

Customer Complaints Initiates Western Municipal Water District Investigation

SUMMARY

Western Municipal Water District (WMWD) is one of the largest water districts in Riverside County. It serves 37.8% of Riverside County's 2,520,060 residents indirectly (through its wholesale business) or directly (through its retail business). The 2021-2022 Riverside County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) received complaints from WMWD residential customers and initiated an investigation into those complaints. Residential complaints came in two general categories:

Governance Complaint Topics

- Lack of residential customer representation on WMWD's Board of Directors
- Legality of WMWD's budget-based billing structure
- Fairness of WMWD's budget-based billing structure
- Legality of WMWD's June 2021 rate increases
- WMWD's customers pay more for water than customers in other local water districts
- Effectiveness of WMWD's executive managers

Communication Complaint Topics

- WMWD hides information
- WMWD ignores residential customers

Based on interviews, document reviews, video and audio recordings, and review of websites, the Grand Jury found the following:

1. There is a perceived lack of residential customer representation on WMWD's Board of Directors.
2. WMWD's budget-based rate structure complies with California's Constitution, including Proposition 218, and it is designed to encourage water conservation.
3. WMWD's water and sewer rates are based on actual and projected costs incurred by WMWD.
4. The procedure WMWD followed to increase residential customer water rates on June 2, 2021 is compliant with an August 2020 California Supreme Court decision.
5. WMWD's residential customers do pay more for water service than customers in other local water districts. However, water rates differ among water districts due to different conditions and costs incurred to provide customers with water.
6. There is evidence that WMWD Executive Managers operate WMWD as required by California law and WMWD policies.
7. There was no evidence found that WMWD is deliberately hiding information from residential customers.
8. Several residential customers feel ignored by Board members, especially by the four Board members, with few or no residential customers in their division areas.

The Grand Jury submits seven recommendations to WMWD's Board of Directors for its consideration:

1. By January 1, 2023, the Board of Directors develop, adopt, and implement a policy that requires all Board members to participate together in biennial sessions related to (a) conflict resolution and (b) governance of a special district.
2. By January 1, 2023, the Board of Directors develop, adopt, and implement a policy that requires user-friendly versions of highly technical and complex reports be available on its website so that interested customers have a clear understanding of the content of those reports.
3. By June 30, 2023, the Board of Directors develops an “open data” portal on its website so residential customers have access to state and local data sets used in WMWD status reports, proposals, and decisions.
4. By June 30, 2023, the Board of Directors (a) develop, adopt, and implement a policy that establishes a “Customer Water Bill of Rights,” (b) prominently displays the “Customer Water Bill of Rights” on WMWD’s website, and (c) annually mails residential customers a printed copy of the “Customer Water Bill of Rights.”
5. By June 30, 2023, the Board of Directors improves access to WMWD’s governing regulations, ordinances, and resolutions, including links to relevant laws, on its website, so that accessing that information takes fewer steps and is user-friendly.
6. By January 1, 2023, the Board of Directors develop, adopt, and implement a policy that supports a “customer-centric” management culture and communication strategy.
7. By January 1, 2023, the Board of Directors develop, adopt, and implement a policy that requires all members of the Board of Directors, as well as WMWD’s Executive Managers, to frequently participate in more public events, such as town hall meetings, where they (a) actively listen to residential customer concerns, (b) assist residential customers’ understanding of water-related issues, and (c) actively seek ways to increase residential customers’ satisfaction with WMWD.

BACKGROUND

California periodically experiences years of drought, and experienced another severe drought in 2021. By the end of 2021, all 58 counties in California endured one of their severest droughts in recorded history.¹

Riverside County’s population increased by 14.47% in the past 10 years. Its population is 2,520,060.² Residents live in either one of Riverside County’s 28 cities or in one of its unincorporated areas across 7,206 square miles.³ Riverside County is the fourth most populous county in California and the 10th most populous county in the United States.⁴

Within Riverside County, there are 40 water districts: 5 districts are led by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, 2 districts are led by city councils, and 33 independent districts are led by publicly elected board of directors.⁵

It is challenging for Riverside County water districts to provide residents with water services due to (a) the county’s ever-increasing population, (b) residential and commercial developments, (c) frequent severe droughts, (d) obtaining and storing drinking water, and (e) the increasing cost of purchasing water for Southern California. As a result, water districts frequently receive customer complaints.

