Urban Drinking Water Governing Bodies:

Representation and Accountability of Systems to Los Angeles County's Residents

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About the Client

The Water Foundation and its partners advance lasting solutions to secure safe water for people, restore and sustain freshwater ecosystems, and build climate resilience. This work is led by two integrated programs – Healthy Communities and Healthy Watersheds. As a public foundation, they do this through direct grantmaking, field building, and campaign strategy development.

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Executive Summary

Community water systems are the building blocks of California's water supply network and are critical intermediaries which shape community access to and management of safe, reliable, and affordable water, especially in urban areas. However, the presence and representativeness of governing bodies of these local systems remain poorly understood and monitored, and residents served by the system are not adequately represented in local water leadership. This report seeks to develop a comprehensive understanding of the representativeness of existing decisionmakers for Los Angeles county's (L.A. county) drinking water system. This focus can inform efforts by residents of the systems served as well as support policymakers, advocates, and community activists in efforts to address current and emerging water system inequities. It also provides a data resource for future research.

This research is the first to evaluate the leadership bodies of L.A. county's drinking water systems to enable analysis of their representational demographics and attributes of governance. I answer two questions in this report. First, how can the governing bodies of L.A. county's drinking water systems be evaluated? Second, how do the governing bodies of the county's drinking water systems compare in terms of representational demographics and accountability? To answer these questions, I used a mixed methods approach to catalog and assess the governance of Los Angeles county's water systems. Multiple different sources of publicly available data were tapped, as there is no single repository for this information. Data collection for this

Key Terms

WATER SYSTEM: Any entity operating, maintaining, or controlling facilities for providing potable drinking water service for compensation. Adapted from California Water Code §10608.12

WATER GOVERNANCE: The structures that control decisionmaking and influent water's use and management.

GOVERNING BODY: Those with the legal responsibility for governing their water system(s).

Research Questions

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- How can we evaluate the governing bodies of Los Angeles county's drinking water systems?
- How do the governing bodies of Los Angeles county's drinking water systems compare in terms of representational demographics and accountability?

Data & Methods

Water Governance Attributes

Los Angeles county drinking water system governance attributes available in 'Water Governance Catalog'.

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Community Partners



research started with the list of Community Water Systems in the UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation's 2020 Performance Guide which analyzed 200 of the 205 active community water systems in the county (Pierce & Gmoser-Daskalakis, 2020). In total, I analyzed 201 drinking water systems with 121 distinct governing bodies and nearly 700 governing body members with a local water leadership role. A database, referred to as the Water Governance Catalog, compiles the governance attributes for the county's drinking water system governing bodies. This Catalog is available for download at: www.innovation.luskin.ucla.edu. The Catalog will be made into a more readily searchable database and mapping tool in the near future.

My findings indicate that there is a striking lack of both representation and accountability in L.A. county's water system governing bodies. Therefore, L.A. County's water systems have work to do to advance more accountable and representational water governance directly involving residents of the systems that they serve.

This report is an exploratory effort that establishes a meaningful first step to understanding the leadership profile of L.A. county's water systems. The UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation intends to continue to build out a body of information to help inform and engage in advocacy and policy making with tangible improvements for the benefit of the residents of the systems served. Four key groups of influence have a role to act on this research in the local context:

- Residents Served by the System (合)
- Advocates and Associations ÆE)
- Drinking Water Systems
- Policymakers

Key Findings

121 > 692 201 Systems Governing Governing

assessed

bodies

body members

Types of Governing Bodies



Introduction

Community water systems (CWS) are the building blocks of California's water supply network and are critical intermediaries which shape community access to and management of safe, reliable, and affordable water, especially in urban areas. However, the presence and representativeness of the governing bodies of these local systems remain poorly understood and monitored, and residents of the system served are not historically represented in local water leadership. In L.A. county, governing bodies hold the potential to directly involve and uplift the people with the most to gain or lose: the residents of the systems served. State, regional, and local efforts have begun to focus on ensuring safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water with the call for a holistic transformation of water governance. Despite growing interest in water governance issues, matters of urban drinking water governance remain understudied and require more concerted support and attention. For the purposes of this report, water governance is defined broadly as the structures (e.g., processes, functions) that control decision making and influence water's use and management.

The goal of this report was to develop a comprehensive understanding of the leadership of L.A. county's water systems to inform, equip, and empower residents of the system served and stakeholders in the governance conversation. This report is one in a series of studies by the UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation (LCI) to advance the Human Right to Water (HRW) in California and particularly builds upon the system-wide performance analysis of drinking water systems in L.A. County conducted by Pierce and Gmoser-Daskalakis (2020) in *Community Water Systems in Los Angeles County: Performance Policy Guide*. It should be noted that this review only represents a snapshot in time; further analysis will be undertaken as updated data becomes available to assess progress over longer timescales.

The critical need to more fully assess water governance at the local level has never been greater. In 2012, Governor Jerry Brown signed the HRW, Assembly Bill (A.B.) 685, into law making California the first state in the nation to recognize access to safe, clean, and affordable drinking water as a human right. Despite this statutory commitment, many systems face challenges that impede the provision of clean, safe, and affordable drinking water. Water systems are under increasing pressure due to dynamic changes in the political, legal, economic, social, and technological aspects around water. At the heart of these changes are deep rooted inequities that are borne out on residents of the system served. Every month 332,000 Californians pay a bill for water that doesn't meet state and federal drinking water standards (California Water Boards, 2020). Across L.A. county the number of systems with poor water quality, high water bills, and vulnerable supplies suggests the importance of continued interventions and investment to improve HRW outcomes for water systems (Pierce & Gmoser-Daskalakis, 2020).

Nonetheless, the HRW conversation has largely approached insecurity challenges as a technical problem when it is, in fact, a social problem. For example, governing bodies and their officials make decisions for a given water system or water systems. Residents of

the systems served, as well as stakeholders, then depend on these officials and their technical advisors (e.g., general manager) to take account of competing considerations to determine what water uses get priority, what infrastructure investments are funded, and how clean it should be (Susskind, 2013). It is from this viewpoint that water governance has emerged as a concept suited to address these posed challenges to water resources and their management. This represents a fundamental shift from 'government to governance'. The once formal rules, norms, and actions of a singular body with the responsibility and authority to make binding decisions have been made more flexible with interactive mechanisms of public engagement and shared decision-making (Schulz et al., 2017). In this way, there are roles for civil society in water governance. This means that there are untapped opportunities to identify and involve residents of the system served for more transparent, accessible, and representative processes with equitable outcomes in local water leadership.

Despite the rich literatures on water governance both in the management of water as a natural resource and the development of water, the broad conceptual debates overlook critical relationships between effective governance contextualized to how local water leadership can and should be assessed. Some recent research conducted in California has begun to raise questions about the disconnect between the representative potential of water system governing bodies and the current reality (Weiner, 2018; California Civic Engagement Project, 2018). Taken together with research that details the disconnect between board members' demographics and the demographics of the residents they represent, there is a clear need for renewed civic engagement. Yet, due to a lack of available data at the level of individual system types, we lack a comprehensive understanding of local water governance let alone an understanding of its potential relationship to safe, affordable, and accessible drinking water provision.

L.A. County typifies the acute governance challenges of urban drinking water systems in California. Across the county there is newfound engagement with urban drinking water problems and the race, class, and place-based inequities. Local headlines have awakened the public's attention to scandals, corruption, pollution, and social activism, particularly in southeast L.A. County. To continue this initial momentum, we must develop a comprehensive understanding of drinking water governance of the county's water systems that can inform advocates, policymakers, and regulators as well as support residents in efforts to address current and emerging drinking water inequities.

To address the issue of leadership drinking water governance in the county, this report considers the following research questions: 1) How can we evaluate governing bodies of local water systems; and 2) How do the governing bodies of L.A. County's water systems compare in terms of representational demographics and accountability? I answer these questions by cataloging and assessing the leadership positions among other characteristics of the county's water system governing bodies. Multiple different sources of publicly available data are used as there is no one repository for this information. It is worthwhile to propose and assess specific characteristics of governing bodies and relate them to attributes of representative and accountable governance in the context of the county's drinking water systems. The presence or absence of any single characteristic does not, on its own, provide much insight into the governing body itself; however, when taken collectively, they can provide a valuable glimpse into some factors that both reflect and drive the governance of drinking water systems.

This report is the first to catalog drinking water system governance in L.A. county and establish a baseline of governance characteristics. Analysis reveals that there are clear deficiencies of both representation and accountability within the county's local water governing bodies. Females and Hispanics or Latinx, are sorely underrepresented in local water leadership especially in comparison to the demographics of the residents in which the water systems serve. Leadership and governance behaviors of the water systems themselves potentially hinder organizational performance including tenure and compensation. Elections serve as an important mechanism of accountability, but they take many forms. In addition, the county's water systems use a number of approaches to inform the residents served by the system and interested parties about their activities, which in turn lead to enhanced accountability. While regulatory framework and resulting conformity guide accountability and transparency in governance for local water systems, it does not incentive the systems to do more or do better.

The remainder of this report is organized as follows. In the next section, I provide an overview of the relevant research on defining and evaluating water governance as well as justification for this research. Then I discuss L.A. county's water systems and the laws, regulations, and leadership structures that inform the purpose and functions of their governing bodies. After a brief literature review, I detail the research design and methodology, including aspects of data collection and data analysis. Next, I shift to a detailed review of countywide trends and analysis of the governing bodies of L.A. county's water systems. Finally, I propose recommendations that act as a call to action to advance public understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and pathways to local water leadership. I conclude by suggesting future avenues of research and roles that advocates, policymakers, and residents of the systems served can play.

California's Water Context

California's water resources and management are under increasing pressure. As the foundation of the state's water supply network¹, CWS provide water to approximately 90% of the state's population with the responsibility to provide customers with a reliable supply of clean water at an affordable price (California Environmental Protection Agency, 2021). However, the state's water management system is highly decentralized and complex. Dobbin and Fencl (2019) identify approximately 3,000 drinking water systems statewide with 26 system types that are aggregated into nine governance arrangements². This extreme fragmentation has led to disparate provision of its water resources, as water systems differ widely in their capacities and performance (Dobbin, 2021; Sivas et al., 2017). Compounded by the threat multiplier of climate change, the state is struggling to revamp the complex system to deal with the acute needs and challenges of this century.

In 2012, Governor Jerry Brown signed Assembly Bill (A.B.) 685 into law, making California the first state in the nation to recognize access to safe, clean, and affordable drinking water as a human right. Despite this statutory commitment, many systems face continued challenges that impede the provision of clean, safe, and affordable drinking water (Pierce & Gmoser-Daskalakis, 2020). The systems are under increasing pressure due to dynamic changes in the political, legal, economic, social, and technological aspects around water. At the heart of these changes are deep rooted relations between power, poverty, and inequality. These inequities are borne out on the residents of the systems served, particularly low-income communities, communities of color, indigenous communities, and rural communities (McFarlane & Harris, 2018; Allaire et al., 2018, Pierce & Jimenez, 2015). Nearly one million Californians lack access to clean water due to problems of water quality, availability, and affordability (California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, 2021). Every month 332,000 Californians pay a bill for water that doesn't meet state and federal drinking water standards (California Water Boards, 2020).

Since the passage of AB 685, state, regional, and local efforts have focused on quantitatively assessing the HRW across three components of drinking water: water quality, accessibility, and affordability. As such, the HRW conversation has approached California's water challenges as a technical problem when it is in fact a social problem. For example, governing bodies and their officials make decisions for a given water system or water systems. Residents of the systems served and stakeholders then depend on these officials and their technical advisors (e.g., general manager) to take account of competing

¹ There are three primary types of water suppliers that make up California's drinking water management system. The first are contractors that receive annual allocations of imported water from the State Water Project and (continued) Colorado River authorities. The second are wholesalers that purchase and resell water from contractors or other wholesalers. The third are water systems that sell water directly to residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural ratepayers (Pincetl et al., 2015).

² The nine governance types include: city, county, joint powers authority, independent special districts, state and federal, investor-owned utility, mobile-home parks, user owned utilities, and other private systems.

considerations and determine what water uses get priority, what infrastructure investments are funded, or how clean it should be (Susskind, 2013).

