

## **California Urban Water Agencies releases white paper on declining flows and adapting to change**

Jan. 3, 2018, WALNUT CREEK, Calif. — The California Urban Water Agencies (CUWA) has released a new white paper on Adapting to Change: Utility Systems and Declining Flows to provide decision makers, water/wastewater system managers, and other stakeholders an understanding of the impacts of declining system flows and how utilities are adapting to these circumstances. “Wise water use is a fundamental component of CUWA’s mission and an important part of our agencies’ long-term water supply reliability efforts for sustainably meeting future water demands. And yet, within the interconnected urban water cycle, rapidly declining flows can potentially impact water, wastewater, and recycled water systems,” said CUWA Executive Director, Cindy Paulson.

During the recent historic drought, Californians responded to the Governor’s call for emergency statewide water use reductions. And the corresponding reduction in water demands brought to light some unintended consequences of declining flows that have a ripple effect throughout systems within the urban water cycle. “Our goal with this white paper is to better understand the system-wide impacts of increased conservation and water use efficiency so that decision makers are better informed as they address California’s current and future water challenges,” said CUWA Staff Engineer, Wendy Broley.

CUWA’s white paper was developed through a partnership with California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA), the Water Research Foundation (WRF), WaterReuse California, and the California Water Environment Association (CWEA). The white paper summarizes information from several resources, including:

- A literature review to gain a foundational understanding of what impacts utilities may be experiencing because of declining flows.
- A high-level survey to determine the level and range of observed impacts in California.
- One-on-one interviews and developing case studies to illustrate the broad range of issues agencies are experiencing and their associated impact.

“It is interesting how water use reductions, and the subsequent declining flows are impacting agencies throughout California. Our survey showed that 50% of respondents did in fact experience impacts on their drinking water, wastewater, or recycled water infrastructure,” said City of San Diego External Water Policy Program Manager, Cathy Pieroni. Since the completion of the white paper, CUWA has received multiple requests from utilities interested in responding to the survey with observations and experiences of their own. As a result, CUWA has agreed to keep the survey open for those that would still like to respond. CUWA will incorporate the updated results in outreach materials, such as presentations and/or a future article.

The white paper can be accessed on CUWA’s website at:

[http://www.cuwa.org/pubs/CUWA\\_DecliningFlowsWhitePaper\\_11-28-17.pdf](http://www.cuwa.org/pubs/CUWA_DecliningFlowsWhitePaper_11-28-17.pdf)

The survey can be accessed here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/decliningflows>

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### **About CUWA**

Established in 1990, the California Urban Water Agencies (CUWA) is a nonprofit corporation of 11 major urban water agencies that are responsible for delivering drinking water to about two-thirds of California's population. As the collective voice for the largest urban water purveyors in California, CUWA provides technical perspective to promote common understanding and consensus solutions among the urban water community. CUWA agencies include Alameda County Water District, City of Fresno, Contra Costa Water District, East Bay Municipal Utility District, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, City of San Diego Public Utilities Department, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, San Diego County Water Authority, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Santa Clara Valley Water District, and Zone 7 Water Agency in Livermore. For more information, visit: <http://www.cuwa.org/>

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