One of the largest water districts in Riverside County is the Western Municipal Water District (WMWD) that provides water services directly or indirectly to 953,681 (37.8%) of Riverside County’s 2,520,060 residents. WMWD functions as both a wholesaler and a retailer to

customers in a 527 square mile area of western Riverside County (see Appendix 1 for WMWD’s overall service area). WMWD’s service area includes the cities of Canyon Lake, Corona, Eastvale, Jurupa Valley, Lake Elsinore, Murrieta, Norco, Riverside, Rubidoux, and Temecula as well as some unincorporated areas of Riverside County. WMWD’s services include drinking water, wastewater (sewer), and recycled water services.⁶

Based on written and verbal complaints from WMWD residential customers (i.e., single family or multi-family dwelling customers), the Grand Jury initiated an investigation into WMWD’s policies and procedures. The focus of the investigation was on residential customer complaints. Complaints were characterized into the following two general categories:

Governance Complaint Topics

- Lack of residential customer representation on WMWD’s Board of Directors
- Legality of WMWD’s budget-based billing structure
- Fairness of WMWD’s budget-based billing structure
- Legality of WMWD’s June 2021 rate increases
- WMWD’s customers pay more for water than customers in other local water districts
- Effectiveness of WMWD’s executive managers

Communication Complaint Topics

- WMWD hides information
- WMWD ignores residential customers

METHODOLGY

The Grand Jury conducted an extensive series of interviews, document reviews, accessed websites, and accessed video and audio recordings.

Interviews Conducted

- Representative, California State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water, District 20
- Representative, Riverside County Local Agency Formation Commission
- Manager, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
- General Manager, non-WMWD Riverside County water district
- Residential customers with complaints
- Residential customers without complaints
- All members of the Board of Directors, WMWD
- General Manager, WMWD
- Deputy General Manager, WMWD
- Director of Finance, WMWD
- Customer Service Manager, WMWD
- Director of Strategic Communications, WMWD

Documents and Recordings Reviewed

An extensive number of documents and recordings were reviewed during this investigation. Documents and recordings appear in either the “Reference” or “Bibliography” sections below.

FINDINGS

Governance Complaints

Complaint 1.1

There is a lack of residential customer representation on the Board of Directors.

There are two primary reasons for this complaint: (1) the number of directors elected **directly** by residential customers and (2) the pattern of votes cast by directors.

Division Representation

Under the authority of California’s Municipal Water District Act of 1911, Riverside County voters authorized the establishment of WMWD in 1954. Since 1954, smaller water districts were established within WMWD’s overall boundary area. WMWD purchases water from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) and resells that water to the smaller water districts within its boundary area.

As a result, WMWD has both a retail business and wholesale business. For the purposes of this report, the water WMWD sells **directly** to business and private residences is referred to as “residential customers.” These customers send their water bill payments directly to WMWD.

After each United States Census, WMWD is legally required “to adjust, by resolution, their division boundaries so that their divisions are equal in population.”⁷ “Population equality” is based on the total population of residents within WMWD’s overall boundary.

WMWD’s boundary area is separated into five divisions. WMWD’s boundary area includes WMWD’s residential customers as well as smaller water district customers. Voters within a division elect a single director to represent them on the Board of Directors (Board) for a four-year term. By law, directors must live in the division they represent.⁸

As **Table 1** illustrates, there are significant differences in the numbers of residential customers among WMWD’s five divisions. The director representing division 2 represents 86.4% of WMWD’s residential customers. WMWD directors representing divisions 1 and 4 do not have residential customers in their divisions at all.

