



Water Supply Assessment Fact Sheet

(Updated: March 22, 2022)

Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) is a special district established in 1918 by the California state legislature to protect the Coachella Valley's water resources and build a canal to supplement the local groundwater basin with imported Colorado River Water. CVWD policies are regulated by several state and federal agencies including the State Water Resources Control Board, California Department of Public Health, and the California Environmental Protection Agency. The CVWD Board of Directors may enact and enforce ordinances, and pass resolutions necessary for the operation of CVWD's business.

When a new development or project is approved, the public may have questions regarding who approved what, how, and why. This document clarifies CVWD's role in land use planning within its service area.

1. Who approves land use zoning and development?

Land use and zoning regulations are vested in cities and counties by way of their general police power to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of their residents. As a special district, CVWD does not have the police power to make, change, or affect land use decisions made by the cities or counties within CVWD's service area.

2. What, if any, is CVWD's role in land use planning?

For projects that are subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) within CVWD's service area, the city or county as the lead agency will identify CVWD as the "public water system" that will supply water for the proposed project. If the project meets certain size or water use criteria, the lead agency will request a Water Supply Assessment/Water Supply Verification (WSA/WSV) to incorporate into the environmental review documents required by CEQA. Once CVWD receives the request, CVWD must provide the WSA/WSV to the lead agency within 90 days.

3. What is a Water Supply Assessment/Water Supply Verification (WSA/WSV)?

To foster better communication and more closely link land use decision-making and water supply availability, Senate Bill (SB) 610 and SB 221 were enacted into law in 2001.

Water Supply Assessment (SB 610):

The purpose of a WSA is to determine whether the public water system's total projected water supplies available during normal, single-dry, and multiple-dry water years during a 20-year projection will meet the projected water demand associated with the proposed project, in addition to the public water system's existing and planned future uses. The WSA is incorporated into the proposed project's environmental review documents, pursuant to CEQA.

Water Supply Verification (SB 221):

SB 221 establishes the relationship between the WSA and project approval under the Subdivision Map Act. The public water system must provide a written verification of sufficient water supply (Water Supply Verification) prior to the approval of a new subdivision.

4. Does CVWD have authority to deny water to a project for wasteful or inefficient water use?

CVWD as a special district has no authority over land use decisions. The WSA/WSV is an informational document that state law requires CVWD to provide when a qualifying project is being proposed within



CVWD's service area. The information in the WSA/WSV is defined by state law and does not recommend or advocate any position on whether the city or county should approve or deny a project.

If, because of its assessment, the public water system concludes that its water supplies are, or will be, insufficient, the public water system is required to provide to the city or county its plans for acquiring additional water supplies, setting forth the measures that are being undertaken to acquire and develop those water supplies.

5. How does CVWD calculate future supply and demand?

Future water supply and demand projections within CVWD's boundary are periodically evaluated in CVWD's long-term water management plans like the 2022 Indio Subbasin Water Management Plan Update and 2022 Mission Creek Alternative Plan Update (collectively, 2022 Alternative Plan Updates). Municipal water demand projections were also included in the 2020 Coachella Valley Regional Urban Water Management Plan. The demand projections are based on the regional growth forecasts including population, households, and employment that incorporate city and county general plans.

Similarly, these documents evaluate current and future supply outlooks for all sources. CVWD has a diverse supply portfolio which includes local groundwater, Colorado River water, State Water Project (SWP) water, and recycled water. Plans include investments in developing new sources of supply like additional recycled water and participating in the Delta Conveyance Project to modernize the aging SWP infrastructure and protect the reliability of SWP water deliveries.

6. Does a WSA/WSV consider the sustainability of the aquifer?

A WSA/WSV determines whether CVWD's total projected water supplies will meet the projected water demand associated with the proposed project, in addition to existing and planned future uses. CVWD participates in Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Planning and Urban Water Management Planning (UWMP), which both consider the long-term sustainability of the local groundwater basin. SGMA requires that these plans be evaluated and updated every five years. If SGMA or UWMP inform CVWD that either subbasins' extraction could exceed the inflow of water to the basin (overdraft), CVWD would develop water supply projects and conservation goals to correct overdraft and protect the sustainability of the aquifer.

7. How does CVWD consider the long-term reliability of imported water supplies?

The 2022 Alternative Plan Updates considered impacts of reduced local and imported supplies from more frequent droughts to help plan for these impacts. Specifically, the 2022 Alternative Plans included an evaluation of reduced reliability of both State Water Project and Colorado River Water.

8. How is the expected water use of large development projects calculated?

A WSA/WSV must determine the water demand required by the project. This is based on the size and type of land uses proposed for the project (e.g. residential, commercial/industrial, recreational uses). Indoor residential water demand is based on performance standards as provided in the California Water Code (CWC). Indoor commercial and industrial demand is based on the American Water Works Association Research Foundations Commercial and Industrial End Uses of Water report. Projected outdoor water usage is calculated using the Maximum Applied Water Allowance (MAWA) equation from CVWD's Landscape and Irrigation Design Ordinance.