



Good afternoon,
San Diego County leaders.

This week's heat wave has forced rolling blackouts across California in recent days – and highlighted **opportunities for the water industry to help address energy issues.**

Let me explain. Water and power have a long and complex relationship. Obviously, both are necessary to sustain our economy and quality of life. But the connections are deeper. **Water can be used to generate power** (as we are doing daily at the Lake Hodges Pumped Storage Facilities), and power is critical to run the systems that pump, treat and deliver water from a variety of sources straight to your tap.

When the rolling blackouts became imminent, **the Water Authority and its 24 member agencies quickly took action to ensure water supply reliability despite the challenges** – just like we do for wildfires, the pandemic or other emergencies. Agencies filled water storage tanks and topped off fuel for the backup generators. We closed offices early to reduce power demands, and we shifted energy-intensive operations to off-peak hours. The strategy includes temporarily reducing drinking water production at the Claude "Bud" Lewis Carlsbad Desalination Plant to make power available for other uses.

Water agencies also are tapping their significant backup power generation capacity to ease the strain on the energy grid, thanks to Governor Newsom's executive order that suspends some regulatory requirements for those units during this emergency event. We appreciate the governor's leadership – and **we'd like to work with the administration to ensure that our backup generation capacity can be used proactively to help avoid future energy shortages.**



While the state's immediate energy challenges are significant, **the long-term potential for major power supply shortages is a serious one that California needs to address**, and water agencies can help there as well. One element of the solution is for the state to encourage large-scale pumped storage projects like the one the Water Authority is proposing at San Vicente Reservoir.

Pumped energy storage projects store excess renewable energy from solar and wind when it's available, and then discharge that energy when demands increase and renewable energy is scarce. [A 2019 white paper](#) highlighted the importance of pumped energy storage to California's future as the state relies more and more heavily on solar and wind power.

Considering the current stress on energy supplies, it's clearly time for innovative investments like the San Vicente Energy Storage Facility to sustain our renewable energy future, and we look forward to working with the Newsom administration to move this project from concept to reality. The San Vicente project can be started now at no cost to taxpayers – users only pay when the project comes online.

Thank you for your interest in these important issues. I would love to hear from you at GM@sdcwa.org with your comments, suggestions or questions.

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