Table 1

Estimated Number of Residential Customers by Board Divisions²⁰

	Director Division 1	Director Division 2	Director Division 3	Director Division 4	Director Division 5	Total Residential Customers
Estimated Number of Residential Customers*	0 (0.0%)	90,743 (86.4%)	14,220 (13.5%)	0 (0.0%)	17 (0.02%)	104,980

* Residential customer population is based on the average number of people in a household times the number of billing locations.

Pattern of Votes

Residential customers compare how the Division 2 Director votes on issues affecting them compared to the votes from the other directors. The perception is that the Division 2 Director is the only director actively listening to them and voting in their interest. For example, Board members voted to increase residential customer water rates on June 2, 2021.⁹ The Division 2 Director was the only Board member who voted against the rate increase. Another example is when the Board voted to keep the same Board officers for 2022 as it had in 2021. Residential customers perceived the vote as a way of preventing the Division 2 Director from serving as Board President. It is important to note that the Board decided, on a 5-0 vote, to keep the same Board officers in 2022 that it had in 2021.¹⁰

Whether the differences among Board members are due to (1) opinions on policy and procedural issues normally observed among elected officials, (2) personal conflicts among Board members, and/or (3) the number of residential customers who cast ballots within the five divisions, vocal residential customers perceive they are represented by only one of the five Board members.

Complaint 1.2

Budget-based billing system is illegal.

In April 2018, two WMWD residential customers legally challenged WMWD's budget-based water rate structure (a.k.a. allocation-based water rate structure). They asserted that WMWD (1) improperly voted to pass on the cost of a capital-improvement project, (2) violated California's Proposition 218, and (3) contended that a five percent charge exceeds the fees required to construct the capital project and constitutes a profit. On October 16, 2018, Riverside County "Superior Court Judge Daniel A. Ottolia ruled that WMWD's budget-based rates are compliant with the State constitution, Proposition 218 and satisfy the State's requirements that agencies implement measures to conserve California's water resources."¹¹

Complaint 1.3

Budget-based billing is unfair.

According to the California State Water Resources Control Board, California water districts use several different methods of charging residential customers for water-related services. California law encourages "public entities to voluntarily use allocation-based conservation water pricing, tailored to local needs and conditions, as a means of increasing efficient uses of water, and further discouraging wasteful or unreasonable use of water under both normal and dry-year hydrologic conditions."¹²

WMWD uses an allocation-based residential customer rate that it calls a "budget-based" rate. WMWD's "budget-based" rate structure includes an indoor water allocation and an outdoor water allocation. The indoor allocation is based on the number of people in the household (55 gallons per person per day) and the number of days in the billing cycle. The outdoor allocation is based on irrigated landscape area, local weather, and specific amount of irrigation water required by each type of plant in the outside area.¹³

The complaints, alleging "unfair billing," come primarily in two categories. The first category involves neighbors who have similar homes and outside property areas. Residential customers

consider it unfair for one neighbor to pay more for water than the other neighbor. However, appearances may be misleading. For example, one neighbor may have more people living in their home than the other neighbor resulting in a different indoor water allocation and bill amount. If two neighbors have identical indoor and outdoor factors but are charged differently, then their recourse is to contact WMWD's Customer Service Department to resolve the issue.

The second category involves the use of weather conditions in calculating the outdoor water allocation. Obviously, residential customers do not have control over the weather, nor is it reasonable for residential customers to constantly change their outdoor water usage based on changing weather conditions.

WMWD addresses this weather-based complaint in two ways. The first way is to refurbish or replace older water meters with new "smart meters." "Smart meters" have the ability to store and transmit hourly meter readings to WMWD. Once the system is operational, customers will have the ability to monitor their own water usage, via a customer portal on WMWD's website, and make any adjustments they wish to make before a water bill is generated. Customers will receive timely alerts, via email or text, when their usage indicates a possible water leak. WMWD estimates that its Meter Replacement Project will be completed in summer of 2022.

The second way WMWD addresses the weather-based complaint is to distribute information on weather-based sprinkler and irrigation controllers.¹⁴ Weather-based controllers use irrigation clocks that automatically adjust watering times in response to environmental changes. These types of controllers use sensors and weather information to manage watering times and frequency.

