen all-electric, zero-emission transit buses. ◦

Green, modern bus fleet

Metro is already doing regenerative braking for rail cars, and complementing this with the installation of a 1-megawatt Wayside Energy Storage Substation at its Gold Line, estimated to reduce energy consumption by 670,000 kilowatt-hours annually once it opens.

In 2011, Metro achieved its goal of a 100 percent alternatively-fueled bus fleet. In 2012, its rail propulsion power efficiency used 1.96 kilowatt-hours of electricity per rail boarding, a 13 percent increase in efficiency since 2005.

Cumulative air pollutant emissions have also decreased by 42.4 percent from 2011 to 2012, with across-the-board reductions in water usage, waste generation, and greenhouse gas emissions. ◦

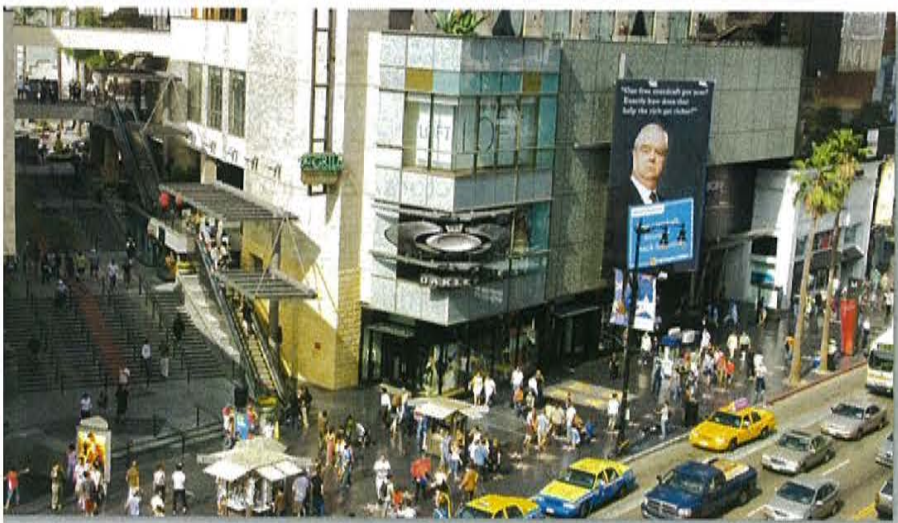


100 percent of Metro's bus fleet runs on alternative-fuels including compressed natural gas, making Metro's fleet some of the most state-of-the-art in the country.

Creating choices for better living and working



Transit-oriented development integrates employment, housing and shopping into a walkable neighborhood near public transportation.



Metro values private and public sector partnerships for development of Metro-owned property near transit stations and corridors.

Providing more transportation choices for those who live and work in Los Angeles County is a key component to Metro's sustainability planning initiatives.

Metro has also taken a leadership role in its advocacy of transit-oriented developments, in which higher-density housing and other quality-of-life facilities are built adjacent to or near transit stations.

A walkable community with easy access to transit is not only beneficial for the health and well-being of people and the environment, but it also enhances the regional transportation system.

An increase in transit-oriented development will assist in creating and preserving more open spaces elsewhere in the county. Housing around transit also leads to the preservation of many historic and low density single family communities in urban areas.

New transit-oriented development on Metro Owned Properties

Metro continues to create transit-oriented development projects throughout the county as part of its Joint Development Program.

This program is designed to secure the most appropriate private and/or public sector development on Metro-owned property, at and adjacent to transit stations and corridors.

The projects range in size and scope, and most include a combination of housing and retail. Some have also included improved open space areas in addition to childcare centers and affordable housing.

The Willow Street/Long Beach Metro Blue Line development is an example of such a project. This joint project with the Long Beach Redevelopment Agency spans more than 12 acres and features a neighborhood shopping center with a major grocery store, drug store, retail and food service facilities and a 700-space transit parking structure next to the Metro Blue Line.

Biking with Metro

Metro also plays an important role in bicycle planning across Los Angeles County, facilitating first mile/last mile connections to transit and supporting bicycle transportation through various policies and programs.

