

## NEWS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## COLLABORATIVE SUCCESS AT PCWA'S EAST SLOPE MEETING

**AUBURN AND LAKE TAHOE, Calif. (October 2, 2024)** — Collaborative efforts among Placer County utility districts continue to pay off in both water quality and quantity, according to reports presented at the September meeting of the Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) Board of Directors. Local utility districts have tackled such issues as copper and lead levels, upgrading water meters, fighting algae blooms, and replacing water mains as well as dealt with emergencies as they continued to provide their customers with water reliability.

With PCWA's assistance, this success has set the stage for ambitious projects that will have long-term positive impacts such as a new water treatment plant using Lake Tahoe surface water to supply more than 2,000 connections.

These projects go beyond water: Fire safety, forest management, and energy recovery are part of a planned \$10 million wood energy plant that could supply heat to Tahoe-area residents.

On Sept. 19, the PCWA Board of Directors gathered in North Lake Tahoe for its annual East Slope board meeting to receive updates from local utility districts. Hosted by the North Tahoe Public



*PCWA Board of Directors engaging with local utility leaders at the annual East Slope meeting in North Lake Tahoe, discussing collaborative efforts for water quality, infrastructure, and future projects.*

Utility District (NTPUD), this meeting is a valuable and useful opportunity for PCWA to engage with key partners and gain insights into ongoing and future water infrastructure projects in the Tahoe Basin.

“The collective insight shared during the East Slope board meeting underscores the

importance of collaboration among our agencies,” said PCWA Board Chair Robert Dugan. “By sharing our experiences, successes, and challenges, we can accelerate the learning curve for new initiatives. This exchange of information on programs, projects, and regulatory hurdles equips each district with the necessary tools to implement successful public water supply and infrastructure projects.”



*PCWA Board of Directors gathers on the shore of Lake Tahoe at the annual East Slope meeting, hearing reports from regional partners and the future of water management in the Tahoe area.*

Here are some highlights:

#### **Donner Summit Public Utility District (DSPUD)**

Steve Palmer, General Manager, presented the district's unique challenges, including managing water services for ski resorts, Caltrans, and homes at high elevations. He outlined efforts to address algae blooms in Lake Angela and discussed their upcoming dam infrastructure testing project. Palmer also highlighted the district's Water Supply Resiliency Study, funded in part by PCWA's FAP, and plans to establish an interconnection with Sierra Lakes County Water District. DSPUD is tackling infrastructure issues, including relocating water lines in the Big Bend area, also partially funded by PCWA's FAP.

#### **Tahoe City Public Utility District (TCPUD)**

Tony Laliotis, Director of Utilities, shared a comprehensive update, thanking PCWA for its longstanding financial and technical support. Serving the north and west shores of Lake Tahoe, TCPUD faces challenges with 16 fractured water systems, including public and private entities. Laliotis highlighted the acquisition of the Tahoe Swiss Village Utility, Inc., with a transition planned by Jan. 1, 2025. TCPUD also has made significant strides in the \$27.5 million West Lake Tahoe Regional Water Treatment Plant Project. Partially funded by \$782,500 from PCWA's Financial Assistance Program (FAP), this project will use Lake Tahoe's surface water to serve up to 2,200 connections with a treatment capacity expandable to 1,000 gallons per minute. In addition, Laliotis discussed future projects such as the Mid-Sierra Reconstruction and the West Shore Storage Augmentation, both crucial to regional water system improvements and long-term reliability.

#### **North Tahoe Public Utility District (NTPUD)**

Brad Johnson, General Manager, discussed the district's aggressive capital investment plan, which includes proposed rate adjustments that would double their water system investment. This will fund the replacement of small water mains and improve fire flow. Johnson emphasized the importance of building a comprehensive hydraulic model, with support from PCWA's FAP award, to

unify patchwork water systems and enhance fire protection for the community. He also recounted a recent raw sewage spill that prompted a swift, coordinated response from nine different agencies, underscoring the value of collaboration and strong relationships between utility districts.

### **Olympic Valley Public Service District (OVPSD)**

Charley Miller, General Manager, provided insights into their ongoing projects, including the early stages of a Prop. 218 rate study and their comprehensive community wildfire protection plan initiated in 2022. This plan has identified five critical areas for improvement, focusing on community involvement in fire safety measures. The OVPSD is recognized as a Fire-wise community and actively collaborates with the local fire department on wildland training and green waste programs.

Miller noted that recent funding of \$2.5 million from the Tahoe National Forest Foundation will support fuel management projects covering hundreds of acres. OVPSD also is implementing a water meter replacement program with approximately 480 meters upgraded to date, aiming for completion next year. OVPSD was awarded more than \$371,000 through PCWA's FAP for this program. Additionally, an emergency intertie project is under construction to improve water supply reliability, with the help of PCWA's FAP with an award of more than \$400,000.

### **Northstar Community Services District (NCSD)**

Mike Geary, Assistant General Manager, expressed gratitude to PCWA staff for the ongoing support, particularly in fuels management initiatives. He emphasized the importance of collaboration in providing such services as water, sewer, fire, and road maintenance. Geary discussed the completion of the Martis Valley Trail, which will connect Northstar Village to Truckee, facilitating better access and connectivity for residents and visitors. He shared that the NCSD is also constructing a wood energy facility that will utilize biomass from local forest fuels reduction projects, significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions while providing heating solutions for the village. This \$10 million project, partially funded by grants and PCWA's FAP, aims to create a sustainable energy loop that repurposes wood waste, contributing to the community's climate resilience efforts.

### **Truckee Donner Public Utility District (TDPUD)**

Chad Reed, Water Utility Director, reported the district's focus on service reliability and safety, which has improved operational efficiency and customer service. Reed highlighted the district's ongoing efforts to comply with the new lead and copper regulations including a comprehensive survey of about 2,000 connections and the on-going implementation of technology that enhances compliance with water quality regulations.

Steven Poncelet, Public Information and Strategic Affairs Director for the TDPUD, wrapped up the presentation with updates on continued challenges the district faces with State and Federal legislation and regulatory activities and potential solutions they are engaging to ensure regulatory compliance while minimizing impacts to customers.

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**About PCWA**

Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) is the primary water resource agency for Placer County, California, with a broad range of responsibilities including water resource planning and management, retail and wholesale supply of drinking water and irrigation water, and production of hydroelectric energy.