Whether WMWD's budget-based billing structure is fair or unfair must be determined by residential customers themselves.[†] There are water districts within Riverside County that deliberately stay away from allocation-based billing methods. Therefore, they do not get allocation-based billing complaints from their customers.

Complaint 1.4 **Rate increases were illegally approved.**

On June 2, 2021, WMWD's Board approved, by a vote of 3 to 1, "a 2.1 to 3.5 percent rate increase for water and wastewater (sewer) services for bills issued on or after July 1, 2021, with increases every year for an additional three years."¹⁵ The focus of the complaint was that the increase in water and sewer services should have been decided by referendum (i.e., general vote by the general electorate), as required by California Proposition 218, rather than a vote by WMWD's Board.

In August 2020, the California Supreme Court decided that water rates are deemed "tax levies" for purposes of Article II, section 9, of the California Constitution and that "tax levies" are exempt from the referendum process.¹⁶ The procedure WMWD followed to increase residential customer water rates on June 2, 2021 is compliant with that California Supreme Court decision.

[†] Water and sewer rates are based on a series of studies located at <https://www.wmwd.com/556/Rate-Studies-Resources>.

Complaint 1.5

WMWD customers pay more for water than Riverside Public Utilities (RPU) and Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) customers.

WMWD has two primary explanations to this complaint. First, “RPU can secure 100% of their water from local groundwater supplies, the lowest-cost water supply available. While EMWD must also import some of their water, they do have access to groundwater supplies and have more recycled water capacity. Since RPU and EMWD have direct access to local groundwater, their costs must support pumping the water out of the ground and cleaning it to meet drinking water standards.”¹⁷

Second, WMWD imports 56% of its water into its service area. WMWD purchases water from the MWD. Imported water costs continue to increase yearly. For example, in a letter dated May 22, 2020, MWD’s Assistant General Manager/Chief Financial Officer, Katano Kasaine, informed member agency managers (WMWD is a member agency) that MWD’s Local Resources Program rates would increase from \$1,096 per acre-foot in 2020 to \$1,128 per acre-foot starting on January 1, 2021.¹⁸ The \$32 per acre-foot increase was about a 3% increase per acre-foot (i.e., one acre-foot equals about 326,000 US gallons). MWD will increase its rate another 4% for fiscal year 2022.¹⁹ WMWD’s water and sewer rate studies provide detailed information on the cost of providing those services to residential customers.²⁰

Complaint 1.6

WMWD’s Executive Managers do a poor job of operating WMWD’s projects and services.

Governance includes those individuals who serve in WMWD’s executive management positions. WMWD’s General Manager recommends and implements Board policies and procedures. WMWD’s General Manager serves at the pleasure of the Board of Directors. All other WMWD Executive Managers serve at the discretion of the General Manager.

Executive Managers are instrumental in WMWD’s day-to-day operations. WMWD successfully provides drinking water, wastewater (sewer), and recycled water services in its area of Riverside County, even under severe drought conditions. It successfully provides water services to new commercial and housing developments. WMWD purchases water at lower prices during wet seasons and stores that water for use during droughts. WMWD works collaboratively with other water agencies and commissions in Southern California to obtain, store, and conserve water for future use (e.g., Inland Empire Clean Water Partnership; Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority Commission).²¹

There is evidence that a few disgruntled residential customers are spreading misleading and inaccurate information about WMWD’s Executive Managers and WMWD’s policies on social media.²² However, there is significant evidence that WMWD Executive Managers operate WMWD as required by California law and WMWD policies.²³

Communication Complaints

Complaint 2.1

WMWD is hiding information from residential customers.

