

# NEWS CLIPS

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**Resource Conservation and Public Outreach**

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# California's top court rules in favor of Gov. Brown's water project

Source: LA Times 7/22/16



The California Supreme Court cleared the way Thursday for state water authorities to do environmental and geological testing on private land for a proposed project to divert Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta water to the south.

The ruling capped six years of litigation by delta property owners, who challenged the state's right to enter their land without compensation.

In a decision written by Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye, the court said state water authorities could proceed with testing — subject to various conditions — on more than 150 properties.

The ruling overturned a state appeals court decision that favored the delta owners but also gave property owners more rights than they had previously under state law.

The state will have to obtain a court order prior to geological testing, the decision said, and the trial court may limit the exploration to protect the interests of the owners.

The trial court also may require the state to deposit an amount that the court decides is sufficient to cover any likely damage and allow the owner to seek compensation before a jury for losses, including restricted use of the property.

Thomas H. Keeling, who represented dozens of landowners in the case, said he had hoped for a ruling that would send a strong message to the government about protecting the rights of private property.

Thursday's decision, he said, would leave California landowners vulnerable to "aggressive tactics" by state agencies.

Still, he said, he was pleased that the court decided that owners had a right to seek jury compensation for the loss of use of their property and damage. State law previously had not included that right, and rather than overturn the law as unconstitutional, the court added that provision.

The proposed project “would leave the delta, the largest estuary on the west coast of America, as a saline area and make it very difficult to farm,” he said. “The farmers in the delta will suffer immensely if these tunnels are ever built.”

The project, backed by Gov. Jerry Brown, would have to be approved by various agencies. Keeling said reviews and planning would take years.

The state has said that it might later acquire the properties, either through voluntary sales or eminent domain, and that it needed to map and survey the properties for plant and animal species, habitat, soil conditions, hydrology and other resources.

On 35 of the properties, the state has intended to do geological testing that involved drilling deep holes to determine subsoil conditions.

“The department is not seeking to obtain title to private property, to permanently maintain bored holes on the landowners’ property, or to obtain exclusive possession of any portion of the property for a significant period of time,” Cantil-Sakauye wrote.

Ted Thomas, a spokesman for the California Department of Water Resources, said the ruling was a significant victory for the project.

“It retains our momentum in increasing water supply reliability while protecting and enhancing the Delta ecosystem,” he said.

# Coastline in Long Beach will remain closed after spill dumped 2.4 million gallons of sewage

Source: LA Times 7/21/16



Two people jog along the shoreline in Long Beach on July 19, after officials closed the beach to swimming following a sewage spill. (Gary Coronado / Los Angeles Times)

## Veronica Rocha

Beaches in Long Beach will remain closed Thursday following a major sewage leak that spilled 2.4 million gallons of waste into the Los Angeles River earlier this week.

Five of nine test samples showed elevated bacteria levels Thursday, said Nelson Kerr, manager of Long Beach's Bureau of Environmental Health.

Initial samples [were clean and didn't show any signs of sewage](#), he said. But changes in flow from the L.A. River and ocean currents could have caused sewage to reach the beaches.

"It's just a snapshot in that window we take the sample," Kerr said.

The beaches could reopen by Saturday. Health officials will continue testing the waters twice a day until the samples are clean, he said.

Alamitos Bay, Colorado Lagoon and Mother's Beach remain open.

In Seal Beach, health officials on Thursday reopened a stretch of coastline that had closed following the spill.

All coastal beaches were closed Monday after an aging [5-foot sewer pipe collapsed](#) about 2 p.m. at 6th Street and Mission Road in Boyle Heights. The pipe was constructed in 1929.

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Debris clogged the line and caused sewage to overflow, according to Paul Gomez, spokesman for the city of Los Angeles' Department of Public Works.

Crews finally stopped the spill about 1:50 p.m. Tuesday, almost 24 hours after the rupture, and installed temporary pumping systems to minimize the flow. A permanent sewer bypass later was installed.

Of the 2.4 million gallons spilled, only 750,000 gallons were captured.

After the spill, crews washed and sanitized streets, sidewalks, storm drains and channels flowing to the L.A. River.

The cause of the failed pipe has not been determined.

Long Beach officials said Monday's leak is the largest sewage spill in the last 10 years to impact the city's beaches.

*The Las Virgenes - Triunfo IPA invites you to attend a free tour*

## Protecting the Malibu Creek Watershed

Join us for a free guided bus tour of key locations in the Malibu Creek watershed; learn its unique characteristics and the vital role played by wastewater treatment practices that protect public health and the environment. You will visit several interesting sites, including the Tapia Water Reclamation Facility, the Rancho Las Virgenes Composting Facility and the Solar Power Generation Facility.



