

PROPOSED DOHENY OCEAN DESALINATION PROJECT

Frequently Asked Questions

The proposed Doheny Ocean Desalination Project could provide a reliable, drought-proof, locally-controlled, safe water supply for South Coast Water District customers. Below are some of the most commonly asked questions about this project.

WHY DO WE NEED THIS DESALINATION PROJECT?

Currently, South Coast Water District imports 85 to 100 percent of its drinking water, causing vulnerability during droughts, supply shortages and potential natural disasters. We have seen the effects on water supply during five years of drought. The proposed project would create a new, reliable, drought-proof source of water, and is one of the first projects to meet all requirements of the California Ocean Plan.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THE DOHENY OCEAN DESALINATION PROJECT?

Unlike traditional desalination projects, the Doheny Ocean Desalination Project would use advanced slant wells that protect marine life by drawing water from beneath the ocean floor. This technology is preferred by environmentalists and state regulators.

WHAT ARE THE VISUAL IMPACTS OF THIS PROJECT ON DOHENY STATE BEACH?

The slant wells, pumps and pipes at the beach would be below the surface at Doheny State Beach and San Juan Creek and would not be visible. The pipelines to the treatment facility would also be sub-surface and would run to the District's property slightly inland near San Juan Creek.

WHERE WOULD THE DESALINATION FACILITY BE LOCATED?

The proposed desalination facility would be ideally situated on existing District-owned industrial property in close proximity to existing potable water distribution pipelines, requiring less infrastructure and resulting in lower cost. The treatment facility would be located on the District's property slightly inland near San Juan Creek.



For more information and to submit comments about the proposed Doheny Ocean Desalination Project, please visit www.scwd.org/desal.

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HAVE YOU LOOKED AT LESS EXPENSIVE WAYS TO GET MORE LOCAL WATER?

We continually examine new ways to secure more water. All new, local potable water supplies would require investment. Desalination is in the same cost range as other new, local potable water supplies, including potable reuse. Imported water, while less expensive now, is projected to eventually cost more than desalinated water. The Water Reliability Study conducted by SCWD evaluated and ranked potential water supply alternatives and the costs of potential water supply options. The report also provides a long-term cost analysis of the water supply options. The Doheny Ocean Desalination Project was the highest-ranking individual option, scoring very well in system reliability, supply reliability, resiliency and level of control.

CAN WE SIMPLY CONSERVE MORE?

Our community has been very successful in responding to the need to conserve. From June 2015 through June 2016, the District reduced potable water consumption by more than 26 percent. However, even if we achieved significantly more than that, it would not be sufficient to meet our water supply requirements during extreme water shortages.

WHAT IS THE TOTAL DESALINATION PROJECT COST?

A desalination facility with an initial capacity of up to five million gallons per day (MGD) is estimated to cost approximately \$100 million.

HOW WOULD YOU PAY FOR THIS DESALINATION PROJECT?

The District has reviewed multiple project delivery methods and funding sources. In 2017, the District received a \$10 million grant from the State of California toward the proposed project.

WHY NOT INVEST MORE MONEY IN RECYCLING WATER?

A leader in recycled water, the District already produces close to one MGD of recycled water. In our district, recycled water is used to irrigate a variety of golf courses, homeowner association landscaping, and parks. While that is enough water to provide 2,000 families with water each year, it is not enough to ensure we have water reliability during an emergency if our imported supplies are cut off.

DOESN'T DESALINATION USE TOO MUCH ENERGY?

Desalination is energy intensive, but so is transporting our water from hundreds of miles away. New technologies continue to be developed to make desalination more energy efficient, and the District is evaluating alternative energy sources for the proposed project.

WHY NOT USE LOCAL AQUIFERS?

In South Orange County, we have only one small underground basin known as the San Juan Basin, which is heavily dependent on rainfall. The District is one of four members of the San Juan Basin Authority working on groundwater basin monitoring and sustainable groundwater use.



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