At first glance, it should be easy for WMWD to communicate effectively with its customers. However, anticipating what customers want to know about is more challenging than it first appears. Customers are interested in water supply, cost, quality, storage, pumping, reclamation, and desalination. Communicating about water-related laws is also challenging. Drinking water alone is included in California's "Corporations Code, Education Code, Food and Agricultural Code, Government Code, Health and Safety Code, Public Resources Code and Water Code. Regulations are from Title 17 and Title 22 of the CCR."²⁴

After viewing all 40 Riverside County water districts' websites, it is evident that WMWD provides customers with more information than most other water districts in the county. Most water districts provide only minimal amount of information for their customers. The exception is the Coachella Valley Water District. Similar to WMWD, the Coachella Valley Water District provides its customers with an extensive amount of information.

Based on interviews, document reviews, and recordings of Board of Directors meetings, it is evident that WMWD has a "product-focused" business culture and communication strategy.²⁵ It communicates what WMWD is **legally required to communicate** to customers (e.g., potential rate increases), as well as, what WMWD believes **customers want to know or need to know** (e.g., conserve water). WMWD is particularly good at "product-focused" communication.

Legally Required Communication

Periodically, California water districts undergo proceedings to analyze the actual cost of obtaining water, the infrastructure to deliver water, and ensure the water delivered conforms to federal and California water quality regulations. According to California law, when a water district proposes to increase its water rates, it must do the following:²⁶

- Conduct a detailed engineer's report that identifies the actual costs of providing water services to customers.
- Contact parcel owners affected by potential rate increases at least 45 days prior to a public hearing on the matter.
- Conduct a public hearing on the proposed rate increases.

As required by law, WMWD conducted a detailed engineer's report identifying the actual costs associated with providing water and sewer services to its specific customers for fiscal years 2021-2022 through 2024-2025. The study, along with a series of tables associated with that study, were posted on WMWD's website. The results of the study were used to justify water and sewer rate increases from 2.1 to 3.5 percent starting July 1, 2021.²⁷ Also required by law, residential customers were notified in writing about the potential rate increases²⁸ and when the public hearing would be held.²⁹

Want to Know or Need to Know Communication

WMWD provides extensive and broad ranging water-related information it believes residential customers want to know or need to know. The information is provided in both printed and digital formats. Printed materials are often in English and Spanish languages. WMWD's website has a Google translation option which translates information up to 90 different languages.

Table 2 provides examples of the variety of topics available to residential customers on WMWD's website.

Table 2
Sample Topics on WMWD's Website

My Account	Meter Replacement Program
24-Hour Emergency Information	Water Use Regulations & Restrictions
How to Read Your Bill	Drought Status and Water Supply
Water Quality	Accountability & Transparency
2021 Rate Adoption	Financial Statements
Rebates	Departments
Notify Me [®]	Employment
Meeting Agendas and Livestreaming	Landscape Guide Books

Source: Western Municipal Water District: <https://www.wmwd.com/>

In addition to WMWD's mailers, bill inserts, newsletters, and website, WMWD offers residential customers alternative means of receiving water and sewer related information. Customers can subscribe to receive website updates, efficiency and emergency alerts and news flashes. It will also provide access to a calendar of events, meetings, and bid postings. WMWD uses four social media platforms (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube) to convey information to customers and answer general customer questions without conveying customer confidential information.³⁰

One of WMWD's stated core values is to be transparent with residential customers. There are many documents on its website where WMWD is transparent to the public concerning operational topics. For example, WMWD provides information on internal and external contracts, employee financial compensation, budgets, water and sewer rates, and financial statements.³¹

Even with WMWD's efforts to be transparent with customers, a few residential customers believe WMWD is "hiding information." "Hiding information" complaints revolve around four general areas.

1. Highly technical reports are complicated to understand, yet those reports are used to justify proposals presented to WMWD's Board for their approval (e.g., water and sewer rate increases residential customers must pay).
2. There is no way to access data to verify WMWD claims (i.e., no "Open data portal"). "Open data" is defined as "information or content made freely available to use and

redistribute, subject only to the requirement to attribute it to the source. The term also may be used more casually to describe any data that is shared outside the organization and beyond its original intended use, for example, with business partners, customers or industry associations.”³²

3. WMWD does not have a list of customer water rights. A “Customer Water Bill of Rights” provides a centralized location where customers can access information in a “Frequently Asked Questions” format. Examples of the types of information available on such list are as follows:^{33, 34}

