

2025 Annual Report

Consensus Into Action

Southern California Water Coalition



Letter from the Executive Director

2025 was a year of momentum and resolve for SCWC. We built bipartisan legislative champions through our outreach and education channels for **Delta Conveyance permit streamlining** and helped to organize one of the broadest statewide coalitions in recent memory—business, labor, community, agriculture, and water agencies—keeping the project front and center even though the legislation did not get across the finish line this year. We helped restore critical funding for **Healthy Rivers & Landscapes**, supported protections against invasive golden mussels, worked to keep Proposition 4 allocations advancing water reliability and resilience, and supported SB72's passage establishing long-term water supply targets to meet future resiliency and reliability needs. We testified before the State Water Resources Control Board and coordinated member input with SWRCB and the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment so emerging drinking water standards protect public health while remaining practical and affordable, especially for small and disadvantaged communities.

Our education and outreach scaled alongside advocacy. California Water Magazine expanded from Inland Empire and Orange County editions (864,000 circulation) to new Ventura, Los Angeles, and San Gabriel Valley editions **reaching 3.4 million readers**.

What Matters Water TV & Podcast explored wildfires and water systems, why it takes so long to build, and the potential of cap and trade funding—surpassing **135,000 cumulative viewers and listeners**. We launched development of a recycled water educational video to build public trust in direct potable reuse and issued timely statements supporting the Delta Conveyance Accountability Action Plan, the State Water Project Adaptation Strategy, the Bay Delta Plan update, and the Pure Water SoCal Environmental Impact Report.

Thanks to your support, SCWC finished the fiscal year ahead of plan and entered FY 2025–26 with strengthened reserves and a growing membership. In the year ahead, we will retool our Delta Conveyance strategy with our new bipartisan champions, pursue funding for State Water Project conveyance repairs and energy affordability, shape 2026 Proposition 4 allocations, and continue regulatory engagement that marries science, equity, and practicality. We'll find ways to communicate the value of water and examine the impacts of artificial intelligence and workforce development on water supplies. Securing our backbone supply through the Delta is essential to every other investment we make in local water—together, we will keep leading with facts, partnerships, and solutions.

Warm regards,



Charley Wilson
Executive Director



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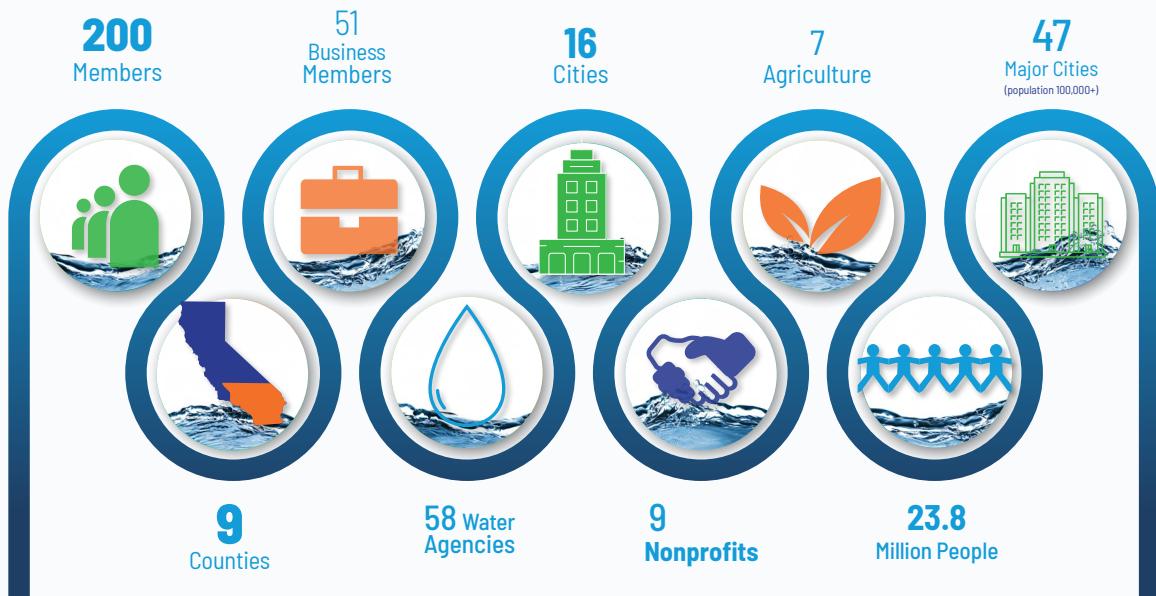
Securing our backbone supply through the Delta is not optional. It's essential to every other investment we make in our water future.”