Recently, Metro has launched an "Every Lane is a Bike Lane," campaign which raises awareness about bicycle safety. The Metro Bike Program also holds various bike safety demonstration events, workshops, and roundtable discussions to foster broader support and awareness for bike friendly stations, streets, and communities. ◦



Metro launches "Every Lane is a Bike Lane" to promote awareness about bicycle safety.



Proud past and promising future



Twenty years have passed since the California State Legislature created the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

Metro, as the agency has come to be known, was a merger of the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission and the Southern California Rapid Transit District.

The newly-formed 13-member Board of Directors did much that first year, including adopting an Alternative Fuel Initiative and committing all future Metro bus purchases to alternative fuel vehicles only.

Today, Metro is the third-largest public transportation agency in the nation and acts as transportation planner and coordinator, designer, builder and operator for one of the nation's largest, most populous counties – serving more than 9.6 million people. ◻

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FIRST 20 YEARS INCLUDE:

- 1994 →** Metro Board approves \$316 million to help fund 85 miles of carpool lanes on nine freeways throughout L.A. County.
- 1996 →** Carpool lanes open on the Harbor Transit Way; the Metro Purple Line opens, serving three stations between Westlake/MacArthur Park and Wilshire/Western; Metro initiates the first Advanced Technology Transit buses with automated stop announcements and low-emissions engines.
- 1997 →** Metro begins retrofitting all buses to include bike racks for passengers combining transit and bicycling.
- 1998 →** Photo enforcement cameras are installed at gated crossings on the Metro Blue Line. Similar cameras are installed at non-gated crossings in 2004. Today, there are 26,400 safety and security cameras installed throughout Metro's systems.
- 1999 →** The Metro Line between Wilshire/Vermont and Hollywood/Vine opens, with five new stations. Volunteers form the nation's only Metro Art Docent Council, providing free tours to thousands of new riders.

- 2001 →** Metro Board approves the agency's long-range Transportation Plan to guide regional mobility improvements over the next 25 years; in partnership with Caltrans opens a carpool lane on the I-605 Freeway between Cerritos and the Orange County border; and initiates the development of smart card technology to begin transitioning to a regional universal fare system. And in November, opens a \$615 million retail/entertainment complex above Metro's Hollywood/Highland Station as a result of Metro's Joint Development Program.
- 2002 →** The Alameda Corridor Freight Rail Expressway opens, eliminating more than 200 at-grade railroad crossings. Metro provided \$358.7 million of the total \$2.4 billion cost. Metro forms local service councils to provide input on service changes and development. And the board approves a policy to increase bicycle access on Metro Rail by eliminating permits required to take bikes on board and expanding hours bikes are allowed on trains.
- 2003 →** The initial segment of the Metro Gold Line opens, with service to 13 stations connecting downtown Los Angeles, South Pasadena and Pasadena.
- 2005 →** The Metro Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit opens in San Fernando Valley, with an adjacent bike path along the route.
- 2007 →** The American Public Transportation Association names Metro as North America's top transportation agency with the "Outstanding Public Transportation System" award. The Metro Board establishes the Ad Hoc Sustainability and Climate Change Subcommittee to oversee internal and countywide sustainability initiatives and adopts the agency's first sustainability and energy policy.
- 2008 →** LA County voters pass Measure R, the traffic relief and expansion ordinance, which is projected to raise \$35 billion to fund specific transportation improvement projects.
- 2009 →** Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension opens with plans to improve pedestrian and bicycle access along the light rail alignment.
- 2011 →** Metro purchases Union Station for \$75 million. It includes 38 acres of land and 6 million square feet of potential development to build on the property and draw lease revenues.
- 2013 →** The Metro Expo Line opens, with 10 new stations serving USC, Expo Park, and diverse LA neighborhoods such as Culver City, the Crenshaw District and downtown LA. Metro becomes the first transit agency to provide electric vehicle chargers for passengers with a pilot program that includes charging stations at five Metro Rail stations; receives \$130 million in federal funds for the Purple Line subway extension and the Regional Connector projects. And major work on the I-405 Sepulveda Pass Improvements Project, including bridges, ramps, sound and retaining walls, and a new carpool lane continues. Project completion is scheduled for 2014.



