Water Projects at a Glance

RECENTLY COMPLETED EXAMPLES

**Identifying the Performance of Water Systems in L.A. County to Target Interventions**  
*Funders: Environment Now and Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation*

LCI 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.

**Providing Affordable Drinking Water to Low-Income Californians**  
*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 LCI released the report containing our analysis and recommendations for this statewide program.

**Fighting Drought with Stormwater: From Research to Practice**  
*Funders: University of California Multi-campus Research Programs and Initiatives*

LCI worked with researchers across the University of California system to assess the economic feasibility of stormwater permittees using enhanced stormwater capture techniques to address drought conditions, safely augment water supplies, and minimize flood risk in urban California.

**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 the water bills of disadvantaged ratepayers.

**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 due to premise plumbing – pipes that run from the lot line of a property to the tap and are the responsibility of landowners. The process also resulted in the report “Stopping the Drain on Household Budgets: Addressing Tap Water Mistrust through Affordable Premise Plumbing Investments.”
CURRENT RESEARCH

Conducting First-of-Its-Kind Needs Analysis for Drinking Water in California  
Funder: California State Water Resources Control Board

Through a $3 million contract, LCI is beginning a comprehensive assessment to identify risks and solutions for water systems and private wells throughout California. This will include analyzing the technical, managerial and financial capacity of hundreds of systems that provide drinking water to Californians. Recommendations will be tailored for each water system in violation or at risk of violation.

Valuing Benefits of Water Reuse from the West Coast’s Largest Wastewater Facility  
Funder: Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

LCI is supporting what is expected to be one of the largest water projects of the 21st century for Southern California. As such, 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 making decisions to increase local and regional water reliance by using water to its fullest potential.

Testing and Eliminating Lead Exposure in Drinking Water in Early Care and Education Sites  
Funder: First 5 LA

This partnership with First 5 LA supports 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. LCI is convening three community roundtable discussions that will inform final policy recommendations for facilities and state agencies regarding implementation.

CONTACT

Gregory Pierce, associate director (gpierce@luskin.ucla.edu)