**Saturday, August 6, 2016  
from 8:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

- Pre-registration is a requirement - sign up at [www.LVMWD.com/QuarterlyTour](http://www.LVMWD.com/QuarterlyTour); walk-ins cannot be accepted.
- Complimentary breakfast snacks and a light lunch will be provided.
- Guests must be age 10 or older; children under 18 must be accompanied by a responsible adult.
- Inclines and stairs should be expected; comfortable walking shoes are recommended.
- Preference is given to customers of Las Virgenes Municipal Water District and Triunfo Sanitation District.



Tours are offered by the Governing Board of  
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[www.LVMWD.com/QuarterlyTours](http://www.LVMWD.com/QuarterlyTours)

Source: The Acorn 7/21/16

Free compost available on Saturdays

## **Residents can pick up quality product till 1 p.m.**



Residents can pick up free compost from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Saturday at the Rancho Las Virgenes Composting Facility, 3700 Las Virgenes Road, Calabasas.

The soil enriching nutrients found in RLV compost is ideal for lawns, shrubs, ornamentals and vegetable gardens.

The compost saves water by helping the soil retain moisture.

RLV compost qualifies for the USEPA's Class-A Exceptional Quality rating and is the preferred choice of many local gardeners and professional landscapers.

For more information, visit [www.LVMWD.com/ community-compost](http://www.LVMWD.com/community-compost).

## Last Chance for a Rebate on Four Rain Barrels

### **Act Now Before the July 31 Deadline!**

The rainy season may be over for now, but what about next year?

Follow these steps to receive up to \$800 in rebates when you install water-saving rain barrels at your home.

1. Register online to reserve up to four rain barrel installation rebates. \$125 rebate for the installation of each barrel.  
[www.LVMWD.com/Rain-Barrels](http://www.LVMWD.com/Rain-Barrels)

2. Then, buy up to four qualifying rain barrels and get a \$75 rebate on each one from SoCalWaterSmart.com.

*You'll save money, save water and smile every time it rains!*



More information, forms and links can be found at  
[www.LVMWD.com/Rain-Barrels](http://www.LVMWD.com/Rain-Barrels)

*This offer only applies to residential customers of Las Virgenes Municipal Water District.*

*Rain barrels and installation must comply with the standards published at: [socialwatersmart.com/?page\\_id=2973](http://socialwatersmart.com/?page_id=2973)*

*Proper installation will require modification of rain gutter downspouts, an elevated base for the barrel and a means to secure the barrel from tipping.*

*Photo documentation of the installation and onsite inspection may be required for installation rebate.*

*This is a limited-time offer that will expire when designated grant funding is exhausted.*

# Incumbents want return to water board

Source: The Acorn 7/21/16



**Polan**

Two members of the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District board of directors are seeking reelection this November.

The water district is governed by a five-member board, each member representing a different geographical area. The members serve four-year terms. Applicants must reside within the division they seek to represent.

Charles Caspary, a Hidden Hills resident, joined the water board in 2001. He represents Division 1, comprising his hometown and portions of Calabasas, West Hills and Chatsworth.

Len Polan, a Westlake Village resident, joined the board in 2012. He represents Division 4, which includes Westlake Village, a portion of Agoura Hills and surrounding unincorporated areas.

The filing period for candidates opens July 18 and election forms must be picked up and returned to the Registrar-Recorder/ County Clerk's office in Norwalk no later than Aug. 12.



**Caspary**

LVMWD provides water and sanitation services to 70,000 ratepayers in Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Hidden Hills, Westlake Village and surrounding incorporated areas.

Both incumbents are making it a priority to ensure local residents have access to reliable water supplies over the long term.

Caspary wants to identify ways to reduce LVMWD's dependence on imported water.

"The board has done a lot of great work, but there are some really large issues facing the water district. We need to further diversify our supply of water," said Caspary, a former owner of Atlas Refuse Removal and Las Virgenes Disposal.

As a member of the Metropolitan Municipal Water District, LVMWD relies on imported water from the Sacramento Delta and the Colorado River. But there are other sources, such as ground water and reclaimed water that should be tapped, Caspary said.

"California would be in much better shape today if we had taken advantage of resources that we've dumped into the ocean for more than 30 years," he said.

The district is also working in partnership with Triunfo Sanitation District to modernize the Tapia Water Reclamation Facility near Calabasas and obtain new discharge permits for the sewer plant. The board directors are developing strategies to take advantage of new technology to reuse more reclaimed water, not only for irrigation, but also for potable water uses.

Polan, a Vietnam war veteran and architect who is completing his first term on the LVMWD board, said a goal for his next term in office is also to find solutions to minimize reliance on imported water and to keep costs down for consumers.

