



Our Region's Trusted Water Leader  
San Diego County Water Authority

# WEDNESDAY WATER TALK

by Sandra L. Kerl, General Manager

## Good afternoon, San Diego County leaders.

As we start preparing for a phased transition back to the workplace in the months ahead, I'm very mindful of the ongoing challenges that we all face as a region. I'm particularly disheartened to hear about the **severe struggles faced by many of our farmers**.

We're blessed that San Diego County has more than 5,500 farms – the most of any county in the nation – and **the vast majority of those are small, family operations**. Many of those farms are suffering due to shipping disruptions, market collapses and other challenges. Thankfully, our friends at the San Diego County Farm Bureau have set up [a webpage that makes it easy to find local farms](#) offering an array of local goods. **I encourage you to help them weather this storm with your patronage.**

Of course, we don't know how long the storm will last, but I'm committed to the idea that **we are not victims of circumstance**. We can – and will – maintain a safe, reliable water system that is a foundational element of regional recovery. And, we will learn from our experience to make the post-pandemic workplace better for our employees and our stakeholders.

These days, **I'm asking my executive team to wrestle with questions about our future** work environment, from the mundane to the profound:

- How can we capitalize on the abilities and agility of our newly mobile workforce?
- How can we use now-common technologies to **maximize efficiency for employees and minimize expenses for ratepayers**?
- How can we better accommodate the needs of vastly different generations in our workplace to capitalize on their differing perspectives and experiences?
- How can we **foster a sense of connectedness** among employees that has often been taken for granted and now seems so essential?
- How can we develop flexible work hours to accommodate evolving school and preschool schedules?
- **How many people should we have in any given workspace** or meeting room?

That's a daunting list, and it's just the start. As leaders, **we have a responsibility to use this moment for the long-term good of our organizations and our community** – and I'm confident that San Diego County has the capacity to do just that.

While we strive to shape a better future, water and wastewater employees are still working on the frontlines each day. In fact, the U.S. EPA has tapped the Water Authority to coordinate the distribution of 25,000 cloth facemasks for water agencies across a six-county region over the next few weeks. **It's a tall order, but one that leverages our core values of collaboration and communication on behalf of our community.**

Thank you for your support, and please email me at [GM@sdcwa.org](mailto:GM@sdcwa.org) to share the issues you're addressing as you lay the groundwork for returning to the workplace.



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