It is from this viewpoint that water governance has emerged as a concept suited to address these posed challenges to water resources and its management. This represents a fundamental shift from 'government to governance' where the formal rules of enforcement have become more flexible with interactive mechanisms of public engagement and shared decision-making (Schulz et al., 2017). It further exemplifies an effort to pivot from conventional forms of water governance. Top-down, supply-driven approaches are being replaced with bottom-up, demand-driven approaches that combine the experience, knowledge and understanding of various local groups and people (UNDP, 2007a). Governance is widely viewed as a prerequisite for improving water management (Jiménez et al., 2020; Wutich et al, 2016; Newig and Fritsch, 2009; Dobbin and Fencl, 2019; Dobbin, 2020). In this way, there are roles for civil society in water governance. This means that there are greater ways to identify and involve residents of the systems served for more transparent, accessible, and representative processes with equitable outcomes in local water leadership.

Nascent research conducted in the context of California's water system has raised questions about the disconnect between the representative potential of water governing bodies and the current reality. A report by the Community Water Center, Untapped Opportunity: Local Water Boards and the Fight for Water Justice, found that there is a striking lack of both representation and accountability on water boards in the San Joaquin Valley (Weiner, 2018). For example, nearly 500 local water board directors held uncontested seats and a majority of these same boards did not hold elections at all in the last four years (Weiner, 2018). A separate study conducted by the California Civic Engagement Project (2018) examined the representation of Latinos in California community water board elections. They found that there is a gender gap among California Latino water board directors and that Latinos are significantly underrepresented among water board directors, given their share of voters in November 2016 water board elections (California Civic Engagement Project, 2018). More recent scholarly research has found that in newly formed Groundwater Sustainability Agencies disadvantaged communities are less likely to be represented as decision-makers (Dobbin & Lubell, 2019). When considered collectively, there is ample need for renewed civic engagement to deliver on the promise of the HRW.

Drinking Water Governance in Los Angeles County

L.A. County typifies the acute governance challenges of urban drinking water systems in California. This governance system is highly complex and opaque, responsible for overseeing the distribution, management, and conservation of potable water in the county (Pincetl et al., 2015). Specifically, the system has been described as a relic of late 19th century water law and legislative intent when the ideology of local control was pervasive; when there was no large-scale water conveyance; and, when the region was sparsely urbanized (Pincetl et al., 2016). These historical water development trends led to fragmentation with myriad separate water systems, each with their own territory, governance type, infrastructure, and regulatory framework. As a result, the county's drinking water systems come in all shapes and sizes. **Figure 1** shows drinking water systems in L.A. County by regulatory authority.



Figure 1. Map of drinking water system by regulatory authority in L.A. County

There are over 200 active drinking water systems serving an average customer population of 49,296 (Pierce & Gmoser-Daskalakis, 2020). The systems can further be categorized into at least eight different governance structures: city-run systems, county-run systems, investor-owned utilities (private), mutual water companies, special districts, mobile home parks, and other private systems (Pierce & Gmoser-Daskalakis, 2020).

O City-run

City-run systems are public water systems that operate as a department or enterprise within a city government (Pierce & Gmoser-Daskalakis, 2020). The primary function of a city-run system is to control water for the beneficial use of the residents of the system served. Cities can provide water directly to all areas of the jurisdiction or allow another entity to provide water within its boundaries (Firestone, 2009).

🜔 County-run

Similar to city-run systems, county-run systems are directly operated by local government (Pierce & Gmoser-Daskalakis, 2020). County Waterworks Districts are a type of county-run system, such as the L.A. County Waterworks District, that can provide water for irrigation, domestic, industrial, or fire protection purposes (Cal. Water Code § 55330).

O Investor-owned Utility

Investor-owned utilities are a type of regulated private utility company that provide water as a commercial, for-profit enterprise. Investor-owned utilities are regulated by the California PUC and can range from publicly traded companies to small, family-owned businesses.

🚫 Mutual Water Company

Mutual water companies are cooperatives where landowners who receive the water are both member-owners and users (Pierce & Gmoser-Daskalakis, 2020). These water systems function as a non-profit mutual benefit corporation organized to sell, distribute, supply, or deliver water for irrigation or domestic use (Cal. Corp. Code §§ 7312(e), 14300). Mutual water companies deliver water only to its member-owners, referred to as shareholders.

🚫 Special District

Special Districts are a broader category of local government entity that can include water districts. Irrigation districts—a type of special district—provide irrigation water to landowners within the district (Pierce & Gmoser-Daskalakis, 2020). Irrigation is broadly defined to include commercial, agricultural as well as domestic, residential uses (Cal. Water Code § 20702). This report only reviews irrigation districts which provide drinking water and can be classified as CWS.

Other System Governance Types

Other small, private entities provide drinking water but are not private water utilities. In these cases, the Public Records Act, Brown Act, and Prop. 218 do not apply, nor does the PUC generally have jurisdiction.

Figure 2 details the number of systems exhibiting each type of governance in the county. This highlights that water system governance is diverse with mutual water companies as the most common (23%), closely followed by city-run systems (22%). However, over half of L.A. county residential customers are served by a city-run system of which over one-third are served by a single system (LADWP), and only 8% of customers are served by

mutual water companies. This corroborates the existence of pervasive water system sprawl in the county (Pierce et al., 2019; Pierce et al., 2015; Pincetl et al., 2016). In this way, most residential customers in the county are served by larger water systems. Yet, there are a number of small water systems that serve small populations often in overlapping service territories.



*Other includes 11 systems with unknown categorization and one other private system (not investor-owned utility)



Such a fragmented system has led to uneven water provision, as each system differs in their technical, managerial, and financial (TMF) capacity and overall system performance depending on their governance structures (Dobbin & Fencl, 2019; Pierce & Gmoser-Daskalakis, 2020). The water governance types have different powers, regulatory authorities, and responsibilities. This has resulted in a lack of supervision, transparency and accountability across the county—the number of systems with poor water quality, high monthly water bills, and vulnerable supplies suggests the importance of continued interventions and investment to improve HRW outcomes (Pierce & Gmoser-Daskalakis, 2020). Nonetheless, the politics and complexity of water governance has only recently begun to receive attention (Pincetl et al., 2016; Pierce et al., 2015). Due to a lack of available data at this level of individual system types, we lack a comprehensive understanding of this diversity let alone an understanding of the relationship between local water governance and issues of drinking water.

³ Reproduced from UCLA LCI's Community Water Systems in Los Angeles County: A Performance Policy Guide (Pierce & Gmoser-Daskalakis, 2020).

Laws Informing Drinking Water Governance Requirements

Each water governance type has its own set of laws that structurally prescribe the governance roles and responsibilities of a given water system. L.A. county's water systems are subject to state laws that regulate their actions and guarantee members of the public have rights to access information and participate in decision making processes. Publicly owned systems, such as cities-run, county-run, and special districts, all must meet certain laws, such as the Public Records Act, the Brown Act, and Proposition 218. In contrast, privately owned systems, such as investor-owned utilities, and mutual water systems are not subject to those same requirements and are governed by their own bylaws and are also subject to rules under the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). Refer to Table 1 which summarizes the laws applicable to L.A. county's water system governing bodies. Additional detail about the governing laws, governing structure, and public participation and access to information by governance type can be found in **Appendix A.1**.

Law	Citation	Publicly owned Water System ⁵	Privately owned Water System ⁶
Brown Act	Cal. Gov't Code §54950, <i>et seq</i> .	Yes	No
Public Records Act	Cal. Gov't Code §6250, <i>et seq</i> .	Yes	No
Proposition 218	Cal. Const. art. XIIID	Yes	No
Public Utilities Commission (PUC)	Cal. Pub. Util. Code 2701, <i>et</i> <i>seq</i> .	No	No ⁷
Bilingual Services Act	Cal. Gov't Code §7291, <i>et seq</i> .	Yes	No
The California Civil Rights Act	Cal. Gov't Code §11135, <i>et seq</i> .	If receives state funding	If receives state funding
The Federal Civil Rights Act (Title VI)	42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq	If receives federal funding	If receives federal funding

Table 1. Summary of laws that apply to L.A. county's water	system governing bodies ⁴
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⁴ Adapted from *Guide to Community Drinking Water Advocacy* by the Community Water Center (Firestone, 2009).

⁵ Public water systems include city, county, and special districts.

⁶ Private water systems include mutual water companies, investor-owned utilities, and other private systems.

⁷ This does not apply to investor-owned utilities.

Brown Act

The intent of the Brown Act is to ensure transparency and encourage public participation in local government. City-run, county, and special district water systems are subject to the Brown Act requirements for public notices and opportunities for public input, located at California Government Code 54950 et seq. The Brown Act requires that members of the public be allowed to attend governing body meetings with the meetings held locally and in an accessible location. All members of the public have a right to address the governing body and speak on any issue within the governing body's jurisdiction whether or not that issue is on the agenda and prior to action being taken. Generally, this opportunity is given during a public comment period at the beginning or end of a meeting. Governing bodies may make rules limiting the length of public comments; however, those rules must be reasonable.

Likewise, all agenda items must be discussed in an open public meeting unless it is subject to a specified exemption for closed session. The agenda must briefly describe the issues that will be discussed in closed session, and it is typical for the governing body to report any action taken when the public meeting is re-opened.

Additionally, the Brown Act requires that notices of a meeting and agendas be posted in a freely accessible location to the public at least 72 hours before regular meetings, 24 hours before special meetings, and one hour prior to emergency meetings.

Public Records Act

City-run, county-run, and special districts, as public entities, are subject to the California Public Records Act regarding access to information located at located at California Government Code 6250 et seq. This law requires the water systems to make all public records available for review during the water system's hours of operation. This provides any member of the public with the right to make a request for information or records, regardless of whether a person is a resident of the system served or other. Any information related to the public business of the agency should be made available, regardless of the form it takes (i.e., written documents, pictures, audio records, electronic data).

Any member of the public can have access to all communications related to public business, regardless of what physical form or other characteristics the record has (e.g., written documents, pictures, audio records, symbols, and electronic data).

Proposition 218

Commonly referred to as Prop. 218, Article XIIID of the California Constitution requires governmental entities to follow a set process before they can raise water rates as well as limits on why rates can be increased. City, county, and special districts are subject to Prop 218 meaning that their power is limited to impose new fees and charges related to water service.

Bilingual Services Act

In California, the Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act (BSA) requires that local agencies that serve a substantial number of non-English speaking people which provide materials explaining services in English, must also provide the same type of materials in any non-English language spoken by a substantial number of the residents served by the agency (Cal. Gov't Code § 7290 et seq.). This means that city-run, county-run, and special districts must provide translated materials if a proportion of their residents are non-English speakers.

California Civil Rights Act

The California Civil Rights Act prohibits the "denial of full and equal access to the benefits of... any program or activity that is conducted, operated, or administered by the state or by any state agency, is funded directly by the state, or receives any financial assistance from the state" on the basis of "race, national origin, ethnic group identification, or color" (Cal. Gov't Code § 11135). Therefore, any water systems that receive state funding must provide interpretation or translation services necessary to ensure that non-English speaking residents of the system served can receive its services and participate in its activities.

Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964

Similarly, the regulations implementing the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, also referred to as Title VI (42 U.S.C. § 2000d, et seq.) require recipients of federal financial assistance to ensure sufficient access to their programs and activities for persons with limited English proficiency. This means that any water system that receives federal funding is required to provide translation or interpretation services necessary to ensure that non-English speaking residents can benefit from its services and participate in its activities.

What is Water Governance?

Water governance literature and research incorporates a range of perspectives. Some literature is descriptive, merely documenting water governance institutions, their changing characteristics, and the roles they play. Practitioner-oriented literature seeks to make sense of and improve upon current policy and practice. In tandem, there is robust literature that explores the theory of water governance and interrogates it from various disciplinary perspectives. Understanding how water governance is defined and discussed across the literature can help inform how we attempt to surmount some of the limitations inherent to assess urban drinking water governance in L.A. county.

