



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

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News Release

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Water Authority Wins 2018 WaterSense Excellence Award

U.S. EPA recognizes the Water Authority's training program for water-efficient landscapers

Las Vegas – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today recognized the San Diego County Water Authority with a 2018 WaterSense Excellence Award for advancing water efficiency through its Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL) program. The Water Authority received one of 21 WaterSense awards presented at the WaterSmart Innovations Conference in Las Vegas.

The QWEL program, created by the Sonoma-Marin Saving Water Partnership and adopted in several states, is certified by EPA to significantly increase water management skills and knowledge among landscape professionals. Program curriculum consists of 20 hours of classroom and hands-on training on principles of plant care, irrigation system design, maintenance, programming, operations and troubleshooting.

“Partnering with EPA has helped the Water Authority strengthen its leadership position and promote water efficiency with a variety of key audiences,” said Jim Madaffer, chair of the Water Authority’s Board of Directors. “Through the QWEL program, we are raising awareness of challenging landscape water-use efficiency rules in California, and empowering landscaping professionals to adopt best practices.”



As one of the first QWEL providers in Southern California, the Water Authority helped to greatly expand the program's branded reach and educational outcomes. Since the local launch of QWEL in January 2016, more than 750 San

Diego landscape professionals have participated, making the region’s program one of the largest in the nation. More than 500 participants representing nearly 200 employers earned QWEL certifications through classes offered in English and Spanish. The Water Authority promoted its QWEL training in collaboration with landscape contractors, trade associations, faith-based organizations, community colleges, garden clubs, adult education and English-as-a-Second-Language programs.

Evaluations submitted by participants after each QWEL class in San Diego County have been highly favorable. Nearly everyone (99 percent) said the class helped them better manage landscape water efficiency, and 97 percent said class information would help them educate their clients, managers or others.

Since 2006, nearly 2,000 WaterSense partners nationwide have helped consumers save more than 2.7 trillion gallons of water – more than the amount of water used by all U.S. households during nearly 100 days. In addition to saving water, WaterSense initiatives helped reduce the amount of energy needed to heat, pump, and treat water by 367 billion kilowatt hours – enough to power more than 34.1 million homes for a year and save \$63.8 billion in water and energy bills.

“Through innovation and commitment, our partners are helping to transform the marketplace for water-efficient, high-performing products and homes,” said Veronica Blette, WaterSense program manager. “Award winners are leading the charge to save water, energy, and money for future generations.”

For more information about WaterSense, go to www.epa.gov/watersense.

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The San Diego County Water Authority sustains a \$220 billion regional economy and the quality of life for 3.3 million residents through a multi-decade water supply diversification plan, major infrastructure investments and forward-thinking policies that promote fiscal and environmental responsibility. A public agency created in 1944, the Water Authority delivers wholesale water supplies to 24 retail water providers, including cities, special districts and a military base.



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