"Representing the concerns and needs with our available supplies is the job," Polan said. "I work hard doing this."

## **Ready, Set, GROW!**

This Saturday, pick up a load of FREE Rancho Las Virgenes Community Compost and watch your garden grow.

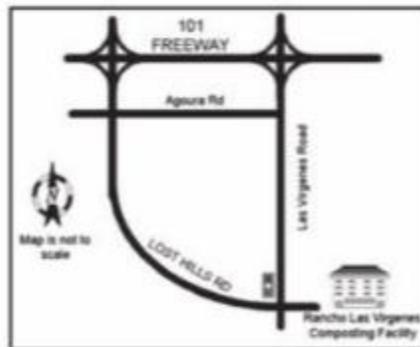
As the summer season is now underway, your plants will love the soil enriching nutrients found in RLV compost.

It's ideal for lawns, shrubs, ornamentals and vegetable gardens and it saves water by helping the soil retain moisture.

RLV compost qualifies for the USEPA's "Class-A Exceptional Quality" rating and is the preferred choice of many local gardeners and professional landscapers.



**Anyone can pick up FREE compost every Saturday, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., at our Rancho Las Virgenes Composting Facility located at 3700 Las Virgenes Rd in Calabasas.**



For more information, visit [www.LVMWD.com/community-compost](http://www.LVMWD.com/community-compost).



Source: Calabasas Style

# Water-Wise Landscaping Is "the New Normal"

Las Virgenes Municipal Water District

Driven by years of drought and a state-mandate to reduce water use 20 percent by 2020, Las Virgenes Municipal Water District has implemented a "water budget" program to encourage customers to use water more efficiently and avoid the waste of a limited resource. Under the new water budget program, each residential customer receives a personalized indoor and outdoor water-use target every month. While your indoor budget is based on the number of people living in your household (55 gallons per person per day), your outdoor budget is based on local weather data and the amount of landscaped area at your property that receives regular watering; this includes pools and spas.



Customers who operate within their water budgets are billed at the lowest rates; those who exceed their target pay more.

Historically, about 70 percent of the water delivered to LVMWD customers has been used outdoors, primarily to irrigate landscapes. The best way to stay within your water budget is to reduce outdoor water use, and there are different ways to achieve this: you can install a weather-based irrigation controller to keep from over-watering your landscape, and you can replace or reduce the amount of high-water-use grass and plants with an attractive, low-water-use, native landscape that can enhance the appearance and value of your home.



*Top photo: Example of landscaped area around property that receives regular watering. Photo taken using aerial photography.*

*Bottom photo: Water-wise landscape featuring colorful, native, low-water-use plant varieties within Las Virgenes Municipal Water District's service area.*

*(photo credit: LVMWD staff)*

Weather-based irrigation controllers automatically reduce watering time as the weather gets cooler and apply more water as it warms. Several models automatically shut off when it rains. Replacing a standard clock timer with a weather-based irrigation controller is easily done and can cut back your water use. There's also a rebate for qualifying models through SoCal WaterSmart. Converting to a low-water-use landscape can significantly reduce your water bill.

As we enter a fifth year of drought in Southern California, there are still many customers with lush, thirsty landscapes—especially those with large estate properties. Several Calabasas property owners pay some of the highest bills in the LVMWD service area. Worse, customers who exceed their water budget by 200 percent now pay additional penalties.

Climate change and water uncertainty is "the new normal." After years of severe drought conditions forced many lawns to go brown, it makes no sense to return to wasteful landscape practices. Similar to hybrid cars and newer energy-saving appliances, using water more efficiently is smart, sustainable and harmonious with our native climate.

If you're still undecided, switching to a drought-tolerant landscape does not mean having a plethora of rocks and cacti around your home. There are plenty of colorful, leafy alternatives, including Blue-eyed Grass, Common Sage, Desert Marigold, and Spanish Lavender. See the photos of vibrant, creative, low-water-use gardens already in use by your neighbors.

A list of low-water-use, native plant varieties can be viewed at [www.LVMWD.com/PlantGuide](http://www.LVMWD.com/PlantGuide).

Should you wish to contact a local water conservation-qualified landscape professional for a consultation, visit [www.LVMWD.com/Landscape-Professionals](http://www.LVMWD.com/Landscape-Professionals).



*More local landscapes adorned with colorful, native, low-water-use plant varieties.  
[photo credit: LVMWD staff]*

# Sewage spill in L.A. grows to 2.4 million gallons after pipe ruptures for second time

Source: LA Times 7/19/16



A damaged sewage line that has been a hazard since Monday afternoon ruptured again Tuesday, spilling at least 2.4 million gallons of sewage into the Los Angeles River and forcing the closure of all beaches in Long Beach, officials said.