Customers have the right to:

- Know what a “water right” is in California law.
 - Know what benefits they have based on their “water right.”
 - Safe, affordable, and reliable water that meets or exceeds mandated water quality standards.
 - Have a water quality complaint, water pressure concern, or water system leak promptly and thoroughly investigated and addressed.
 - Sufficient and readily available water to fight fire in any neighborhood or business area.
 - Prompt response to questions or concerns.
 - Clear, accurate, and reliable information.
 - Restoration of water service within 24 hours, when the cause for the shutoff (e.g., nonpayment) has been resolved.
 - An organization that complies with all laws and regulations.
 - An organization that operates by sound policies in the areas of governance, board conduct, district finances, and transparency.
4. WMWD’s governing policies, regulations, and ordinances are difficult to access and use. To be clear, WMWD does make their governing policies, regulations, and ordinances available to customers on its website. However, a customer needs to navigate through several sequential screens before getting to the information they seek.

The Riverside County Civil Grand Jury found no evidence that WMWD is deliberately hiding information from residential customers. However, “hiding information” complaints will be minimized with a greater sensitivity to what residential customers want to have access to and making that information accessible to them.

Complaint 2.2

WMWD Ignores Residential Customers

As with all elected agencies, WMWD’s Board members and Executive Managers receive both positive and negative comments from those they serve. Board members and Executive Managers receive those comments directly during regular and special Board meetings, through correspondence, personal interactions with individuals, and in small group gatherings with residential customers. Board members also receive comments from residential customers indirectly through social media platforms and contacts with WMWD’s Customer Service Department.

Residential customers who express negative comments toward WMWD express intense feelings of (a) being ignored, (b) anger over “not being listened to,” (c) there is a lot more communication now than in the past but “it isn’t effective,” (d) it is a monopoly and it can do as it pleases, and (e) Board members are more interested in making WMWD “look good,” rather than representing residents who voted them into office.³⁵ The result is frustration with and mistrust of WMWD Board members and Executive Managers. The number of frustrated and mistrustful residential customers, out of the thousands of residential customers, is not known. It is clear from interviews, document reviews, and recordings of Board meetings, that WMWD’s emphasis on a “product-focused” culture and communication strategy does not alleviate the problems it has with disgruntled residential customers.

FINDINGS

Based on interviews, document reviews, video and audio recordings, and review of websites, the Grand Jury found the following:

Governance Complaint Findings

Finding 1.1

There is a perceived lack of residential customer representation on WMWD’s Board of Directors.

Finding 1.2

WMWD’s budget-based rate structure complies with California’s Constitution, including Proposition 218, and it is designed to encourage water conservation.

Finding 1.3

WMWD’s water and sewer rates are based on actual and projected costs incurred by WMWD. Whether the rates are fair or not is subjective.

Finding 1.4

The procedure WMWD followed to increase residential customer water rates on June 2, 2021 is compliant with an August 2020 California Supreme Court decision.

Finding 1.5

WMWD’s customers do pay more for water than RPU and EMWD customers due to costs actually incurred by WMWD to obtain and supply water to its customers.

Finding 1.6

There is evidence that WMWD Executive Managers operate WMWD as required by California law and WMWD policies.

Communication Complaint Findings

Finding 2.1

No evidence was found that WMWD is deliberately hiding information from residential customers.

Finding 2.2

Several residential customers feel ignored by Board members, especially by the four Board members, with few or no residential customers in their division areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Grand Jury submits the following recommendations to WMWD:

Recommendation 1:

By January 1, 2023, the Board of Directors develop, adopt, and implement a policy that requires all Board members to participate together in biennial sessions related to (a) conflict resolution and (b) governance of a special district.

Based on Finding 1.1

Financial Impact – Minimal

Recommendation 2:

By January 1, 2023, the Board of Directors develop, adopt, and implement a policy that requires user-friendly versions of highly technical and complex reports be available on its website so that interested customers have a clear understanding of the content of those reports.