Cover: Dawn view of Lake Palmdale and the Los Angeles Aqueduct in Palmdale, California, United States.

About Southern California Water Coalition

Founded in 1984, the SCWC is an alliance of leaders from local and regional governments, businesses, water agencies, and organizations who lend their voices to water resource advocacy. As a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization using tools such as public education and partnership, we drive advocacy and action to ensure reliable and resilient water supplies in Southern California.

Membership by the Numbers



Task Forces

The SCWC contributes to topical education by offering multiple task forces to provide ideas, offer resources, and propose strategies for regional water issues.



Colorado River



Delta Issues



Equity,
Access, and
Affordability



Infrastructure
Finance



Legislative
Policy



Recycled
Water



Stormwater



Water Energy
Efficiency



Water
Quality

Join Us

Everyone in Southern California has a stake in the future of California's water supply. By joining the conversation and offering your support, you're ensuring that your voice is heard and is among the full range of perspectives represented when critical water infrastructure decisions are being made locally and statewide.

Membership also confers great benefits:

- Share insights, gain knowledge, and shape solutions on issues like stormwater, the water-energy nexus, recycled water and more by joining our task forces.
- Learn and collaborate with experts and stakeholders at our workshops and events.
- Network with water industry leaders at premier regionwide events.
- Tap into policy analysis, outreach, and advocacy on issues you care about.

Turning Consensus Into Outcomes

In 2025, SCWC rallied bipartisan support into measurable policy influence.



Delta Conveyance Project Permit streaming



We helped to build bipartisan champions for Delta Conveyance permit streamlining, organizing one of the largest cross-sector coalitions (**200+ members**) in recent memory, and met with 50+ legislators and staff—anchored by a June 11 Capitol advocacy day. While the DCP bill did not receive a floor vote, we established the champions, messaging, and coalition infrastructure needed for action and message amplification in 2026.



Protecting Water Supplies

We also helped restore roughly \$350 million for Healthy Rivers & Landscapes in budget negotiations, supported protective legislation against golden mussels, and helped keep Proposition 4 water-resilience allocations moving alongside cap-and-trade reauthorization and grid regionalization.



Tracking Legislation and Regulation

The Legislative Task Force tracked dozens of measures and advanced clear positions. Wins included SB 31 (Recycled Water) and SB 72 (California Water Plan), both signed. We supported SB 454 (PFAS mitigation) and SB 682 (PFAS source control), which were vetoed, and held an “oppose unless amended” stance on AB 1319 (California Endangered Species Act), which was chaptered.

SCWC also testified before the State Water Resources Control Board and coordinated statewide coalition input with SWRCB and Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment on emerging drinking water standards, emphasizing science, practicality, and affordability for small and disadvantaged communities.



Delta Conveyance

Modernizing the state's water delivery system

The Delta Conveyance Project modernizes the State Water Project's backbone for 27 million people and 750,000 acres of farmland. In a hotter, drier, volatile climate—and amid earthquake and sea level rise risks—the project would safeguard water quality, add operating flexibility, and keep supplies reliable and affordable. It complements local investments in recycling, stormwater capture, conservation, and storage.

In 2025, SCWC helped lead a coordinated campaign to support this project: we built bipartisan champions from a standing start, organized 50+ meetings with legislators and staff, partnered with Groundswell for Water Justice, Southern California Leadership Council, BizFed L.A. County, and Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley to amplify educational efforts, and held a June 11 Capitol advocacy day. We also briefed the Los Angeles County delegation and new legislators in the Governor's office.

We helped to mobilize a 200-plus organization coalition letter and a bipartisan legislator sign-on with 32 signatures in support of the DCP permit streamlining bill. We publicly supported the DCP Accountability Action Plan (Aug 6) and the State Water Project Adaptation Strategy (Aug 19). Our communications push included commentary in Maven's Notebook and an LA Times response, as well as targeted advertising on YouTube, more than 40 social posts, and six email blasts.

Although the permit streamlining bill did not receive a floor vote, the champions, messages, and infrastructure are now in place. SCWC will sustain outreach into 2026 to secure permitting clarity, predictable timelines, and science-based decisions that reduce delay and cost and enable an informed choice.