Defining Water Governance

Governance is not a new term. Different schools of thought have developed their own epistemology towards the meaning of governance and the language to express that meaning. As a result, practitioners and researchers have adopted and interpreted governance from different perspectives, sometimes with conflicting objectives which has led to different usage, or descriptive meaning, of the term. Lautze et al. (2011) comprehensively review various uses of water governance and conclude that: (1) governance is consistently viewed as the processes involved in decision-making; (2) the processes of decision-making take place through institutions (including mechanisms, systems and traditions); and (3) the processes and institutions of decision-making involves multiple actors. Scholars specifically relate governance to the processes and institutions involved in decision-making as reflected in the most frequently cited use of governance: "The exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs at all levels. Governance comprises the complex mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, mediate their differences, and exercise their legal rights and obligations" (Kakabadse & Kakabadse, 2001). In Graham et al. (2003), governance is similarly described as "the interactions among structures, processes and traditions that determine how power and responsibilities are exercised, how decisions are taken, and how citizens or other stakeholders have their say".

Other literature has adapted governance to the context of water. Allan (2001) defines water governance systems specifically in terms of the outcome as those that determine who gets what water, when and how they get that water, and who has the right to water, related services, and their benefits. Others see water governance as comprising the higher-level decisions that apply to operational decision-making. Jiménez et al. (2020) outlines an operational framework for unpacking water governance delineating the "what", "how" and "what for": "Water governance is a combination of functions, performed with certain attributes, to achieve one or more desired outcomes, all shaped by the values and aspirations of individuals and organizations". This report adapts the diverse perspectives into the broad working definition of water governance used in this report—"Water governance is the interactions among structures that control decision-making and influence water's use and management".

Principles of Effective Water Governance

In these attempts to capture the complexity of governance, the uses of the term are mainly descriptive in nature. More nuanced, prescriptive definitions have been made to incorporate guiding principles, also referred to as attributes, of effective governance (Araral & Wong, 2013). These discussions center on how governance should be performed with the best possible chance of achieving intended outcomes. The principles highlight governance gaps in policy, administration, coordination, funding, information, and accountability that often handicap water resources management (Akhmouch & Correia, 2016; OECD, 2015).

The general movement towards incorporating guiding principles and attributes to define water governance warrants further review as they signify the complex relationships at play and reflect values by which water system governing bodies can be assessed. Jiménez et al. (2020) describe a guiding principle, or attribute, as how governance functions are or could be performed. Functions refer to primary activities that the responsible organizations undertake or facilitate to manage water resources and services (Jiménez et al., 2020). Schulz et al. (2017) also distinguish that governance-related values describe perceived ideal characteristics of water governance (e.g., transparency, participation, or sustainability). These values are taken from normative work on water governance and in different disciplines can be understood as guiding principles. In addition, the notion of "democratic governance" is often identified both as a cornerstone and a goal of good or effective governance. Democratic governance can be understood as the process of strengthening institutions and electoral and legislative systems, enhancing citizen engagement in decision-making, and involving civil society in the political processes associated with governance reforms often referred to as "democratization" (Susskind, 2013).

Several initiatives, largely international in scope, have worked on defining desirable attributes for governance generally. For example, the United Nations on Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) (2009) identify some of the qualities that establish a baseline for good governance. These include promoting legitimacy and voice through participation, consensus, and informed decisions; the performance of institutions and processes through responsiveness, effectiveness, and efficiency; promoting accountability and transparency; ensuring fairness by implementing equity, rule of law, and conflict management (UNESCAP, 2009). The OECD adapted the UN good governance principles for water governance and promote: legitimacy; transparency; accountability; human rights; rule of law and inclusiveness in water governance processes (OECD, 2015). They further emphasized that water governance systems should be designed based on the challenges they are seeking to address (OECD, 2015).

Guiding principles and attributes in some of the literature have been discussed in relation to specific outcomes, such as sustainability or resilience (Chaffin et al., 2014; Akamani, 2016; Pahl-Wostl, 2017; Harrison, 2003). Attributes in the resilience discourse are polycentric and multilayered; coordination; collaboration; participation; deliberation;

equity and inclusiveness; accountability and transparency; and adaptive (Folke et al., 2005; Lebel et al., 2006). Wiek and Larson (2012) summarize elements of water governance as "a systemic perspective, a governance focus on social actors, a transparent and accessible discourse on values and goals, and a comprehensive perspective on water sustainability." Jiménez et al. (2020) reflect this link between governance function, attribute, and outcome with a proposed operational framework to assess water governance for use by practitioners and decision makers. Attributes that support the different functions of governance are identified as: multilevel governance; participation; deliberation; inclusiveness; accountability; transparency; evidence-based; efficiency; impartiality and rule of law; and adaptiveness (Jiménez et al., 2020).

Once again, the diversity of perspectives poses a methodological challenge in the review of water governance. While there is general consensus that it is important—as reflected in the width and depth of literature available—it is not clear what the goals and, thus, outcomes of good water governance should be. Moreover, the guiding principles and attributes are theoretical debates divorced their practical application.

Factors to Assess Water Governance

Despite the rich literatures on water governance both in the management of water as a natural resource and the development of water, the broad conceptual debates overlook the critical relationships between effective governance and how local water governing bodies can and should be assessed. I reference an active area of research and public debate—corporate governance and corporate stewardship—to address this gap in order to assess L.A. county's governing bodies.

At its foundation, effective governance requires a dedicated focus on the board of directors, cited as the most important element in governance structures (Business Roundtable, 2016; García Martín & Herrero, 2018; Einstein, 2020). Corporate governance literature has begun to evaluate the structural aspects of governance as board performance is generally a strong indicator of organizational success (Einstein, 2020). However, the role of a board has changed over the years. Fundamentally it is the role of the board to advise and supervise; however, in recent years, the priority of functions have broadened to include supervision and monitoring in addition to more administrative roles. This newfound need for supervision and monitoring effects the expectations of board composition. Companies and other entities employ diverse approaches to board structure and operations. Although no single structure is right for every entity, literature offers best practices set forth for board membership that focus on size, composition (e.g., diversity, tenure), experience, independence, and election.

Board size is often discussed as a reflection of depth and complexity of the issues facing an organization. Lehn et al. (2009) argue that large boards of directors can offer a higher standard of advice. In this way, it is in the best interests of the board to add new directors with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide guidance commensurate with the complexity of issues facing an organization. When faced with greater complexity, more advice is required and this is reflected in a larger number of directors (Coles et al., 2008;

Farag & Mallin, 2017). However, there is not consensus that a bigger board is better as not all studies observe this relationship. Some studies observe a larger number of directors can make it more difficult to reach consensus when making decisions (Donnelly & Kelly, 2005). Some research has also attempted to identify the most effective number of directors for group decision-making landing on a size between five and eight total.

Discussions about board composition have focused mainly on diversity issues of gender, race, and ethnicity (DeHaas, 2016). There is a wealth of literature that illustrates the positive relationship between gender-diverse boards and organizational and financial performance. Specifically, research has found a strong relationship between the corporate, social, and economic benefits of more women in leadership (Credit Suisse, 2012; McElhaney & Mobasseri, 2012; Schwanke, 2013). A meta-analysis of 140 studies conducted by Post and Byron (2014) concluded that female board representation is positively related to accounting returns and the board's two primary responsibilities: monitoring and strategy involvement. A University of California, Berkeley study found that companies with more women on their boards are more likely to "create a sustainable future" by, among other things, instituting strong governance structures with a high level of transparency (McElhaney & Mobasseri, 2012). Despite general trends to involve communities more fully in governance, women often continue to be excluded from community water governance mechanisms (Harris, 2009). Moreover, men hold key decision-making leadership positions and contribute more time toward water governance activities than women, exemplifying an outstanding gap in not only gender but education, years served on committees, and gender perception (Hannah et al., 2021).

More recently, diversity is beginning to be viewed through a much wider lens to encompass a range of skills, experiences, and perspectives (DeHaas, 2016). More diverse boards can meaningfully enhance the performance of a board (Posner, 2020; Landaw, 2020). To improve gender, racial, and ethnic diversity, governing bodies should consider both demographic and cognitive diversity (Landaw, 2020). Demographic diversity focuses on differences in people's demographic characteristics. Cognitive diversity addresses the differences in people's knowledge, views, and perspectives, particularly in how they perceive, process, and interpret information and approach problem-solving. Demographically and cognitively diverse boards are better equipped to perform its obligations as well as innovate and respond to today's water challenges.

Board tenure and resulting turnover can support achieving diversity objectives. Research indicates that a modest amount of turnover tends to be a characteristic of the leadership and governance behaviors that drive organizational performance (Anderson & Chun, 2014). That stands to reason: new governing body members bring their skills, talents and abilities to the governing body (Creary et al., 2019; Fucci & Cooper, 2019). They may also be more likely than established members to challenge orthodoxy and raise previously unasked questions. New perspectives may stem from best practices that encourage diversity of background, age, gender, ethnicity or other demographics. However, there are benefits to long-serving governing body members that have the organizational history and the institutional knowledge that can be of great benefit to water systems (Creary et al.

al., 2019). Therefore, a modest amount of turnover periodically supports the balance between bringing in new perspectives and skills while retaining beneficial experience and governing body stability.

Independence is another important aspect of board composition. Independence refers to the absence of relationships between the company and the director that would impair the director's independent judgment (Deloitte, n.d.). On the one hand, there are arguments that internal directors have more and better information regarding an organizational entity (Raheja, 2005; Coles et al. 2008). Yet, other studies suggest that independent directors in an advisory role provide better advice along with holding greater experience (Boone et al., 2007; Lehn et al., 2009).

Finally, elections are formal mechanism in which individuals can be voted, nominated, or appointed to a governing board. The type of election is driven by the type of organization which shapes representation. Pitkin (1967) defines representation "to make present again". Using this definition, representation is the activity of making people's voices, opinions, and perspectives "present" in formal decision-making processes. Pitkin (1967) also discerns three components of representation – authorization, responsiveness, and accountability. Political scholars have generally coalesced on two themes when analyzing the link between elections and representation. The first is the role of race and ethnicity, and the second is how institutions shape practices and outcomes (Trounstine, 2010). Trounstine (2010) summarizes literature in which scholars have found that racial and ethnic divisions are rampant in local politics with implications that shape voting decisions and policy outcomes. Likewise, the institution itself can decrease the visibility of politics and in some situations advantage white, middle/upper class residents (Trounstine, 2010).

Data & Methods

The primary purpose of this research is to evaluate the governing bodies of the county's local water systems to enable comparison of their representational demographics and attributes of accountable governance. A mixed methods approach was used to catalog and assess the governance of L.A. county's water systems. Multiple different sources of publicly available data were tapped, as there is no one repository for this information.

Methods of Data Collection & Analysis

Data collection for this research started with the list of CWS in the UCLA LCI's 2020 Performance Guide that analyzed 200 of the 205 active community water systems in L.A. County (Pierce & Gmoser-Daskalakis, 2020). These systems are characterized into eight governance types: city-run systems, county-run systems, mutual water companies, investor-owned utilities, special districts, mobile home parks, irrigation districts, and other private systems (Pierce & Gmoser-Daskalakis, 2020). From this list, three (3) city-run systems were removed⁸ that do not directly provide water, and the special district, Water Replenishment District, was added for analysis. Wholesalers (i.e., Central Basin Municipal Water District, Metropolitan Water District, and Three Valleys Water District) were subsequently added as an additional governance type for consideration. While wholesalers do not have direct customer populations, they do represent customers through a governing body with the potential for community influence. Finally, irrigation districts are a type of special district and my assessment only reviews those irrigation districts which provide drinking water and can be classified as a CWS.

In total, this research analyzed 201 drinking water systems that were aggregated into three distinct types of water systems by governing body. Some governing bodies in the county serve a singular system. Therefore, one governing body represents one drinking water system and customer base, categorized as 'own governing body'. Other governing bodies in the county serve multiple systems. In this case, one governing body oversees more than one water system and is categorized as 'jointly governed'. For sufficiently small systems there is no identifiable governing body. The two categories of 'private' and 'unknown' were removed from analysis since their governance structures do not fit with the other types and publicly accessible information for these systems is unavailable. These systems are categorized as 'no governing body' or 'jointly governed' were considered for analysis.

