**SPEAKER SUMMARY**

**April 2025**

**BEN WONG AND TIMOTHY USHIJIMA**

**SUMMARY OF 2025 WATER SUPPLY CONDITIONS**

**By Robert Yoshimura**

Ben Wong from the DWP Water Resources Division and Timothy Ushijima from the Water Operations Division provided an update of current water supply conditions on the City of Los Angeles’ three primary water sources (Los Angeles Aqueduct, Metropolitan Water District, and local groundwater).

**Los Angeles Aqueduct (LAA).** The current year runoff from snowmelt in the eastern Sierra Nevada provides most of the annual water supply delivered to Los Angeles via the LAA. Runoff forecasting is thus a critical part of the planning process for water supply operations. Forecasting methods accurately estimate runoff, as last year's forecast predicted 102% of normal runoff and the actual was 99%.

Recent historical runoff data shows that above-normal runoff is rare and that three consecutive years of normal or above is particularly so. 2023 was the wettest year in history yielding 300% of normal runoff and 2024 was a good year as described above. Expectations for 2025 were thus not optimistic. As shown in the graph of snowpack below, the water year began true to expectations with below-average snowpack until mid-February. Since then, a series of storms have raised the snowpack to 90% of normal as of April 1.



The forecasted runoff for 2025 is about 250,000 acre-feet (AF), similar to last year, partly because of carryover from the wet year of 2023.

**Metropolitan Water District (MWD).** MWD’s two sources of water are the State Water Project (SWP) and the Colorado River. The snowpack in the northern Sierra that contributes to the SWP is at 118% of normal and has resulted in an increase in promised allocations to MWD of 40% of the contracted amount. The Colorado River snowpack is 87% of normal. As of March 5, 2025, when the SWP allocation was only 35%, the combined deliveries of water from those sources will enable MWD to fulfill all its obligations to its member agencies and, in addition, store 17,000 AF of surplus water. A 40% SWP allocation will thus further increase the surplus available for storage. (*Ed. note: per Ben Wong’s presentation a year ago, a 30% SWP allocation is the break-even point balancing demand and supply.)*

**Local Groundwater.** Groundwater pumping from wells in the San Fernando Basin have recently been severely restricted because of contamination from a variety of industrial organic compounds. To resolve this issue, DWP has been constructing wellhead treatment facilities at three locations in the San Fernando Valley. Those facilities, known as North Hollywood West, North Hollywood Central, and Tujunga Remediation Facilities are nearing completion and will begin operation within the next year or so as shown in the table below. When fully operational, San Fernando Valley groundwater will provide roughly 20% of the city’s water supply in a typical year.



**Water Demand Trends.** To wrap up his presentation, Ben Wong discussed water demand trends during the ’24 –’25 runoff year that ended at the end of March. He provided a brief discussion of the following factors that affect demand:

* The average maximum daily temperature for the year was very close to average and likely did not cause deviations in demand.
* Rainfall, however, was significantly below average at 8.5 inches total for the year compared to 14.7 inches in a normal year.
* Actual water demand during the year was higher than forecast with the deviation from the forecast generally increasing as the year progressed. This trend suggests a rebound in total water use after a period of decline.
* The city’s population declined steadily between 2018 and 2023 but rebounded in 2024.

The projection for 2025 and 2026 is for a continuation of the growth, with the recognition that it is an uncertain forecast.

* Per capita water usage declined precipitously from 1987 when it was 187 gallons per capita per day, to 2024 when it bottomed out at 101 gpcd. However, since then, a rebound has occurred reaching 106 gpcd in February 2025. However, conservation efforts will continue to target a usage rate of 100 gpcd by 2035.

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