



PALMDALE WATER DISTRICT

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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATE AWARDS \$17.5 MILLION TO PWD FOR PALMDALE DITCH CONVERSION

Palmdale, CA – The state Department of Water Resources (DWR) has announced that Palmdale Water District (PWD) will receive \$17,580,000 for the conversion of the Palmdale Ditch to a closed pipeline.

The funding from the DWR’s Urban Community Drought Relief Program, along with a \$5 million grant from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, will cover the entire cost of the \$22,580,000 project.

“We are very grateful to DWR for recognizing the importance of modernizing the Palmdale Ditch that was built in the 1880s,” said PWD Board Director Scott Kellerman. “A closed pipeline will reduce water loss and save on maintenance costs. The Board applauds staff for getting this project fully funded and saving money for our customers.”

According to PWD Engineering Manager Scott Rogers, it will take about three years to completely enclose the 8.5-mile ditch that runs from the Littlerock Dam to Lake Palmdale. About 6.7 miles of it is currently open and

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exposed. The remaining lengths are enclosed in pipes, tunnels and culverts. Much of the length of the ditch has a dirt bottom, which causes water loss through seepage. Water also is lost due to evapotranspiration and overspill.

Although water loss varies annually depending on the weather, the average loss is 25%. Since 2010, the average water loss has been about 800 acre-feet annually, or enough water for 1,372 Palmdale households with four people.

In April, PWD received \$5 million from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Program: Water and Energy Efficiency Grants for the ditch conversion. Under the grant agreement, PWD had to secure the remainder \$17.58 million for the project and complete it within three years.

"It's wonderful to get these back-to-back fundings for the Palmdale Ditch," said Rogers, who submitted the DWR grant. "In addition to reducing water loss, there are numerous other benefits, including making it safer for the crew to maintain, reducing sediment entering Lake Palmdale from the ditch, and increasing water flow from Littlerock Dam to the lake."

District staff spend about 400 hours a year maintaining the ditch, including clearing debris, cleaning screens and installing geosynthetic clay liners to the ditch's dirt bottoms.

Since 1918, the Palmdale Water District has provided high-quality water at a reasonable cost. We pride ourselves on providing great customer care; advocating for local water issues that help our residents; educating the community on water-use efficiency; and leading our region in researching and implementing emerging technologies that increase operational efficiency. For more information about PWD, visit www.palmdalewater.org.