This study further relies on secondary data because there are no single source documenting governance attributes of L.A. county's water system governing bodies. Therefore, information was gathered from distinct sources to assemble the catalog of governance attributes for the county's water systems governing bodies. Governance attributes can be thought of as characteristics that aim to operationalize governance in the context of water resources and management. It is worthwhile to propose and assess

⁸ These city-run systems include: City of Hawthorne, City of Bell Gardens, and City of Commerce.

specific attributes of good governance in the context of L.A. county's water systems. The presence or absence of any single attribute does not, on its own, provide much insight into the governing body itself; however, when taken collectively, these attributes can provide a valuable glimpse into some factors that both reflect and impact the governance of L.A. county's drinking water systems.

Data points were mined from a water system's website found using a general Google search of the water system's name. Most water systems-including city-owned, countyowned, investor-owned utilities, and special districts-had a publicly accessible website. Search queries consisting of combinations of keywords related to governance or transparency were further used on the given water system's website to aid in focusing the search criteria. City-run, county-run, and special districts commonly posted information on a specific 'governance' or 'transparency' denoted webpage. Investor-owned utilities often cited information on their parent company's website either under 'governance' or within an environmental social governance (ESG) report. Additional thematic searches were also conducted to target outstanding data gaps. For example, a charter, municipal code, bylaws, and/or articles of incorporation were referenced when available. In some cases, a website directed to external sources of information such as the California State Controller's website for financial data. Water systems with no website, as in the case of mutual water companies, disclose information related to governing body members' name, role, and financial compensation on an annual 990 tax form. The data available by source varied by year. Most mutual water company data is reported from 2018 and cityrun, county-run, irrigation district, and special district data reported is 2019 or 2020. It is important to note that data collection took place from August 2020 to October 2020 and, therefore, do not reflect the most recent results of the November 2020 election cycle for participating systems.

Governance Attributes

I rely on data of the following specific attributes, gathered for each of L.A. county's drinking water systems governing bodies wherever possible. A summary of the guiding questions with the associated key governance attribute(s) and data sources can be found in **Appendix A.2**.

Website	A publicly accessible website is a landing place for residents of the systems served and other stakeholders can learn and connect with their water system. A Google search was applied for each water system considered for analysis to confirm whether they had an active, functioning website (binary).		
Form of Governing Body	The form of governing body (e.g., board of directors; city council) is a foundational characteristic of water systems that differs by governance type. The governing bodies that I am concerned with are those that have a legal responsibility for governing their water systems. Water systems may have various groups that are called "boards", or similar, but that do not have such responsibilities. For example, advisory committees may contribute their expertise to a water system but do not hold any legal authority. Such committees often play an important role in the organization, but they are not governing boards and are not the focus of this research. This information was commonly disclosed on a water system's website.		
Name & Role	For each governing body, current members' first and last names were gathered in addition to their specific role. Roles vary among governing bodies from director, secretary, or treasurer to president and vice president or officer with differing responsibilities. This information was commonly disclosed on a water system's website or the water system's 990 tax form, if applicable.		

	Additional demographics of race and ethnicity were imputed with respect to each governing body member. Race and ethnicity for a given member were not publicly disclosed information. As a result, the underlying quality of the data on race and ethnicity is tenuous. The U.S. Census Bureau's race and ethnicity classifications were referenced in analysis; however, the implicit assumptions about the quality of data on "race" and "ethnicity" are acknowledged as a limitation of this approach. For example, the individual race of members cannot be easily, validly, or reliably determined. Further, racial and ethnicity categories are not clearly or consistently defined.
Race & Ethnicity	Surname analysis was applied as a method to impute the likelihood that an individual belongs to a particular racial and/or ethnic group. The U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 Census Surname Table ⁹ that matches a surname with a racial/ethnic group was referenced in comparison with names of governing body members gathered. The dictionary includes the probability that a surname is of a specified racial/ethnic group. When the probability that a surname was 50% or greater for a specified racial/ethnic group that group was assigned to the governing body member. This analysis was cross-checked with visual identification, when available. Based on how this table was applied, type I errors are introduced (e.g., classifying a non-Hispanic or Latino person incorrectly as Hispanic or Latino) as well as type II errors (such as not classifying a Hispanic or Latino).
Sex	The sex for governing body members was imputed applying the qualitative method of visual identification. Visual identification refers to the use of photographs as a visual predictive aid to inform a governing body member's sex. When visual identification was not available as a predictive aid, as in the case of mutual water companies, a method based on the first name of the governing body member was imputed. Like race and ethnicity, sex is a diverse demographic and personal dimension that is oversimplified and prone to error in this research. The attribute, sex, is characterized as a dichotomous variable—male or female.

⁹ Frequently occurring surnames from the 2010 census: <u>https://www.census.gov/topics/population/genealogy/data/2010_surnames.html</u>

Authorization Mechanism	Governing body members are formally named to their position through a mechanism by which water users authorize representatives to act on their behalf. The authorization mechanism was further individualized to each particular governing body member. Three variables (elected by voters; elected by shareholders; appointment) were considered.		
Authorization Cycle	The authorization cycle refers to the process and frequency in which governing body members are formally named (i.e., appointed or elected) to their position. Water systems are subject to differing mechanisms in which their members are elected, appointed, or other.		
Tenure	Governing body member tenure was imputed from the difference between the year that this data was gathered (2020) and the year in which the governing body member was first elected. If provided, gap years were removed; otherwise, active and ongoing participation on the governing body was assumed.		
Term Expiration Term Expiration Term Expiration Term Expiration Term Expiration Term Expiration Term Expiration Term Expiration Term Expiration Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Solution Soluti			
Term Limits	Term limits refer to the legal restriction on the length of time a governing body member may hold their position. This information was often disclosed in governing documents of the governing body such as a municipal code, city charter, or bylaws. If there was no explicit mention of term limits, it was assumed that there are no limits imposed on the number of terms a member can serve and verified with governing body member tenure.		

Financial Compensation	Ancial Governing body members may receive financial compensation in exchange for their time and talents committed to serving for water retailer. Members are compensated in the form of fixed compensation, often monthly, and/or incentive compensation in the form of variable contingent compensation (e.g., external board participation or restricted stock). Incentive compensation along with additional health and retirement benefits were not considered for analysis.		
Meeting Format	Meetings are convened for governing body members to discuss and address the issues facing the water retailer and the community it serves. Such meetings also enable governing body members to facilitate and receive input from those affected by decisions and provide an opportunity for the public to engage, understand, and relate to the decisions that are being made. Meeting aspects such as their location, schedule, day and time held, and whether or not they are open to the public or closed are disclosed for each governing body.		
Meeting Materials	Meetings are one example of an effective mechanism for encouraging ratepayers to participate in the governance process and understand ongoing developments. Meeting materials consist of an agenda, posted prior to the meeting, and minutes posted following the meeting that document the formal written record of the meeting.		
Translation Services	An important element of accessible government is the language(s) in which agendas, materials, and general information is provided. A binary designation was determined for each water system if key materials like meeting agendas and minutes were provided in at least one language other than English.		

The governance attribute data was comprehensively gathered for all water system governing bodies considered and compiled into an Excel spreadsheet, referred to as the Water Governance Catalog (i.e., Catalog). This Catalog is available for download on the UCLA LCI website <u>www.innovation.luskin.ucla.edu</u>.

The statistical software, STATA, was used to analyze the data gathered and compiled in the Catalog. Descriptive statistics were computed to organize and describe the basic features of the governance attributes both countywide and by governance type. It should be noted that this data only represents a snapshot in time. Further periodic data collection will need to be conducted as elections take place and the governing bodies for L.A. county's water systems change.

Community Partner Engagement

To inform this analysis, an informal advisory committee of water advocates and professionals was convened, referred to as Community Partners. Those invited were former or current Water Foundation L.A. area grantees. A complete list of participating Community Partners can be found in **Appendix A.3**.

Two meetings were held virtually over Zoom from February through April 2021 during which Community Partners lent their perspectives and expertise, with additional ad hoc consultations were conducted in between meetings. The primary objective of this engagement was to socialize the project encouraging networking, dialogue, and additional education on the topic of water governance in L.A. county. Due to the timing of the meetings in relation to the pacing of the research, integration of Community Partner comments and feedback were limited. Referencing the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) spectrum of public participation, the Community Partner's role on the project decision-making process was to inform and consult. In this way, Community Partners were provided information to assist them in understanding the research questions, approach, and outcomes. Their feedback was also obtained on the findings, recommendations, and opportunities for future research.

Findings & Analysis

Water System Governance in Los Angeles County: An Overview

The number of water systems and diversity of governance types under which they operate in L.A. county is a challenge for policy and practice. There are 201 active water systems that were assessed in L.A. county. While the county's water systems can be distinguished by their governance type, they also differ depending on their type of governing body. The active water systems assessed the county can be further categorized into three distinct types of governing body: own governing body, jointly governed, and no identifiable governing body. **Figure 3** summarizes the type of governing body by system governance type. Refer to **Appendix A.4** for a comprehensive list of the county's water systems detailed by governance type and type of governing body.

There were 121 distinct governing bodies considered for analysis, consisting of systems with their own governing body or which are jointly governed. These governing bodies have nearly 700 governing body members with a local water leadership role. These governing bodies and their members collectively represent over 90% of the county's residential customer population.¹⁰

¹⁰ This estimate is based on SDWIS population numbers which produce an overestimate of the county population. Therefore, the population estimate was modified to account for systems known to have an overestimate and for which the system service area includes portions outside of L.A. County.



OWN GOVERNING BODY

The majority (54%) of water governing bodies in L.A. county serve a singular system. Therefore, one governing body represents one drinking water system and customer base. Mutual water companies are the most common at 39%, closely followed by cityrun systems at 38%. When accounting for the residential customer populations served by these systems, nearly threequarters of county residents are served by a city-run system—an estimated 60% of which are served by a single system (LADWP)—and only 8% of the customers are served by mutual water companies. Special districts and investor-owned utilities also fall within this category.

JOINTLY GOVERNED



The second most prevalent governing body type in the county are water systems that jointly govern, meaning that one governing body oversees more than one water system. Eleven (11) water systems jointly govern and represent just over one-quarter of the county's water systems (27%). Jointly governed water systems serve an average of six (6) systems each. Golden State Water Company serves the largest number of systems with 12. Considering governance type, jointly governed water systems are diverse ranging from county-run, investor-owned utilities, special districts, and wholesalers. Investor-owned utilities are the most prevalent with multiple systems served by Liberty Utilities, California Water Service Company, Cal-am Water Company, Golden State Water Company, and Suburban Water Systems. These systems serve an estimated 85% of the jointly governed water systems. The special district, Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency, in addition to the sole county-run system, L.A. County Waterworks District, are jointly governed as well.



NO GOVERNING BODY IDENTIFIED

The least common type of governing body are water systems with no identifiable decision-making entity. This is common for sufficiently small systems, such as mobile home parks or private systems, in which there is insufficient data available. Thirty-eight (38) systems fall within this categorization that span all governance types except wholesalers and city-run systems.



Figure 3. Type of governing body by water system governance type (n=201)

Los Angeles County Results

The characteristics assessed provide a valuable glimpse of the factors that reflect and drive the governance L.A. county's water systems. The 121 governing bodies were considered for analysis of which the subsequent findings stand out for L.A. county. Additional findings, summarized for each governance type, can be found in **Appendix A.5**.

Females Are Underrepresented in Decision-making

Females are significantly underrepresented in L.A. county's water system governing bodies as evidenced by the fact that only 30% of local governing body member seats are currently held by women. For every female governing body member there are 2.3 male governing body members across L.A. county's water systems. **Figure 4** compares the percentage of male to female governing body members by governance type. City-run, investor-owned utilities, mutual water companies, and special districts all have majority male governing bodies. County-run (L.A. County Waterworks District) is the only governance type to buck this trend with a higher percentage of female governing board members than males.



Figure 4. Percentage of estimated male and female governing body members by governance type (n=681)

The number of women in water leadership positions is also low. Of members that hold an executive or equivalent leadership position, just under one-quarter (24%) are female. Similarly, of governing body members that are female, only 19% hold an executive or equivalent leadership position. **Figure 5** further details the proportion of leadership positions among female governing board members. Of female governing body members, **Figure 6** delineates those in a non-executive and executive position.





