

Water Projects at a Glance

RECENTLY COMPLETED EXAMPLES

[First-of-Its-Kind Needs Analysis for Drinking Water in California](#)

Funder: California State Water Resources Control Board

Supported by a \$3 million contract, this study identified a risk for failure among a significant portion of the state's drinking water systems. The report is the first comprehensive analysis of how clean water is provided in California, and it estimates how much it would actually cost to deliver safe water to every resident.

[Keeping the Lights and Water On: COVID-19 and Utility Debt](#)

Funder: Chan Zuckerberg Initiative

We assessed household utility debt burden in Los Angeles and found that between 25% and 30% of all households face financial difficulties paying for the most essential services of water and electricity. Communities of color face the greatest utility debt burden, which highlight the deepening of racial and economic inequality during the pandemic. Our recommendations inform equitable, accessible, and targeted relief programs for low-income ratepayers during and after the pandemic.

[Testing and Eliminating Lead Exposure in Drinking Water in Early Care and Education Sites](#)

Funder: First 5 LA

This partnership supported the implementation of a state-legislated program to test for and remediate lead in drinking water and other water quality issues affecting children in daycare facilities in Los Angeles County. We convened three community roundtable discussions which informed policy recommendations.

[Analyzing the Governance and Performance of Water Systems to Target Interventions](#)

Funder: Environment Now, Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, Water Foundation

We evaluated the performance of more than 200 water systems across L.A. County and compared data to findings published in our groundbreaking 2015 water atlas. The 2020 progress report flags interventions that may be necessary to continue improvements and address persistent problems, including disparities in water quality, affordability, and accessibility across water systems. A 2021 report focuses on the governance of systems and their accountability to residents they serve.

[Informing California's Water Affordability Actions](#)

Funder: California State Water Resources Control Board

We worked with all major water system providers and environmental justice groups in California to provide the conceptual and empirical evidence base for a state-wide low-income rate assistance program for drinking water—the first of its kind in the U.S. In February 2020, the Water Board in collaboration with the Luskin Center released the report containing our analysis and recommendations for this statewide program.

[Guiding Supply Investments with Human Right to Water Analysis](#)

Funder: Resources Legacy Fund

In the context of a suite of water security and reliance proposals that water suppliers across the Southern California region are pursuing, we evaluated the costs and benefits of various strategies to increase water supply, including desalination, with an emphasis on how those strategies would impact water bills.

[Addressing Tap Water Quality Concerns: Tools for Disadvantaged Communities](#)

Funder: Water Foundation and Environment Now

We convened community members and other stakeholders to identify solutions to increase public trust in drinking water. As a result, we launched a working group to develop policy addressing contamination and mistrust of tap water, including overlooked plumbing issues. We regularly support collaborative efforts between water systems, CBOs and regulators on these issues.

CURRENT RESEARCH

[Valuing Benefits of Water Reuse From the West Coast's Largest Wastewater Facility](#)

Funder: Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

We are assessing the proposed reuse and groundwater development project for the Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant, and estimating the value of benefits for ratepayers. These benefits include avoided future costs in the event of droughts and seismic activity, which can impact the delivery of imported water.

[Envisioning an Urban Water Market for L.A. County](#)

Funders: UCLA Sustainable LA Grand Challenge and the Water Foundation

We are analyzing volume and cost data for all major water stakeholders in L.A. County to assess how to develop governance structures for water trading, feasible pathways of market expansion, and the size of the regional benefits of each alternative and necessary policy reforms to enable market operation.

[Assessing the Energy Implications of Advanced Water Recycling](#)

Funders: U.S./China Clean Energy Research Center for Water-Energy Technologies and the California Energy Commission

This project evaluates the energy and cost intensity of the production of recycled water by comprehensively assessing energy inputs into wastewater and reclamation plant operations in Los Angeles County. The results of this study will inform both water and energy planners in regional water reliance efforts.

[Leading Research on California's Water and Fire Nexus](#)

Funder: UC Agriculture and Natural Resources Unit

California's ability to provide access to clean, safe, and affordable drinking water is threatened by the increasing frequency and severity of wildfires across the state. We are bringing together leading academic research and community expertise to identify opportunities to advance research at the water-fire nexus.

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