



Water Reliability Requires an All-of-the-Above Approach

The days are shorter, colder and the holiday season is in full swing. This must mean we're getting close to the end of the year! As we welcome a new year, it's an opportune time to reflect upon the past 12 months. Water agencies in Orange County work 24/7/365 to deliver safe, reliable water to you and there are several initiatives in place to accomplish this. Simply put, it's an all-of-the-above approach when it comes to managing our water supplies. We've highlighted just a few of the many programs in this article and provided resources for you to learn more about your local water supplies.

Increasing Supplies

It's an exciting time as the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS), a joint project between the Orange County Water District (OCWD) and Orange County Sanitation District (OC San) which takes highly treated wastewater and purifies it into drinking water quality, begins to [produce at its full capacity](#) – 130 million gallons of water a day, serving nearly 1 million people daily. Whether it's water recycling, storage, or stormwater capture, increasing local water supplies means enhanced water reliability for the region.

Combating Seawater Intrusion

The biggest long-term threat to water quality in the Orange County Groundwater Basin, which provides 77% of the drinking water supply to 2.5 million people in north and central Orange County, is the intrusion of salty seawater. There are 102 injection wells located in the cities of Huntington Beach and Fountain Valley that inject fresh water into the basin, creating a barrier that prevents seawater from moving inland and contaminating valuable groundwater that the city relies on. These wells are monitored daily to ensure we protect the basin from seawater contamination. Plans are underway for further evaluation in the Sunset Gap area beneath the Naval Weapons Station in Seal Beach to determine the need for a potential future barrier.

Groundwater Cleanup

OCWD is committed to working with the community to solve threats to groundwater. Industrial chemicals have impacted the [northern part of the groundwater aquifer](#) located under Fullerton, Anaheim and Placentia and we are working closely with stakeholders to clean up the pollution. Additionally, the District has proactively and swiftly addressed issues of new or emerging contaminants like per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), tested effective treatment techniques and is working with impacted cities like Fullerton to build treatment plants and remove PFAS from the water. Fullerton's [Kimberly Well 1A PFAS Treatment Plant](#), the county's first to come online, has been operating since June 2021 and can treat up to 3,000 gallons of water per minute.

We have to implement a broad range of solutions to safeguard our water supply. We encourage you to get involved and take an interest in your water’s journey – from source to tap.

Learn about your local water supply	Visit www.ocwd.com or contact our city water department for information about the infrastructure in place to deliver water to you.
Sign up for a virtual tour or watch an on-demand video	See how the advanced water purification process occurs at GWRS.
Watch a water webinar	From local supplies, water quality, seawater intrusion and much more, there’s something for everyone in our extensive library of water webinars (be sure to sign up for a future one, too).
Apply for a water-saving rebate	Contact the city of Fullerton water service department for specific information about rebates and other water-saving programs available to you.

Happy holidays!

In collaboration with Orange County Water District staff, this article was provided by Orange County Water District Director Bruce Whitaker, who represents Division 10, which covers the city of Fullerton. Contact Director Whitaker at BWWhitaker@live.com.