Figure 6. Executive to non-executive leadership positions held by female governing body members (n=202)

Leadership positions include serving as the president or vice president of the board, mayor or mayor pro-tem/vice mayor, or as a chair to a specific committee. Therefore, females are underrepresented across the areas of governance, directorship, and executive leadership in L.A. county's water systems. This is despite widespread documentation of the strong relationship between the corporate, social, and economic benefits of more women in leadership (Credit Suisse, 2012; McElhaney & Mobasseri, 2012; Schwanke, 2013).

Preliminary steps have been taken to increase female representation on governing boards. Investor-owned utilities, in particular, have undertaken efforts to increase female board member representation as part of a corporate sustainability and equity goals. For example, Liberty Utilities—subsidiary of parent company, Algonquin Power & Utilities Corporation—publishes an annual sustainability for its key stakeholders. The report details their operational commitment using an Environmental, Social Governance (ESG) framework and commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, they have committed to gender equality (SDG #5) with an initiative to pursue gender balance on boards and in senior leadership.

Public companies, including investor-owned utilities, are also subject to California's SB 826. Signed into law in 2018, SB 826 addresses the issue of board gender diversity requiring that publicly traded companies have at least one woman on their boards by the end of 2019. In 2021, the companies must have a minimum of two or three women, depending on the size of their boards. These efforts appear to make an impact on L.A. county's investor-owned utility water systems which have the second highest proportion of female representation on their governing bodies.

The causes for underrepresentation of women in decision-making processes and positions are multiple and complex. Moreover, the process is slow to effect change towards greater gender parity of L.A. county's governing body members, if proactive steps are not taken.

Hispanic and Latinx Communities Are Underrepresented in Decision-making

The lack of female representation on L.A. county's governing bodies is reproduced for Hispanic and Latinx individuals and other underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. An estimated 60% of governing body members are non-Hispanic or Latinx White. Black, Asian, Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Indigenous groups combined (indicated collectively as "other") don't even make up one-quarter of governing body representation countywide, irrespective of governance type. City-run systems are the most racially and ethnically diverse governance type with a majority (54%) of city council members imputed as Hispanic or Latinx among other underrepresented groups. Investor-owned utilities, comparatively, are the least racially and ethnically diverse of the governance types with less than one-quarter of governing body members estimated to be of an underrepresented group. **Figure 7** shows imputed race and ethnicity of governing body members.



Figure 7. Estimated race and ethnicity of governing body members by governance type (n=562)

From these findings, there is no getting around the uncomfortable conclusion that the levels of diversity of L.A. county's water system governing bodies are inadequate. This deficiency is particularly striking when considering the disconnect between governing body member race and ethnicity and the race and ethnicity of the residents of the systems served that they represent. L.A. county's population is racially and ethnically diverse. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2019), the racial and ethnic makeup of L.A. county is 49% of the population are Hispanic or Latinx of any race. When considered with the gender divide, the county's governing bodies by and large continue to be primarily comprised of white men.

This suggests that there are institutional and social barriers that perpetuate the continued underrepresentation of females in addition to racial and ethnic minorities on local water governing bodies. These barriers remain despite the acknowledged and unequivocal benefits of greater board diversity. How effectively a governing body performs its responsibilities depends largely on its composition. More diverse boards— demographically and cognitively—can meaningfully enhance the performance of a board (Posner, 2020; Landaw, 2020). Demographically and cognitively diverse boards are better equipped to perform their obligations as well as innovate and respond to today's water challenges. Moreover, diversity is not just important in how it impacts its employees or system performance—it also plays a major role in how residents of the systems are served and supported as well.

Some organizations are now including racial diversity as part of their social responsibility portfolios, and a new bill, A.B. 979, has been introduced in California designed to follow in the footsteps of S.B. 826 that introduced board gender diversity. Passed and signed into law 2020, A.B. 979 requires that a 'publicly held corporation' with principal offices located in California have a minimum of one director from an underrepresented community by the end of 2021. A director from an "underrepresented community"

means a director who self-identifies as Black, African American, Hispanic, Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, Native Hawaiian, or Alaska Native. By 2022, a corporation with more than four but fewer than nine directors must have a minimum of two directors from underrepresented communities, and a corporation with nine or more directors must have a minimum of three directors from underrepresented communities. The bill also requires that the Secretary of State publish various reports on its website documenting, among other things, the number of corporations in compliance with the bill's provisions. Therefore, as with board gender diversity, the bill requires companies to look outside their traditional channels to find new directors from underrepresented communities.

Elections Are an Important Accountability Mechanism

Elections are a common and powerful form of authorization, including for the county's water systems. Governing body members can be formally named to their position through a mechanism by which voting residents of a system authorize representatives to act on their behalf. Governing body members can also be named to their positions through election by their shareholding members. In lieu of an election, governing body members can be appointed to a position. Reasons for appointment vary due to resignation of an elected individual in which another is appointed to cover for the remainder of the term for which they can run for election. Distinctions among elections by governance type are summarized in **Table 2**.

	City-run/County/ Special District	Mutual Water Company	Investor-owned Utility
Election Type	Municipal Election	Shareholder Election	Shareholder Election
Election Cycle	Staggered every two-years on even-numbered years	4 years (max)	Annual meeting of shareholders
Procedure	Directly elected by voters or appointed to fixed term	Directly elected by shareholders (i.e., members of mutual water company)	Step 1: Nominating/ Corporate Governance Committee nominates candidates Step 2: Elected by shareholders (i.e., stockholders)
Eligibility	 Registered voter Resident of city/district No parole/felony Landowner (in limited cases only) 	 Shareholding member Registered voter 	Basis of character, expertise, business experiences etc.
Supervision	County of Los Angeles Registrar-Recorder/ County Clerk	If requested by shareholder(s)	Internal (Nominating/ corporate governance committee)

Table 2. Water system election process and procedure summary by governance type
The majority (65%) of L.A. county's governing body members are directly elected by the residents of the system that they serve¹¹. Of the nearly 700 governing body member seats assessed less than 1% were vacant. An estimated 115 governing body seats are up for elections slated to take place in 2022. **Figure 8** compares the election type of L.A. county's governing body members by governance type.¹²



Figure 8. Governing body members by election type (n=286)

City-run water systems, the L.A. County Waterworks District (county-run), and special districts hold municipal elections. In the 2020 election cycle, nine (9) scheduled elections were cancelled overall and three (3) scheduled elections were cancelled for particular positions according to the County of L.A. Registrar-Recorder/ City Clerk¹³. Special districts disproportionately represented over 75% of the cancelled elections in this cycle; however, reasons for cancellation are undisclosed.

City-run, county, and special districts have their governing body either directly elected by the voters (in the defined geographic boundary) or appointed for a fixed term of service (often by a city council or board of supervisors). Those eligible to run must be a registered voter in L.A. County, a resident of particular city or district, and are not on parole for a felony. Significant changes have been made in recent years to the election format that impacts these water systems. Upon the passage of A.B. 331 (2013), voting law changed to align and consolidate with the statewide California general election. Coinciding with this legislation, S.B. 415 (2015) requires all local governments to consolidate its General Municipal Election with a statewide election date if holding the General Municipal

¹¹ Note that while an election may have been held this does not indicated that the election was necessarily contested between two or more candidates.

¹² Mutual Water Company is not an included governance type in Figure 9 due to a lack of available information.

¹³ Cancelled elections included San Gabriel Valley, Three Valleys, Foothill, Las Virgenes, Glendora, La Canada, Arcadia, Walnut Valley, Crescenta, La Habra Heights, Orchard Dale, Rowland, and Palmdale. Note that the data collected for analysis does not include the results of the November 2020 elections.

Election on another date has previously resulted in a significant decrease in voter turnout. Per the statewide elections code, many city-run water systems have consolidated their elections to encourage higher voter participation. Elections are now staggered and take place every two years with most governing body elections occurring in even-numbered years. For instance, a governing body might have three seats up for election in November 2022, and the remaining two up for election in November 2024.

Mutual water companies differ as defined by their articles of incorporation and bylaws, which establish the qualifications for who can serve on the board of directors as well as determine whether members are elected or appointed (Cal. Corp Code § 7132(c)(6), 7151(c)). Generally, only members of the mutual can vote unless otherwise noted in the articles of incorporation or bylaws. In the unique case of mutual water companies, it appears that multiple members of a family serve together. It is common for mutual water companies to require that governing body members be landowners that live within the boundaries of the service area. If elected, then the length of their terms will again depend on the articles or bylaws but cannot exceed four years (Cal. Corp. Code §§ 7132(c)(6), 7151(c), 7220(a)). If term lengths are not specified, then the default term length is one year (Cal. Corp. Code § 7220(a)).

Investor-owned utilities also have a unique election process. As a public company, investor-owned utilities must have a board of directors composed of members from both inside (dependent) and outside (independent) the company. Typically, a nominating or corporate governance committee has the duty to recommend a slate of directors for election at each annual meeting of shareholders. The committee considers and makes recommendations to the governing body regarding its size, structure, composition and functioning. The directors are then elected at each annual meeting of the shareholders by the shareholders for a one-year term. It is common company policy that the governing body consist of at least a majority of independent directors as determined in accordance with applicable stock exchange listing standards and any other applicable law or regulation. To be considered an "independent director," a director must meet the New York Stock Exchange ("NYSE") standards of independence, as determined by the board.

There Is a Lack of Governing Body Leadership Turnover

Turnover of governing body leadership is a benefit to L.A. county's water systems. The average tenure of governing bodies ranges from a newly elected or appointed member to others with up to 39 years of experience. City-run systems exhibit the longest length of service while mutual water companies have the highest average tenure of 20 years. Generally, the average tenure of governing body members reflects typical term limit structures such as two, four-year terms. **Figure 9** shows the average, minimum, and maximum tenure by governance type.



Figure 9. Average, minimum, and maximum tenure by governance type (n=265)

Term limits vary by governing body and are rare among the county's water systems. Less than 10% of city-run or county water system governing bodies have term limits. The term limits range from two to three terms served of four years in length per term, or eight (8) to 12 years of service total. Mutual water companies and special districts do not impose any term limits on their water system governing bodies. Investor-owned utilities' term limits are imposed in the form of attrition through resignation, retirement, or death as determined in their bylaws. Of note, wholesalers are a special case since their governing bodies are comprised of members appointed by their respective cooperative cities and water agencies. As a result, term limits are dependent on their respective member organizations.

Research indicates that a modest amount of turnover tends to be a characteristic of the leadership and governance behaviors that drive organizational performance (Anderson & Chun, 2014). That stands to reason: new governing body members bring their skills, talents and abilities to the governing body. They may also be more likely than established members to challenge orthodoxy and raise previously unasked questions. New perspectives may stem from best practices that encourage diversity of background, age, gender, ethnicity or other demographics of which have previously been discussed as lacking on L.A. county's water system governing bodies. However, there are benefits to long-serving governing body members that have the organizational history and the institutional knowledge that can be of great benefit to water systems. Therefore, a modest amount of turnover periodically supports the balance between bringing in new

perspectives and skills while retaining beneficial experience and governing body stability. Attending to water system governing body member turnover—and how it may affect outcomes of representation and accountability—is a step in the right direction.

Compensation Salaries Vary by Role & Responsibility

Water system governing body members commonly receive compensation salaries for their role and responsibilities. Annual pay among L.A. county's water system governing body members runs the gamut from pro-bono up to a salary of \$277,848¹⁴—equivalent to nearly four times the county's median household income. Countywide, a governing body member holding an executive position earns an estimated \$15,550 annually while a non-executive governing body members an estimated \$21,000 annually. **Table 3** provides a comparison of average executive and non-executive compensation by governance type.

Governance Type	Avg. Executive Compensation (n=209)	Avg. Non-executive Compensation (n=468)	Avg. Compensation
City-run	\$18,250	\$33,920	\$28,734
County-run	\$214,601	\$214,601	\$214,601
Investor- owned Utility	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mutual Water Company	\$15,030	\$6,180	\$9,612
Special District	\$9,360	\$8,830	\$10,359
Wholesaler	\$29,650	\$30,100	\$29,279

Table 3. Average compensation for executive and non-executive governing body members (annual retainer only)

These annual compensation values account for annual retainers¹⁵ only. As a result, the annual compensation is estimated to be conservative based on the variability of compensation elements and methods that were not accounted for in this analysis. Additional limitations of scale and specificity of annual retainer data for a given governing body member or governance type further skew the data. The lack of

¹⁴ This corresponds to Mayor Garcetti's salary as a member of the L.A. City Council.