2000 → The Metro Red Line opens three new stations between Hollywood/Vine and North Hollywood for service to the San Fernando Valley. The first two Metro Rapid Lines begin operation with routes on Wilshire/Whittier Boulevard and Ventura Boulevard. And the last two stations on the 19.5-mile Harbor Transitway, at the Pacific Coast Highway and Carson Street, open for service.



Metro receives the American Public Transportation Association's Sustainability Commitment Platinum Recognition Award, the first and only awardee in the nation at this level, to honor Metro's Sustainability and Energy Program and Initiatives. ◻



Water Quality Authority

San Gabriel Valley Lawmakers Support Groundwater Cleanup

Contributing to a more sustainable water supply

By Amy Bentley

As several important water issues make their way through the California Legislature and come before voters in the future in a new water bond, the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority (WQA) continues to work with local lawmakers who are helping to meet the San Gabriel Valley's ongoing water needs.

The California Legislature established the WQA 20 years ago to develop, finance and implement groundwater treatment programs in the San Gabriel Basin. The basin is a large underground aquifer that serves 92 percent of the Valley's water needs.

The basin is also the nation's largest Superfund Site, a legacy of the contamination that extends from the defense industry and manufacturing in the Valley for the last 70 years. The WQA and its partners are overseeing 31 cleanup facilities in the Valley that are removing dangerous contaminants from the groundwater. Since the WQA's inception, WQA-sponsored projects have been responsible for removing nearly 45 tons of contaminants from the basin - almost half of all contaminants believed to be in the groundwater.

The WQA's work would not be as successful without support from the San Gabriel Valley Legislative Caucus and other supportive lawmakers. Over the years, state representatives have sponsored legislation at the state and federal levels supporting cleanup of the basin and ensuring a safe and reliable source of water.



State Senator Dr. Ed Hernandez sponsored Senate Bill 429, the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority Act

SB 429 was signed into law by Gov. Brown on September 9, extending the life of the WQA from 2017 to 2030. Sen. Hernandez recognized the need to allow the WQA more time to complete the job it began 20 years ago. Now that the cleanup facilities are up and working successfully, the WQA will continue to make sure it leverages the newest

and most innovative technology to clean all contaminants from the basin for future generations. Sen. Hernandez has been one of the biggest advocates for groundwater cleanup. His efforts and those of his fellow legislators have resulted in over \$12 million in state funding.

"I am glad the Governor signed my bill into law. The WQA has a proven record cleaning up our groundwater and needs the time to finish the job. I will continue to be a champion for groundwater cleanup in the Valley. Having a clean, affordable water supply is vital to every resident, not only in my district, but throughout the state of California," Sen. Hernandez said.

Assemblyman Roger Hernández sponsored Assembly Bill 687

AB 687 would give preferential energy purchase rights to public agencies like the WQA that clean up polluted groundwater and drinking water systems serving disadvantaged communities. It's an issue of concern in light of a recent report by the State Water Resources Control Board which found that 680 community water systems statewide rely on a contaminated groundwater



WQA Board Members Luis Ayala and Louie Aguiñaga (Chairman) with State Assemblymembers Anthony Rendon and Ian Calderon at a recent tour of the San Gabriel Valley Water Company's Plant B6.

source, and of those, 265 water systems have served water that failed to meet the minimum public drinking water standards. A large problem for smaller water agencies is the cost of operating and maintaining a treatment plant. Energy savings would make it more feasible for these communities to implement cleanup projects. AB 687 is currently in the State Senate.

“The state support has been unprecedented with the San Gabriel Valley Legislative Caucus directly responsible for bringing much needed funding from the state.”

- Louie Aguiñaga, Chairman of WQA

"AB 687 provides local water agencies with lower energy rates, which provides access to quality water. This is what our communities need and deserve. In a time when local governments are fiscally prudent, this bill can alleviate some costs associated with the cleaning of polluted sites," Assemblyman Hernández explained.



Assemblyman Ed Chau sponsored Assembly Bill 1043

This bill, pending in the Assembly, would allow agencies that receive Proposition 84 funds for groundwater cleanup to keep any funds they recover from outside sources. This would allow agencies to reduce cleanup costs and improve existing treatment facilities. Assemblyman Chau is a supporter of ensuring that agencies like the WQA have sufficient funds to succeed.



