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FOR RELEASE

## **Helix Water District Awarded \$10.3 Million Grant**

June 8, 2023 - California's Department of Water Resources announced that it has awarded Helix Water District \$10.3 million in grant funds for the district's drought resilience and drinking water supply reliability project. Helix was one of 26 California agencies, and the only San Diego County agency, to receive a portion of the \$217 million in grants awarded in this round of funding.

The project encompasses four infrastructure upgrades needed for the East County Advanced Water Purification project, which will purify recycled water to provide a drought-proof water supply for up to 30% of East County's needs.

Helix's infrastructure upgrades will allow it to move, store, treat and deliver the new water supply. The work includes modernizing the Chet Harritt Pump Station, building a new aeration system in Lake Jennings, adding a large flow meter to measure finished water at the R.M Levy Water Treatment Plant and improving the piping in the inlet/outlet tower at Lake Jennings.

Helix planned to pay for the anticipated \$22.8 million project with funds collected from water rates and a portion of an \$18.9 million low-interest Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act loan from the EPA, which Helix closed September 2022. Now, the district can use the state grant to help minimize the financial impact on its customers, 44% of whom live in disadvantaged communities.

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“We are thrilled,” said Helix Board President Kathleen Hedberg. “The funding will help the district develop local, drought-proof water supplies that reduce our reliance on imported water sources impacted by drought and climate change. The grant helps drive us toward a more sustainable future while reducing potential rate impacts to our customers.”

The grant is funded through the Department of Water Resources’ Urban Drought Relief Grant program, which was authorized by the legislature in 2021, during the second driest year on record in California. On June 8, the agency announced grant funding for projects throughout the state to help communities become more drought-resilient and prepared for a hotter and drier future.

“When we saw this grant become available, we knew that our customers would benefit from this assistance,” said Hedberg. “We made it our priority and applied for it. We are very appreciative and excited that our customers will benefit from a future of improved water reliability at a responsible price.”

*Helix Water District is a local government agency responsible for tap water in San Diego’s East County suburbs. The district provides water treatment for a population of 500,000 and distributes water to 277,000 people in La Mesa, El Cajon, Lemon Grove, Spring Valley and other unincorporated areas of the county.*

