

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Charlene Engeron, Public Information Officer
(760) 946-7001 or cengeron@mojavewater.org

MWA imports historic amount of water

APPLE VALLEY, CA — After more than a decade of drought, California saw a significant amount of rainfall in 2023, allowing Mojave Water Agency to import a record amount of water last year.

All water supplied to businesses, homes and farms throughout the High Desert is pumped from local groundwater aquifers. This groundwater is replenished, or “recharged,” by two main sources: natural runoff from the local mountains, and water imported from the State Water Project (SWP). The SWP is a water storage and delivery system of reservoirs, aqueducts, pumping plants, and power plants owned and operated by the State of California and managed by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR).

As one of 29 State Water Contractors, Mojave Water Agency is eligible to deliver up to 89,800-acre-feet of water per year from the aqueduct which is also known as its “Table A” water. The amount of Table A water actually delivered each year varies as DWR sets allocation limits based on how much water is available in the State Water Project system.

Due to the [atmospheric rivers](#) in 2023, DWR allocated 100% of State Water Contractors’ Table A water for delivery. A 100% Table A allocation is a rare opportunity as the [long-term average delivery capability](#) of the State Water Project is only 56%.

“The last time we were allocated 100% of our Table A water was in 2006,” noted Mojave Water Agency Board President, Kimberly Cox. “The Board was committed to taking as much water as possible to help refill our desert aquifers after more than a decade of drought conditions. As a major component of the Board-approved drought mitigation strategy we knew we needed to take full advantage of this allocation. At a cost of \$23,780,013, the move was critical to ensure we are sustainable.”

As a result, MWA imported 59,996-acre-feet of Table A and 4,095-acre-feet of water previously stored in San Luis Reservoir. DWR also made available surplus water in the system known as “Article 21” water, of which, MWA imported 35,465-acre-feet. In addition, MWA delivered 25,000-acre-feet of Table A to a neighboring State Water Contractor to fulfill a water transfer agreement. All totaled, the Agency moved nearly 125,000-acre-feet of water in 2023; a record amount of water delivery for MWA.

Water has been seen in the Mojave Riverbed for more than a year now, often flowing past Rock Springs Road and under the bridge at Bear Valley Road. Until a few months ago, this was water imported from the State Water Project by the Agency. However, MWA stopped delivering State Water Project Water in December and current river flows are coming from the natural runoff from the local mountains. If you follow the Mojave River from its headwaters in the San Bernardino Mountains downstream you would observe the amount of water flowing in the river slowly decreasing until the riverbed is past Barstow. This is because the surface water flow percolates into the ground, recharging local groundwater supplies.

“This doesn’t mean the drought is over. The groundwater basins in our service area are far from full,” cautioned Tony Winkel, Hydrogeologist and Director of Water Resources. “With a desert water cycle that averages roughly 10 years of dry for every one to two years of precipitation, conservation is key to our region’s long-term sustainability. This year’s abundance of water should not be wasted or taken for granted.”

Mojave Water Agency doesn’t deliver water directly to homes. Its mission is to collectively manage groundwater basins sustainably, import water responsibly, and address risks proactively using sound science. The Agency recently completed installing several weather stations to help measure rainfall, precipitation and more. This data is public and can be found on the [data and maps tab](#) of the Agency’s website at www.MojaveWater.org.

The Mojave Water Agency Board of Directors meets the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 9:30 a.m. at Agency Headquarters, 13846 Conference Center Drive. Meetings are open to the public and participation is encouraged. For more information, visit the Agency’s website at www.mojavewater.org or follow us on social media @mojavewater.

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