Crews worked overnight to contain the initial spill and finally stopped it at 10 p.m. Monday, said Tonya Durrell, a spokesman for the City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works.

However, the cracked pipe split again Tuesday as repairs were underway, she said.

The initial spill occurred about 2 p.m. Monday near 6th Street and Mission Road in Boyle Heights.

Officials said the top of a sewer pipe collapsed, sending debris into the pipe. The clog then caused the sewage to overflow.

Public Works officials don't know what caused the break, but the major pipe was built in 1929, said Adel Hagekhalil, assistant director of Los Angeles Sanitation.

"This happening is just a part of the maintenance system," Hagekhalil said. "Something grows old, you have to repair it or replace it."

Sanitation workers on Tuesday were building a permanent bypass system to divert flow around the old pipe, he said.

Long Beach officials planned to test samples of ocean water Tuesday morning to determine whether it posed any health risks to the public, said Nelson Kerr, manager of the city's Bureau of Environmental Health.

So far, officials haven't received any reports of waste on city beaches, but Kerr said that doesn't mean it's not in the ocean.

Dr. Mauro Torno, the acting health officer for Long Beach, decided to shut down swimming along the coast until tests show the water is safe. Officials asked the public to avoid puddles of water near the spill.

Health officials will require at least two clean water samples before they decide to reopen the beaches, Kerr said. Depending on the quality of the samples, the beaches could reopen as early as Thursday.

"It's a lot of sewage to consider," he said. "This is a fairly large spill."

The 51-mile river extends from the Santa Monica and Santa Susana mountains, and snakes through Los Angeles County, ending in Long Beach.

Although the leak was large, it pales in comparison with the city's largest spill.

In 1998, more than 30 millions gallons of sewage spilled during El Niño storms, Hagekhalil said.

"We haven't had a large overflow in over 15 years," he said. "We've been doing very well. This was an accident but we're investigating what happened."

# Southern California water district completes \$175-million purchase of delta islands

Source: LA Times 7/18/16



Southern California's powerful water supplier has completed the \$175-million purchase of five islands in the heart of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, the ecologically sensitive region that's a key source of water for the Southland.

The top attorney for the Metropolitan Water District said in a memo Monday that the agency had finalized the purchase of the islands from Delta Wetlands Properties.

The purchase comes [less than a week](#) after the state Supreme Court lifted an order that had barred the water agency from buying the islands. The order was imposed after San Joaquin County, other local governments and environmental groups sued to block the sale of the islands.

Metropolitan is a wholesaler that uses water from Northern California as well as the Colorado River to supply more than two dozen cities and water agencies, including Los Angeles.

The water district has said the land may be used during the construction of the proposed delta tunnel system, a controversial \$15-billion project that would divert Sacramento River water through tunnels directly to pumping plants in the southern delta. Two of the islands are in the path of the tunnels; the MWD's ownership would end the need for eminent domain battles.

An MWD spokeswoman told The Times last week that the agency has yet to put forth a project for the land.

The acquisition of the land from Delta Wetlands Properties, a subsidiary of the Swiss insurance company Zurich Insurance Group, [has generated division](#) since it was proposed in 2015. The MWD board approved the deal in March on a 54% to 41% vote, with "no" votes from representatives of Los Angeles, Santa Monica and the San Diego County Water Authority.

Opponents of the sale filed suits claiming breach of contract or arguing that the water agency should have filed an environmental impact report. Attorneys for San Joaquin County and the environmental group Food and Water Watch blasted the water agency for sidestepping the California Environmental Quality Act, according to court papers.

The Supreme Court order from last week did not dismiss any litigation but cleared the way for the MWD to buy the islands while fighting the legal challenges. The litigation against the MWD is expected to continue for several months or years.

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## **Free Compost Available for Local Gardens**

What's the secret to healthy lawns and gardens? Professional landscapers and savvy "green thumb" gardeners know it takes the right balance of water and nutrients. That's why so many of them choose to use Community Compost that's available free every Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Rancho Las Virgenes (RLV) Composting Facility, located at the intersection of Las Virgenes and Lost Hills Roads in Calabasas.

RLV Community Compost has earned the coveted U.S. EPA designation of "Class A – Exceptional Quality." That means it is an excellent soil amendment that's been tested and verified to meet exacting standards. Most Community Compost users come back again and again, having seen the results it brings to their lawns and gardens. Best of all, it's free! Just bring a sealable bin, container, sturdy plastic bags or a tarp to cover pickup truck beds or trailers. RLV supplies the shovels to load your own supply, you provide the labor.

The RLV Community Composting Facility is operated by the Las Virgenes – Triunfo Joint Powers Authority and is available to everyone.

For more information visit [www.lvmwd.com/community-compost](http://www.lvmwd.com/community-compost).

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