Based on Finding 2.1

Financial Impact – Minimal

Recommendation 3:

By June 30, 2023, the Board of Directors develops an “open data” portal on its website so residential customers have access to state and local data sets used in WMWD status reports, proposals, and decisions.

Based on Finding 2.1

Financial Impact – Moderate Depending on Implementation

Recommendation 4:

By June 30, 2023, the Board of Directors (a) develop, adopt, and implement a policy that establishes a “Customer Water Bill of Rights,” (b) prominently displays the “Customer Water Bill of Rights” on WMWD’s website, and (c) annually mails residential customers a printed copy of the “Customer Water Bill of Rights.”

Based on Finding 2.1

Financial Impact – Moderate Depending on Implementation

Recommendation 5:

By June 30, 2023, the Board of Directors improves access to WMWD’s governing regulations, ordinances, and resolutions, including links to relevant laws, on its website, so that accessing that information takes fewer steps and is user-friendly.

Based on Finding 2.1

Financial Impact – Moderate Depending on Implementation

Recommendation 6:

By January 1, 2023, the Board of Directors develop, adopt, and implement a policy that supports a “customer-centric” management culture and communication strategy.[‡]

Based on Finding 2.1

Financial Impact – Minimal

Recommendation 7:

By January 1, 2023, the Board of Directors develop, adopt, and implement a policy that requires all members of the Board of Directors, as well as WMWD’s Executive Managers, to frequently participate in more public events, such as town hall meetings, where they (a) actively listen to residential customer concerns, (b) assist residential customers’ understanding of water-related issues, and (c) actively seek ways to increase residential customers’ satisfaction with WMWD.

Based on Findings 1.1 and 2.2

Financial Impact – Minimal

LEGALLY REQUIRED RESPONSES

According to California Penal Code 933 (c), the following responses are required within 90 days:

Western Municipal Water District Board of Directors

Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7

LEGALLY REQUIRED DISCLOSURE

One member of the Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recused themselves from all interviews, discussions, and decisions associated with the WMWD investigation and report.

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[‡] “Customer-centric” culture and communications strategy is the ability of an organization to understand customers’ situations, perceptions, and expectations. Customer-centricity requires that the customer is the focal point of all decisions, including communication, related to delivering services to create customer satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy.