¹⁵ An annual retainer refers to the amount that a governing body member is entitled to receive for serving as a member in a fiscal year but does not include reimbursements for other expenses and fees associated with service on the governing body.

compensation information for investor-owned utilities is one such example. In addition, a lower average executive compensation to non-executive compensation supports the conclusion that executives largely receive non-salary compensation. Therefore, the data challenges require further research to provide a more representative and accurate picture of governing body compensation.

Governing body member compensation can include various elements. A compensation package includes annual retainers and per-meeting fees. This is often the case for city-run and county water systems. Another significant element of compensation is travel reimbursement. Governing bodies also have various definitions for what constitutes a meeting and can range from lunches to conferences. This is variable by water systems as outlined in their bylaws, charter, and/or municipal code. For a publicly traded company, such as investor-owned utilities, stock options also make up a significant part of a compensation package. While governing body members of an investor-owned utility are compensated well, this is not reflected in analysis due to the lack of information readily available. Compensation may include a fixed annual retainer, equity compensation, meeting fees and such other elements as the governing body may determine. In addition, governing body members are commonly eligible for certain health and retirement benefits and programs. Members also serve as the water retailer's representative on various regional boards, such as the League of California Cities, Metropolitan Water District (i.e., wholesaler), or Association of California Water Agencies. These boards may pay representatives an additional nominal fee for attendance at meetings.

City-run water systems, if a general law city, are compensated based on population capping at a maximum of \$1,000 per month (Cal. Gov't Code § 36516). This legislation also limits the ability for city council to enact or amend future increases in salary or compensation in excess of the amount authorized. Health, retirement, and other expenses for reimbursement are not included for the purposes of determining salary. The remaining water systems do not have a similar salary cap.

In some cases, governing body member salaries appear to be high compared to the level of work they're completing. Although members aren't involved in the day-to-day operations of a water retailer, they are the fiduciaries responsible to steer the organization towards a sustainable future by adopting ethical and legal governance and financial management policies as well as ensuring the organization has adequate resources to advance its mission. Practically speaking, the governing body determines how the water systems' services are provided by establishing policies and/or enacting laws and adopting an annual budget, including setting rates and approving services.

Importantly, L.A. county's water system governing bodies differ in terms of their expertise and responsibilities related to water that should be considered when discussing compensation. Some water systems are responsible for one specific type of duty, while others provide a wide range of public services. For dependent water systems administered by a city council or board of supervisors, only a portion of their dedicated time is spent on water issues. For these systems, water is only one of a series of responsibilities of governing body members. For example, the regular meeting agendas may simply be part of a broader agenda focusing on other city or county business. On the other hand, when independent or dependent governing bodies have appointed members or are elected by governing board consensus—as is the case with investor-owned utilities—governing body members' public responsibilities focus more exclusively on water issues. In these cases, members are able to spend greater amounts of time dedicated to and developing water expertise.

At the same time, a water system governed by a board of supervisors or city council may offer a broader community perspective than one which focuses exclusively on water issues. For instance, city council would likely have a better understanding of their community's needs—due to their public service on a wide variety of issues. This broad perspective could allow a councilor to have a unique insight into how the water system's policy and direction fit into the community as a whole.

The Research Motivates a Need for Broader Public Access to Information and Engagement

L.A. county's water systems use a number of approaches to inform the residents of the systems they serve and interested parties about their activities, which in turn lead to enhanced accountability. Fundamentally, given the dynamic pace of water policy changes, access to information is most easily distributed to residents of the systems served through a publicly accessible website. Water system websites should serve as comprehensive portals for important water governance service information.

A publicly accessible website was maintained by 94 of L.A. county's water systems assessed (78%). **Figure 10** shows the proportion of water systems with and without a website. Mutual water companies are the only governance type represented with a portion of its water systems lacking a publicly accessible website (46%). However, this statistic does not account for the sufficiently small and private systems removed from analysis due to the lack of accessible information entirely. Therefore, systems lacking a website are much more likely to serve small systems and populations. Nonetheless, Pierce et al. (2015) in the *Los Angeles Community Water Systems Atlas and Policy Guide* found that only 60% of water systems had a publicly accessible website which suggests that this access gap is decreasing.



Figure 10. Proportion of L.A. county's water systems with a website (n=121)

Many formal notices are statutorily required to be made through a website and other media outlets. City-run, county-run, and special districts are governed by the Ralph M. Brown Act's requirements for public notices and opportunities for public input. In general, notices of agendas must be made at least 72 hours before a meeting, and there must be opportunities for public comment during those meetings. These public water systems, therefore, complied with posting current and archived meeting materials, agendas, minutes. All systems further hold open meetings that are accessible to the generable public. If unable to attend a meeting in person or live, most systems additionally had both audio and video capabilities (96%) with the remaining audio only (4%). The prevalence of audio and video decreased when broadened to include all governance types (71%).



Another important dimension of accessibility is the language in which materials are offered. Many water systems have made efforts to translate their materials into a number of additional languages. Less than 10% of water systems in L.A. county made meeting materials (e.g., agendas and minutes) available in Spanish as well as English (see **Figure 11**). In some cases, materials were provided in additional languages representative of the minority communities served.

Not all water systems must comply with these fundamental statutory requirements. Mutual water companies, investor-owned utilities, and other private companies fall into this category. The Public Records Act and Brown Act do not apply to these corporations, nor does the PUC generally have jurisdiction. Mutual water companies are subject to the Corporations Code that limits inspection and access to the company's records and reports to members. Non-members can be allowed access dependent on their articles of incorporation or bylaws. As private water utilities, investor-owned utilities are subject to rules under the PUC and the Public Utilities Code. Other private entities that provide drinking water do not have equivalent laws and regulations enforcing public access to information. The data reflects these realities as the investor-owned utilities and mutual water companies assessed do not publicly disclose this information. Residents of the systems served are left in the dark about these systems' fundamental decision-making processes and outcomes.

These findings suggest that the regulatory framework and resulting conformity guide accountability and transparency in governance for the county's local water systems. This encourages the critical role of legislation and policy in facilitating the adoption and operationalization of more representative and accountable governance. However, while compliance with statutory requirements supports aspects of accountability and transparency in governance, it doesn't incentivize water systems to do more.

Recommendations

This report serves as an exploratory effort that establishes a meaningful first step to understanding drinking water governance of L.A. county's water systems. As dynamic research, the intent is to continue to build out a body of information to help inform and engage in advocacy and policy making with tangible improvements for the benefit of the residents of the systems served. However, representation and accountability do not sufficiently answer all matters of drinking water governance. Future research should expand the understanding of governance in the context of drinking water by addressing the data limitations, knowledge, and understanding of the attributes of governance and their relational impact on system performance.

In particular, the county's water systems offer lessons across California. While the descriptive statistics present quantitative descriptions in a manageable form, there is important nuance that is lost in doing so. Case studies could be explored to provide a journalistic exploration and contextualize the quantitative descriptions of governance attributes and expand on the relationships or distinctions between governance types. This approach is important as there is no single model of effective water governance and, thus, offers additional insights into the different institutional arrangements, financial mechanisms, governance challenges, and political dynamics that are critical to understanding the successes and shortcomings of the governance of L.A. county's water systems.

The information collected for this report also only represents a snapshot in time. To track and assess progress over time ongoing updates and management of drinking water system governance information should be pursued for the benefit of the general public. A first effort should be to develop a publicly accessible website to display the information in a way that promotes increased access, transparency, and data literacy. Finally, this report and Catalog provides a template to scale water governance research to other districts across California.

It is the responsibility of many individuals and organizations to make this research actionable in the local context. Therefore, additional recommendations are organized by key players that collectively have a role in changing L.A. county's drinking water leadership paradigms.

Residents Served by Water Systems

This research serves as a springboard to advance public understanding of L.A. county's governing bodies and drinking water systems. Residents of the systems served are obliged to run for office, to step into their power, and to make a difference in their community. Residents also have an opportunity to address drinking water challenges in their community more broadly by gathering support and forming an organization with this mission. Organizing a community group to address local water issues increases collective power over decisions affecting a community. A formal group enables power in numbers,

provides legitimate recognition, and improves the ability to raise funds on behalf of the community to address local water issues. L.A. county also has many organizations leading advocacy efforts to ensure everyone has access to safe, affordable water. Residents can become involved as volunteers with these organizations to do outreach in their communities and learn more about the county's drinking water system.

Advocates & Associations

Local advocates and grassroots organizations have a continued role to play in promoting safe, clean, and affordable drinking water in their communities. Advocacy is poised to continue to bring about change, whether that's accomplished through raising public awareness, increasing support, or influencing policy on drinking water issues. Likewise, industry associations, or similar, also play an important role that can move the needle on adoption and implementation of governance best practices as exemplified by the Special Districts Leadership Foundation which offers the Transparency Certificate of Excellence. However, adoption and implementation of best practices don't necessarily have a direct and/or positive effect on public participation in or perception of a given drinking water entity. Similarly, there is a role in foundations and other organizations to serve as whistleblowers.

Drinking Water Systems

L.A. county's water systems themselves are central to addressing governance gaps in representation and accountability. It is now more important than ever for water systems to be open and accessible to the residents of the systems served. All of L.A. county's drinking water systems should pursue and promote transparency, representation, and accountability in their operations and governance. This research can be used as a resource to challenge and support water systems in how they conceptualize and apply water governance in their organizations.

Minimum standards that drinking water systems should comply:

- Validate and exhibit their commitment to operating in a transparent and ethical manner.
- Compliance with the Ralph M. Brown Act.
- Compliance with the Public Records Act.
- Conduct audits as required by law.
- Maintain an up-to-date and functional website.
- Pursue a community transparency review, such as with a LAFCO executive officer or local legislator.

Policymakers

This research serves as a talking point for further legislation to bring continued and increased focus on the legislative agenda. Policymakers should consider tasking an agency (regional or state) with the authority and resources to collect, maintain, and publish governance attribute information as an important first step to deciphering the complex governance of water system in California. Other policies could consider publishing a centralized and well-maintained database that would provide a platform for comparing across agencies as well as broader systems analysis, both of which can strengthen management options. At present, there are limited comparable data sources available to assess the representation and accountability of local water governing bodies much less broader conceptions of governance. Fundamentally, policymakers should adapt and bolster legislation for water systems of all water governance types to comply with the minimum accessibility and transparency requirements that serve as best practices including the Brown Act, Public Records Act, Proposition 218, and Bilingual Services Act.

Conclusion

Governing bodies—whether a city council or an independently elected or appointed group—are an invaluable link in ensuring that L.A. county's water systems operate and move forward in ways that represent the desires of their communities. This report is the first to catalog drinking water system governance and establish a baseline of governance characteristics in L.A. county. Analysis reveals that there are clear deficiencies of both representation and accountability on the county's local water governing bodies. Females and Hispanics or Latinx are sorely underrepresented in local water leadership especially in comparison to the demographics of the residents in which the water systems serve. Leadership and governance behaviors of the water systems themselves potentially hinder organizational performance including tenure and compensation. Elections serve as an important mechanism of accountability, but they take many forms. In addition, L.A. county's water systems use a number of approaches to inform the residents of the systems they serve and interested parties about their activities, which in turn lead to enhanced accountability. While the existing regulatory framework and resulting conformity guide accountability and transparency in governance for our local water systems, they do not incentive systems to do more or do better.

This report is one in a series of projects by UCLA LCI to advance the HRW in California. As such, this research advances our understanding of local water leadership in L.A. county with the opportunity to continue the conversation of drinking water governance to address the challenges facing water systems across California. L.A. county's drinking water systems have a critical role to play in water governance directly involving residents of the systems that they serve to advance more transparent, accessible, and representative processes and equitable outcomes.

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Appendices

A.1 Drinking Water System Governance Type Summary¹⁶

City-run

Laws & Regulations

City-run systems are governed by Division 20 of the California Water Code, Sections 71000-73001.