"Thanks to the WQA and many other water districts and entities in the Valley, we have made significant strides in cleaning up groundwater, conserving water and educating the public. However, there is still more work to be done. We must rely less on imported water and find a sustainable and environmentally sound solution to ensure a reliable water source for our communities," Assemblyman Chau said.

The San Gabriel Valley Legislative Caucus has been an ardent supporter of the WQA and making sure that the Valley's water and cleanup needs are included in a comprehensive water bond targeted for the November 2014 ballot. Our lawmakers remain united in their efforts to provide funding

in this proposed bond measure that would help Southern California become less dependent on imported water and continue groundwater cleanups.

Assemblyman Anthony Rendon, Chairman of the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee

is spearheading a review of the proposed water bond being put before voters in 2014. He and Assemblyman Ian Calderon of the 57th Assembly District toured the WQA facilities over the summer to learn more about the WQA and the Valley's water needs.

"Groundwater is a valuable natural resource for California residents and our economy. Restoring the groundwater basins throughout the state in Northern California, the Central Valley and Southern California will allow us to have a thriving economy. The lessons learned and the progress made in the San Gabriel Valley should serve as a template for other regions of the state as we continue the fight to restore and protect local groundwater basins. Groundwater can help us achieve greater regional self-reliance in water," Assemblyman Rendon said.

Assemblyman Calderon said, "After many years of hard work and coalition-building, we are closer than ever to fully restoring the basin. We cannot falter from getting the job done in this critical stage. We must continue to work together to decrease this region's dependence on imported water."

WQA Chairman Luis Aguiñaga commented, "The main reason the basin has had so much success in the last two decades is the result of bipartisan support from current and former members of Congress, the State Senate and State Assembly. The state support has been unprecedented with the San Gabriel Valley Legislative Caucus directly responsible for bringing much needed funding from the state."

WQA Board Member Bryan Urias added, "Having Assemblyman Anthony Rendon take a interest in the progress of the cleanup is directly related to the WQA's accomplishments."

As the WQA enters its 21st year of service, we look forward to continuing with our mission to provide the community with a safe, clean and local supply of drinking water. Support from our lawmakers is paramount; we couldn't do it with out them. When the entire Basin is free of all contaminants, our job here will be done. www.wqa.com

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Water Quality Authority



There's no new water

SUS-TAIN-ABLE adjective \sə-'stā-nə-bəl\ -- : able to be used without being completely used up or destroyed : involving methods that do not completely use up or destroy natural resources: able to last or continue for a long time *Miriam-Webster* <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sustainable>

By Richard W. Hansen, General Manager

As most of us learned in elementary school, there is no new water. The water cycle creates a supply of water that moves in and out of the various states of being that we use and reuse over the millennia. What has changed is the number of people on the Earth who require clean, fresh water for daily living. We have created toxins that are not as readily broken down by natural processes, and which can persist in water over many generations. What hasn't changed is that we still need water to survive.



David De Jesus

Southern California experiences population growth with the same limited supply of water. Limiting the water supply's exposure to unnecessary chemicals, using only what we need and living within the environment's ability to regenerate resources is what we need to be conscious and respectful of. We have to consider living within a "water budget."

Southern California imports about half of its water from many miles away. That expends energy, as much as 20 percent

of the state's energy use is for pumping and treating water. Could we do better living with supplies that are locally available? Maybe. There are many things that might suffer from that limitation, including agriculture, industry and development, thus jobs. California's economy ranks 12th largest in the world. Limiting water use to that which is only locally available would be good for the environment, but extremely challenging to our way of life. Instead, by just limiting waste, overuse and potential contaminants we could stay within a manageable water budget.

"Sustainability extends to the use of all natural resources. We focus on water in this region knowing that living within a sustainable water budget also helps relieve some pressure on the other resources that makes California a great place to live and work."

- David De Jesus, Vice President, Three Valleys Municipal Water District

That would include some simple basic steps like, cutting back on the amount of turf you irrigate on your lot, taking shorter showers, using a car wash that captures and recycles the water onsite, and eating fruits and vegetables that are in season and grown locally.