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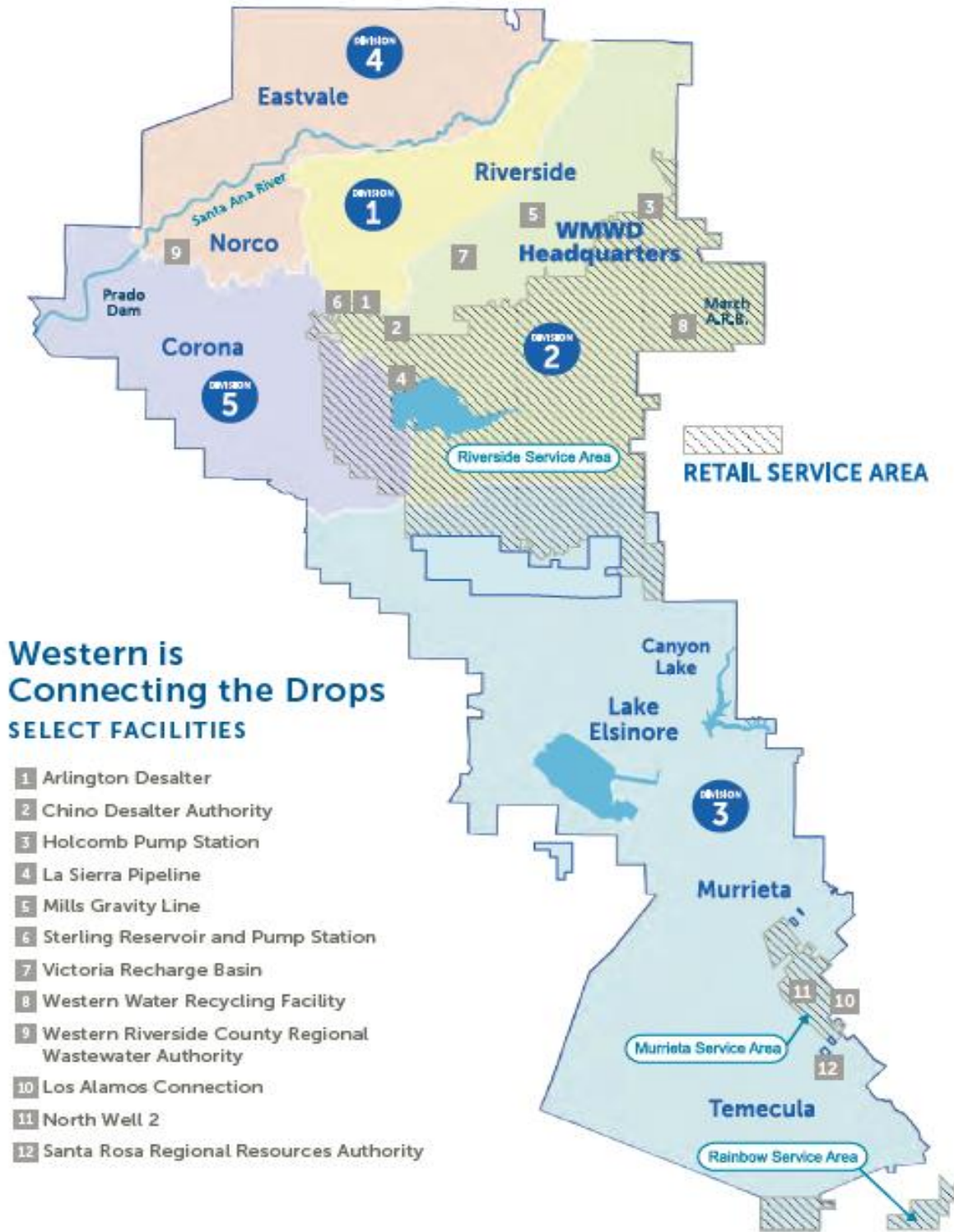
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Appendix 1

Western Municipal Water District Service Area



Source: Western Municipal Water District, Capital Improvement and Facilities Plan, Fiscal Years 2000-2025, page 8, published 2020, retrieved 2021, September 23, 2021, from <https://www.wmwd.com/DocumentCenter/View/5095/Capital-Improvement-and-Facilities-Plan-for-2020-to-2025?bidId=>.

Appendix 2

Riverside County Water and Wastewater Districts

Western Riverside County	Pass/Mountain Area	Coachella Valley/Eastern Region
City of Corona, DWP	City of Banning, Dept. of Public Works - Water	City of Blythe, Dept. of Public Works - Water
City of Hemet, Water Services	City of Beaumont	City of Coachella, Water Dept.
City of Norco, Water Dept.	Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District	City of Indio, Indio water Authority
City of Perris, Water Dept.	Cabazon County Water District	City of Palm Springs
City of Riverside, Riverside Public Utilities	Fern Valley Water District	Chiriaco Summit County Water District
City of San Jacinto, Water Dept.	High Valleys Water District	Coachella Valley Water District
Eastern Municipal Water District	Idyllwild Water District	Desert Water Agency
Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District	Pine Cove Water District	Mission Springs Water District
Home Gardens County Water District	Pinyon Pines County Water District	Palo Verde Irrigation
Home Gardens Sanitary District	San Geronio Pass Water Agency	County Service Area 51
Jurupa Community Services District	Yucaipa Valley Water District	County Service Area 62
Lake Hemet Municipal Water District		County Service Area 122
Rancho California Water District		
Rubidoux Community Services District		
San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District		
Temescal Valley Water District		
West Valley Water District		
Western Municipal Water District		

Source: List provided to the 2021-2022 Riverside County Civil Grand Jury by the Riverside County's Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) office, via email, on September 23, 2021. Riverside County's LAFCO website is located at <https://lafco.org/>.

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