Governing Form & Processes

It is common for a city to have a public works department to oversee the water system. However, the mayor and city council oversee city the water system policies and operations. Therefore, if a city does provide water directly, the city council holds the authority to establish the policy direction, operations, and performance of the water system.

Access to Information & Engagement

The Brown Act, Public Records Act, and Prop. 218 apply to city-run systems.

County-run

Laws & Regulations

County-run systems are governed by Division 12 of the California Water Code, Sections 30000-33901.

Governing Form & Processes

County-run systems shall have a board of five directors—elected or appointed—who must be a registered voter of the district (Cal. Water Code § 30500). The term of office of each director is four years, other than directors first elected or directors appointed to fill an unexpired term (Cal. Water Code § 30502). Each director is allowed to receive compensation in an amount not to exceed \$100 per day for each day's attendance at meetings of the board or for each day's service as a director by request of the board. This cannot exceed a total of six days in any calendar month, including any expenses incurred in the performance of his or her duties required or authorized by the board (Cal. Water Code § 30502).

City Waterworks Districts are governed by the board of supervisors of the county, in lieu of a board of directors appointed by the board of supervisors (Cal. Water Code § 5530). The district may appoint or employ and prescribe the authorities and duties of officers, such as a general manager or treasurer who serve at the pleasure of the board.

Access to Information & Engagement

The Brown Act, Public Records Act, and Prop. 218 apply to county-run systems.

¹⁶ Adapted, in part, from *Guide to Community Drinking Water Advocacy* by the Community Water Center (Firestone, 2009).

Investor-owned Utility

Laws & Regulations

Investor-owned utilities are regulated by the California PUC and can range from publicly traded companies to small, family-owned businesses. The Public Utilities Code places various restrictions on investor-owned utility water system (Cal. Pub. Util. Code §§ 701, 702).

Governance Form & Processes

An investor-owned utility is governed by a board of directors. The number of directors on the board as well as the responsibilities and function are determined in the entity's bylaws. Functioning in a fiduciary capacity for the corporation and its shareholders, the board is a company's supervisory body functioning as its decision and control system (Landaw, 2020). A board is tasked with the responsibility of advising and overseeing management with the goal of facilitating long-term value creation for shareholders. A board fulfills these obligations through its ability to hire, compensate, and terminate the CEO, approve important company decisions, and oversee and influence corporate strategy.

Access to Information & Engagement

An investor-owned utility must, for example, maintain a physical office in the county (Cal. Pub. Util. Code § 791). The Brown Act, Public Records Act, and Prop. 218 do not apply to investor-owned utilities. As regulated by the PUC, however, investor-owned utilities must keep proper accounting records (Cal. Pub. Util. Code § 792) and submit various reports to the PUC (Cal. Pub. Util. Code §§ 581, 582, 584).

Mutual Water Company

Laws & Regulations

Mutual water companies are governed by provisions of the California Corporations Code, including:

- Title 1, Division 2, Parts 1 and 3, Sections 5002-5080 and 7110-8910
- Title 1, Division 3, Part 7, Chapter 1, comprising Sections 14300-14303

Governing Form & Processes

A mutual water company is governed by a board of directors responsible for conducting the activities and affairs of the corporation in addition to exercising its corporate powers (Cal. Corp. Code §§ 5047, 7210). The number of directors on the board are determined in the articles of incorporation and bylaws (Cal. Corp. Code §§ 7132, 7151). Specifically, a mutual water company must have a chairman of the board, a president, or both. The general manager and chief executive officer serves as the mutual water company's chairman, if applicable; else, the president fulfills this role. A secretary and a chief financial officer are also required officers (Cal. Corp. Code § 7213). Unless specified otherwise in the articles of incorporation or bylaws, the board appoints the officers in which one person can serve more than one office (Cal. Corp. Code § 7213).

Access to Information & Engagement

The articles of incorporation and bylaws limit access to information and engagement of the residents of the system served. Overall, the articles of incorporation and bylaws state who can be a member. Shareholders are those who hold units of "shares" in the mutual water company and are often synonymous with the members of the mutual water company (Cal. Corp. Code §§ 5071, 5072). A mutual water company will not have any members unless specified by the articles of incorporation or bylaws (Cal. Corp. Code § 7310(a)).

Only members can attend board meetings. Likewise, all members have a right to inspect the mutual water company's records and reports (Cal. Corp. Code §§ 7160, 8313, 8325, 8330). Only members of the mutual hold voting rights (Cal. Corp. Code § 5056). Often, members are allowed one vote for each parcel owned (Cal. Corp. Code §§ 7153, 7312, 14300). The specific types of decisions on which members are permitted to vote depends on the mutual water company's articles of incorporation and bylaws as well as non-members' access to information (Cal. Corp. Code §§ 7132, 7151).

A mutual water company's articles of incorporation and bylaws also determine whether board members are elected or appointed (Cal. Corp. Code § 7220). Board of directors are elected by shareholders who are members of the community which must be a registered voter living in the district. If elected, then the length of their terms depend on the articles or bylaws not to exceed four years (Cal. Corp. Code §§ 7132, 7151, 7220). If the articles and bylaws do not specify term lengths, then the default term length is one year (Cal. Corp. Code § 7220). If a member requests, the chairman of the board must appoint one or three election inspector(s) to monitor a mutual water company's election process, assess the results, and resolve disputes (Cal. Corp. Code § 7614).

Special District

Laws & Regulations

California state law defines a special district as any "agency of the state for the local performance of government and proprietary functions within limited boundaries" (Govt. Code §16721). Special districts are distinguished by their common features: 1) A form of government; 2) Governed by a board; 3) Provides services and facilities; and 4) Has defined boundaries). Special districts are, in part, governed by California Govt. Code § 56381.

Irrigation districts are a type of special district. Irrigation districts are governed by Division 11 of the California Water Code, Sections 20500-29978. Many sections of the Water Code apply only to individual, specific irrigation districts none of which apply to L.A. county's water system.

Governance Form & Processes

There are independent and dependent special districts. Independent special districts operate under a locally elected, independent board of directors, which oversees district functions. Dependent special districts are those in which the governing board of either a city or county will also serve as decision-makers for a special district. The California Government Code, through the principal act, generally provides special districts with the authority to compensate board members. Special districts generate revenue from several sources including property taxes, special assessments, and fees.

In general, each irrigation district is governed by a five-member board of directors, which manages the district's affairs (Cal. Water Code § 21385). An irrigation district must also maintain a district office at a physical location, although that location does not have to be within the district (Cal. Water Code § 21400). It is common for a district to be divided into five geographic divisions. Each division elects one member to the board of directors (Cal. Water Code § 21550).

To become a member of the board, an individual must be a voter and a landowner in the district, as well as a resident of the division they seek to represent during the entire term (Cal. Water Code § 21100). Any registered voter living in the district is eligible to vote in any election.

Access to Information & Engagement

Irrigation district governing body meetings are open to the public (Cal. Water Code § 21382). While exceptions may apply, in general, the board is supposed to hold a regular meeting on the first Tuesday of each month at the district office (Cal. Water Code § 21377). In addition, as public entities, the Brown Act requires special districts to provide public comment at each meeting.

A.2 Data Sources

Guiding Governance		Data Source ¹				
Questions	Attribute	City-owned	County	MWC	IOU	Special District
Does the water retailer have a website?	• Website link (yes/no)	• Google search	• Google search	• Google search	• Google search	• Google search
Does the water retailer have a physical location?	• Physical address (yes/no)	• Water system website	• Water system website	• Water system website	• Parent company or subsidiary website	• Water system website
Who makes the decisions about and for the water retailer? What is the governing body?	• Governing body (yes/no; structure)	• City website ('City Council' tab)	• Water system website	• 990 tax form	• Parent company website	• Water system website
If there is a governing body, is it local?	• Yes/no	City website ('City Council' tab)	Water system website	• Not available	• Parent company website	• Water system website
Who currently serves on the governing body?	 Name + role Area/ division represented 	City website ('City Council' or 'Elected Officials' tab)	• Water system website	• 990 tax form	Parent company website ('Corporate Governance' or similar tab)	• Water system website
What is the authorization	• Elected/appo inted	 Municipal code City charter 	Water system website	• Water system website (if available)	 Governance documents (e.g., Bylaws, 	• Water system website

Guiding Governance		Data Source ¹				
Questions Attribute	Attribute	City-owned	County	MWC	IOU	Special District
mechanism of the governing body?					Corporate Governance Guidelines, or similar)	
What is the authorization cycle of the governing body?	 Election schedule Upcoming election Term length Governing board size 	 Municipal code City charter City website ('Elections' subpage) Los Angeles County Registrar- Recorder/ County Clerk 	 Water system website Los Angeles County Registrar- Recorder/ County Clerk 	• Water system website (if available)	Governance documents (e.g., Bylaws, Corporate Governance Guidelines, or similar)	 Water system website Los Angeles County Registrar- Recorder/ County Clerk
How long have members served on the governing body?	 Tenure (years) Term expiration 	• City website ('City Council' tab)	• Water system website	• Water system website (if available)	• Parent company website ('Corporate Governance' or similar tab)	• Water system website
What is the sex and ethnic/racial representation of governing body members? (imputed)	 Sex Race/ ethnicity 	City website	• Water system website	 Water system website (if available) 990 tax form 	• Parent company website ('Corporate Governance'	• Water system website

Guiding	Governance	Data Source ¹					
Questions	Attribute	City-owned	County	MWC	IOU	Special District	
					or similar tab)		
What financial compensation, if any, do governing body members receive?	• Annual financial compensation	 City website Municipal code City charter California State Controller 	 Water system website California State Controller 	• California State Controller	Governance documents (e.g., Bylaws, Corporate Governance Guidelines, or similar)	 Water system website California State Controller 	
Can ratepayers actively communicate their opinions to the governing body?	 Meeting location, time, and frequency Meeting format (open/closed) Audio/video services (yes/no) Translation services (yes/no) 	• City website	• Water system website	• Water system website	 Parent company website ('Corporate Governance' or similar tab) Bylaws 	• Water system website	

¹ Sufficiently small systems, such as mobile home parks and private systems had insufficient data for analysis and are not included in this summary as a result.

A.3 Community Partners

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A.4 L.A. County Water System Governance Summary List

Water System	Governance Type	Governing Body Type
AMARILLO MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
ANTELOPE PARK MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
ANTELOPE VALLEY-EAST KERN WATER AGENCY	Special District	Own Governing Body
AQUA J MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
AVERYDALE MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
AZUSA LIGHT AND WATER	City-run	Own Governing Body
BELLFLOWER - SOMERSET MUTUAL WATER CO.	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
BELLFLOWER HOME GARDENS WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
BELLFLOWER, CITY OF	City-run	Own Governing Body
BEVERLY HILLS-CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
BLEICH FLATS MUTUAL WATER CO	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
BURBANK-CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
CAL-AM WATER COMPANY	Investor-owned Utility	Jointly Governed
CALIFORNIA DOMESTIC WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
CALIFORNIA WATER SERVICE CO	Investor-owned Utility	Jointly Governed
CERRITOS - CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
CITY OF ALHAMBRA	City-run	Own Governing Body
CITY OF ARCADIA	City-run	Own Governing Body
CITY OF INDUSTRY WATERWORKS SYSTEMS	City-run	Own Governing Body
CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA	City-run	Own Governing Body
COMPTON-CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
COVINA IRRIGATING COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
COVINA-CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
CRESCENTA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT	Special District	Own Governing Body
DEL RIO MUTUAL	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
DOWNEY - CITY, WATER DEPT.	City-run	Own Governing Body
EAST PASADENA WATER CO	Investor-owned Utility	Own Governing Body
EL DORADO MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
EL MONTE-CITY, WATER DEPT.	City-run	Own Governing Body