You can capture rain water from your site in rain barrels for use in dry months. All of these relatively simple changes save water and help create a more sustainable lifestyle.



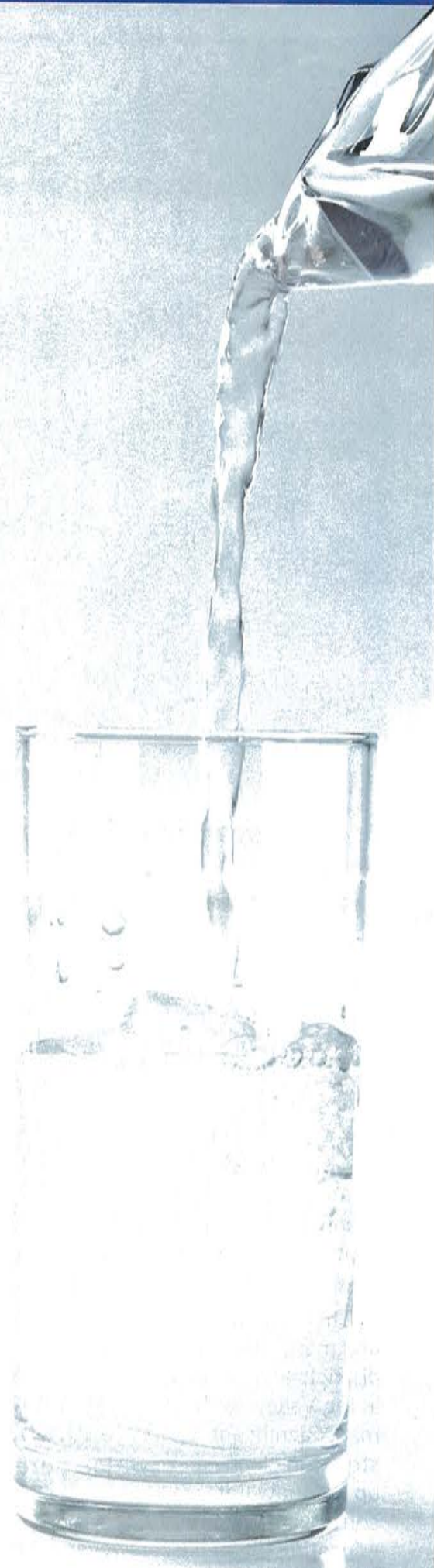
The San Francisco Bay Delta supplies 31 percent of Southern California's water supply to more than 25 million people.

"Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) has worked very hard creating water use efficiency programs that reach all segments of our service area, an area that provides water to more than 18 million people," says Director David De Jesus, MWD Vice Chairman Board of Directors and Three Valleys Municipal Water District Board Member.

"In conjunction with those programs, we continue to educate and partner with agencies up and down the State to safeguard our water supplies and deliver them in the most sustainable, efficient ways possible."

Director De Jesus also said, "Sustainability extends to the use of all natural resources. We focus on water in this region knowing that living within a sustainable water budget also helps relieve some pressure on the other resources that makes California a great place to live and work".

The Three Valleys Municipal Water District serves a number of cities, water agencies and water districts in Eastern Los Angeles County, including: Azusa, City of Industry, Covina, Claremont, Diamond Bar, Glendora, La Puente, La Verne, Pomona, San Dimas, Walnut, West Covina and Hacienda Heights, Rowland Heights.



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IT'S AUTUMN IN THE SAN GABRIEL VALLEY



*Turned the clocks back, now
turn your water usage down...*



You've turned your clocks back, but don't "fall back" on water-wasting habits. Fall is an important time to save water...

Here's why:

- ◆ Last Winter was one of the driest on record. Drought is looming if this winter proves to be another dry one.
- ◆ Water levels in the State's largest reservoirs are below normal. Imported water deliveries from Northern California are being reduced.
- ◆ More than a decade of drought in the Colorado River Basin – a source of about 25% of Southern California's supplies – further threatens our supplies of imported water.
- ◆ Some cities in the San Gabriel Valley have seen their local wells run dry or fall to record low levels.
- ◆ Water rates are sure to climb even more if scarcity sets in.

Outdoors



Indoors



Autumn is a Great Time to Conserve Water!

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