Comprehensive Communications

Informing and empowering Southern Californians about water issues

SCWC's 2025 communications program blended regional storytelling, timely policy updates, and digital engagement. Through our partnership with Civic Publications, *California Water Magazine* published two May editions in the Inland Empire and Orange County and three metro editions in November—Ventura, Los Angeles, and San Gabriel Valley—reaching 4.2 million readers through emails, online subscriptions, and paid advertising.



What Matters Water TV & Podcast advanced water literacy with four timely episodes: California's new conservation mandates (#22), wildfires and water infrastructure (#23), why it takes so long to build in California (#24), and using cap and trade for water infrastructure (#25). All together, our episodes have garnered more than 135,000 viewers and listeners.

Digital channels amplified advocacy and education in real time. Our community remained engaged—more than 15,000 followers and/or subscribers regularly receive updates from us on water policy issues.

In support of the Delta Conveyance Project, we ran paid advertising campaigns on YouTube and LinkedIn, and published more than 40 dedicated social posts, alongside commentary in Maven's Notebook and a Los Angeles Times letter to the editor.

Additional milestones included the Haiku H2O engagement campaign for Water Awareness Month, statements supporting the DCP Accountability Action Plan and the State Water Project Adaptation Strategy, support for the SWRCB Bay Delta Plan update, and a public letter backing the Pure Water SoCal Environmental Impact Report. Together, these efforts elevated partners, expanded reach, and kept facts front and center.

California
Water
circulation
totaled

4.2
million



Gatherings That Get People Talking

In 2025, SCWC united over 2,000 participants through events and webinars, driving solutions to critical issues.

Annual Meeting and Dinner

On October 23rd, 430 leaders from water, business, labor, agriculture, and nonprofits gathered for our annual meeting at Newport Beach's Balboa Bay Resort. Sponsored by industry and community partners, the event featured a dynamic keynote from political strategist **Mike Murphy**, who delivered a sharp, witty analysis of upcoming elections and explored how national politics intersect with water policy.

Two outstanding leaders were honored: **Miguel Luna** received the Harriett Wieder Award for his transformative advocacy on water resiliency and equity, inspired by his family's struggles with scarcity. Introduced by Metropolitan Water District Chair **Adán Ortega, Jr.** and former MWD General Manager **Ron Gastelum**, Luna urged continued engagement and justice in water management.

Beth Olhasso, Vice President of West Coast Advisors, earned the Kathy Cole Award for her strategic leadership in legislative initiatives like the Delta Conveyance Project. Her commitment to mentorship and collaboration reflects Cole's legacy, fostering future water policy leaders.



Engaging Events

July Quarterly Luncheon

SCWC hosted its July Quarterly Meeting and Luncheon on July 18 at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley. The program, *“Financing the Future: New Models and Partnerships for Water Investment in California,”* featured **Robb Grantham**, General Manager of Santa Margarita Water District; **Wendy Greuel**, National Advisor, Manatt, Phelps & Phillips; and **Deven Upadhyay**, General Manager at Metropolitan Water District.



April Quarterly Luncheon

The April event at Wilson Creek Winery in Temecula featured as speakers California Department of Water Resources Director **Karla Nemeth**, who emphasized climate resilience, infrastructure upgrades, and affordability, and **Assemblyman Jeff Gonzalez**, who stressed collaboration and practical solutions. Nearly 200 attendees joined the luncheon for networking and deeper discussions. Afterward, the Board gathered for a strategic retreat and dinner to set priorities for the year.



January Quarterly Luncheon

SCWC launched 2025 with a Quarterly Luncheon on January 24 at the new Intuit Dome in Inglewood, drawing 200 attendees. Industry leaders, policymakers, and members gathered for insightful discussions and exclusive access to one of Los Angeles' premier sports venues. **Senator Laura Richardson** opened the program, followed by retired **Senator Jim Brulte** and **Juan Rodriguez** of Bearstar Strategies, who shared post-election insights. The event concluded with a VIP tour of the state-of-the-art arena.



Cap-and-Trade: Funding Water Infrastructure for Climate Resilience

A July 11 webinar examined extending California's cap-and-trade program beyond 2030 and using its revenues for water infrastructure. Panelists **Johnny Amaral** (Friant Water Authority), **Glenn Farrel** (GF Advocacy), and **Jennifer Pierre** (State Water Contractors) discussed using the program to fund water security and statewide climate adaptation.



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