Water System	Governance Type	Governing Body Type
EL SEGUNDO-CITY, WATER DEPT.	City-run	Own Governing Body
EVERGREEN MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
FOOTHILL MUNICIPAL WATER DIST	Special District	Own Governing Body
GLENDALE-CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
GLENDORA-CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
GOLDEN STATE WATER CO	Investor-owned Utility	Jointly Governed
GREEN VALLEY COUNTY WATER DISTRICT	Special District	Own Governing Body
HEMLOCK MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
Huntington Park, City of	City-run	Own Governing Body
INGLEWOOD- CITY, WATER DEPT.	City-run	Own Governing Body
KINNELOA IRRIGATION DISTRICT	Special District (Irrigation)	Own Governing Body
LA CANADA IRRIGATION DISTRICT	Special District (Irrigation)	Own Governing Body
LA COUNTY WATERWORKS DIST	County	Jointly Governed
LA HABRA HEIGHTS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT	Special District	Own Governing Body
LA PUENTE VALLEY COUNTY WATER DISTRICT	Special District	Own Governing Body
LA VERNE, CITY WATER DIVISION	City-run	Own Governing Body
LAKE ELIZABETH MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
LAKEWOOD - CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
LAND PROJECTS MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
LANDALE MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
LAS FLORES WATER COMPANY	Investor-owned Utility	Own Governing Body
LAS VIRGENES MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT	Special District	Own Governing Body
LIBERTY UTILITIES	Investor-owned Utility	Jointly Governed
LINCOLN AVENUE WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
LITTLEROCK CREEK IRRIGATION DIST.	Special District (Irrigation)	Own Governing Body
LLANO MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
LOMITA-CITY, WATER DEPT.	City-run	Own Governing Body
LONG BEACH-CITY, WATER DEPT.	City-run	Own Governing Body
LOS ANGELES-CITY, DEPT. OF WATER & POWER	City-run	Own Governing Body
LYNWOOD PARK MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body

Water System	Governance Type	Governing Body Type
LYNWWOOD, CITY OF	City-run	Own Governing Body
MANHATTAN BEACH-CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
MAYWOOD MUTUAL WATER COMPANY No. 1	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
MAYWOOD MUTUAL WATER COMPANY No. 2	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
MAYWOOD MUTUAL WATER COMPANY No. 3	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
METTLER VALLEY MUTUAL	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
MONROVIA-CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
MONTEBELLO LAND & WATER CO.	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
MONTEBELLO-CITY, WATER DEPT.	City-run	Own Governing Body
MONTEREY PARK-CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
NORTH TRAILS MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
NORWALK - CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
ORCHARD DALE WATER DISTRICT	Special District	Own Governing Body
PALM RANCH IRRIGATION DISTRICT	Special District (Irrigation)	Own Governing Body
PALMDALE WATER DISTRICT	Special District	Own Governing Body
PARAMOUNT - CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
PASADENA-CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
PICO RIVERA - CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
PICO WATER DISTRICT	Special District	Own Governing Body
POMONA - CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
QUARTZ HILL WATER DISTRICT	Special District	Own Governing Body
REESEDALE MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
ROWLAND WATER DISTRICT	Special District	Own Governing Body
RUBIO CANON LAND & WATER ASSOCIATION	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
RURBAN HOMES MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
SAN FERNANDO-CITY, WATER DEPT.	City-run	Own Governing Body
SAN GABRIEL COUNTY WATER DISTRICT	Special District	Own Governing Body
SAN GABRIEL VALLEY WATER COMPANY	Investor-owned Utility	Jointly Governed
SANTA CLARITA VALLEY WATER AGENCY	Investor-owned Utility	Jointly Governed

Water System	Governance Type	Governing Body Type
SANTA FE SPRINGS- CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
SANTA MONICA-CITY, WATER DIVISION	City-run	Own Governing Body
SHADOW ACRES MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
SIERRA MADRE-CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
SIGNAL HILL - CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
SLEEPY VALLEY WATER COMPANY INC	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
SO. CAL. EDISON COSANTA CATALINA	Investor-owned Utility	Own Governing Body
SOUTH GATE-CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
SOUTH MONTEBELLO IRRIGATION DIST.	Special District (Irrigation)	Own Governing Body
STERLING MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
SUBURBAN WATER SYSTEMS	Investor-owned Utility	Jointly Governed
SUNDALE MUTUAL WATER COMPANY A, B	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
SUNNY SLOPE WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
SUNNYSIDE FARMS MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
THREE VALLEYS WATER DISTRICT	Wholesaler	Jointly Governed
TORRANCE-CITY, WATER DEPT	City-run	Own Governing Body
TRACT 180 MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
TRACT 349 MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
VALENCIA HEIGHTS WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
VALLEY COUNTY WATER DISTRICT	Special District	Own Governing Body
VALLEY VIEW MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
VALLEY WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
VERNON, CITY OF	City-run	Own Governing Body
WALNUT PARK MUTUAL WATER COMPANY	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
WALNUT VALLEY WATER DISTRICT	Special District	Own Governing Body
WATER REPLENISHMENT DISTRICT	Special District	Own Governing Body
WEST VALLEY COUNTY WATER DISTRICT	Special District	Own Governing Body
WESTSIDE PARK MUTUAL WATER	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body

Water System	Governance Type	Governing Body Type
WHITE FENCE FARMS MUTUAL	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
WATER CO		
WHITE FENCE FARMS MUTUAL WC NO.3	Mutual Water Company	Own Governing Body
WHITTIER-CITY, WATER DEPT.	City-run	Own Governing Body
METROPOLITAN WATER	Wholesaler	Jointly Governed
DISTRICT		
CENTRAL BASIN MUNICIPAL	Wholesaler	Jointly Governed
WATER DISTRICT		
THREE VALLEYS WATER	Wholesaler	Jointly Governed
DISTRICT		

A.5 Results Summary by Governance Type

City-run

Total water systems: 42 **Total governing body members**: 234

Sex			
Female	78 (33%)		
Male	155 (66%)		
N/A	1 (1%)		
Race			
White	192 (82%)		
Non-white	41 (17%)		
N/A	1 (1%)		
Ethnicity			
Hispanic or Latino	81 (34%)		
Non-Hispanic or Latino White	152 (65%)		
N/A	1 (1%)		
Tenure			
Average Tenure (years)	7		
Maximum Tenure (years)	39		
Compensation			
Average Compensation	\$28,734		
Maximum Compensation	\$277,848		
Website			
Yes	42 (100%)		
No	0 (0%)		
Physical Address	5		
Yes	42 (100%)		
No	0 (0%)		
Translations Availa	ble		
Yes	10 (24%)		
No	32 (76%)		
Election Type			
Elected by Voters	139 (59%)		
Elected by Shareholders	0 (0%)		
Appointed	9 (4%)		
N/A	86 (37%)		
Audio/Video			
Yes (both)	41 (98%)		
Yes (audio only)	1 (2%)		
No	0 (0%)		
Meeting Material	s		
Yes	42 (100%)		
No	0 (0%)		

County-run

Total water systems: 1 Total governing body members: 5

Sex			
Female	4 (80%)		
Male	1 (20%)		
Race			
White	4 (80%)		
Non-white	1 (20%)		
Ethnicity			
Hispanic or Latino	1 (20%)		
Non-Hispanic or Latino White	4 (80%)		
Tenure			
Average Tenure (years)	6		
Maximum Tenure (years)	12		
Annual Retainer			
Average Compensation	\$214,601		
Maximum Compensation	\$214,601		
Website			
Yes	1 (100%)		
No	0 (0%)		
Physical Address			
Yes	1(100%)		
No	0 (0%)		
Translations Availa	ble		
Yes	0 (0%)		
No	1 (100%)		
Election Type			
Elected by Voters	5 (100%)		
Elected by Shareholders	0 (0%)		
Appointed	0 (0%)		
N/A	0 (0%)		
Audio/Video			
Yes (both)	1 (100%)		
Yes (audio only)	0 (0%)		
No	0 (0%)		
Meeting Material	s		
Yes	1 (100%)		
No	0 (0%)		

Investor-owned Utility

Total water systems: 9 Total governing body members: 68

Sex			
Female	26 (38%)		
Male	40 (59%)		
N/A	2 (3%)		
Race			
White	54 (80%)		
Non-white	7 (10%)		
N/A	7 (10%)		
Ethnicity			
Hispanic or Latino	4 (6%)		
Non-Hispanic or Latino White	57 (84%)		
N/A	7 (10%)		
Tenure			
Average Tenure (years)	8		
Maximum Tenure (years)	24		
Annual Retainer			
Average Compensation	N/A		
Maximum Compensation	N/A		
Website			
Yes	9 (100%)		
No	0 (0%)		
Physical Address	5		
Yes	9 (100%)		
No	0 (0%)		
Translations Availa	ble		
Yes	0 (0%)		
No	9 (100%)		
Election Type			
Elected by Voters	0 (0%)		
Elected by Shareholders	34 (50%)		
Appointed	10 (15%)		
N/A	24 (35%)		
Audio/Video			
Yes (both)	0 (0%)		
Yes (audio only)	0 (0%)		
No	9 (100%)		
Meeting Material	s		
Yes	1 (12%)		
No	8 (89%)		
Mutual Water Company

Total water systems: 43 **Total governing body members**: 209

Sex		
Female	50 (24%)	
Male	154 (74%)	
N/A	5 (2%)	
Race		
White	49 (23%)	
Non-white	3 (1%)	
N/A	157 (75%)	
Ethnicity		
Hispanic or Latino	17 (8%)	
Non-Hispanic or Latino White	35 (17%)	
N/A	157 (75%)	
Tenure		
Average Tenure (years)	8	
Maximum Tenure (years)	24	
Annual Retainer		
Average Compensation	\$9,612	
Maximum Compensation	\$266,383	
Website		
Yes	16 (37%)	
No	27 (63%)	
Physical Address		
Yes	34 (79%)	
No	9 (21%)	
Translations Available		
Yes	1 (2%)	
No	42 (198%)	
Election Type		
Elected by Voters	0 (0%)	
Elected by Shareholders	6 (3%)	
Appointed	5 (2%)	
N/A	198 (95%)	
Audio/Video		
Yes (both)	0 (0%)	
Yes (audio only)	2 (5%)	
No	41 (95%)	
Meeting Materials		
Yes	5 (12%)	
No	38 (88%)	

Special District

Total water systems: 23 Total governing body members: 100

Sex	Sex	
Female	27 (27%)	
Male	73 (73%)	
N/A	0 (0%)	
Race		
White	77 (77%)	
Non-white	8 (8%)	
N/A	15 (75%)	
Ethnicity		
Hispanic or Latino	22 (22%)	
Non-Hispanic or Latino White	63 (63%)	
N/A	15 (15%)	
Tenure		
Average Tenure (years)	11	
Maximum Tenure (years)	34	
Annual Retainer		
Average Compensation	\$10,359	
Maximum Compensation	\$21,996	
Website		
Yes	23 (100%)	
No	0 (0%)	
Physical Address		
Yes	23 (100%)	
No	0 (0%)	
Translations Available		
Yes	0 (0%)	
No	23 (100%)	
Election Type		
Elected by Voters	22 (22%)	
Elected by Shareholders	0 (0%)	
Appointed	3 (3%)	
N/A	75 (75%)	
Audio/Video		
Yes (both)	4 (17%)	
Yes (audio only)	11 (48%)	
No	8 (35%)	
Meeting Materials		
Yes	23 (100%)	
No	0 (0%)	

Wholesaler

Total organizations: 3 Total governing body members: 50

Sex		
Female	14 (30%)	
Male	35 (70%)	
N/A	0 (0%)	
Race		
White	43 (86%)	
Non-white	7 (14%)	
N/A	0 (0%)	
Ethnicity		
Hispanic or Latino	16 (32%)	
Non-Hispanic or Latino White	34 (68%)	
N/A	0 (0%)	
Tenure		
Average Tenure (years)	8	
Maximum Tenure (years)	30	
Annual Retainer		
Average Compensation	\$29,279	
Maximum Compensation	\$34,538	
Website		
Yes	3 (100%)	
No	0 (0%)	
Physical Address	5	
Yes	3 (100%)	
No	0 (0%)	
Translations Available		
Yes	0 (0%)	
No	3 (100%)	
Election Type		
Elected by Voters	39 (78%)	
Elected by Shareholders	0 (0%)	
Appointed	11 (22%)	
N/A	0 (0%)	
Audio/Video		
Yes (both)	2 (67%)	
Yes (audio only)	1 (33%)	
No	0 (0%)	
Meeting Materials		
Yes	3 (100%)	
No	0 (0%)	

