



San Diego County
Water Authority



Water Transfers: A Regional Tool for Reliability & Resilience

July 22, 2026

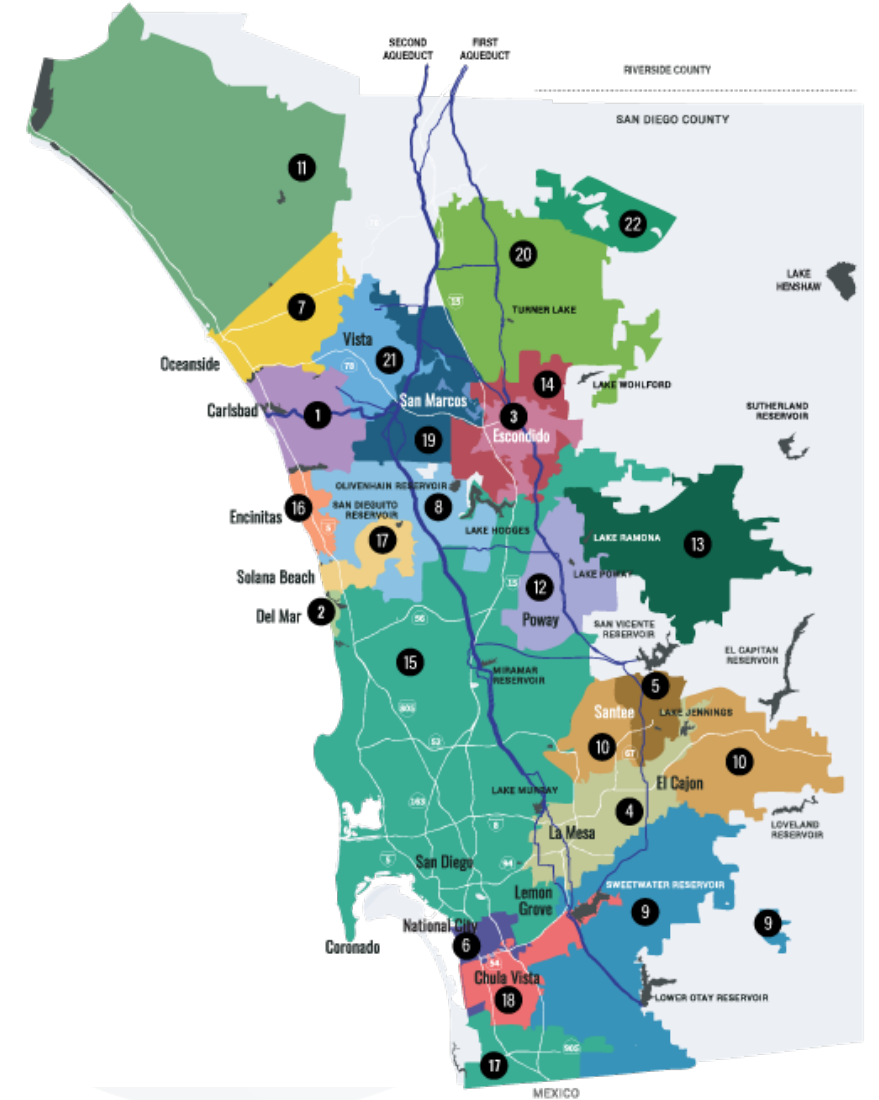
Southern California Water Dialogue

Alex Heide

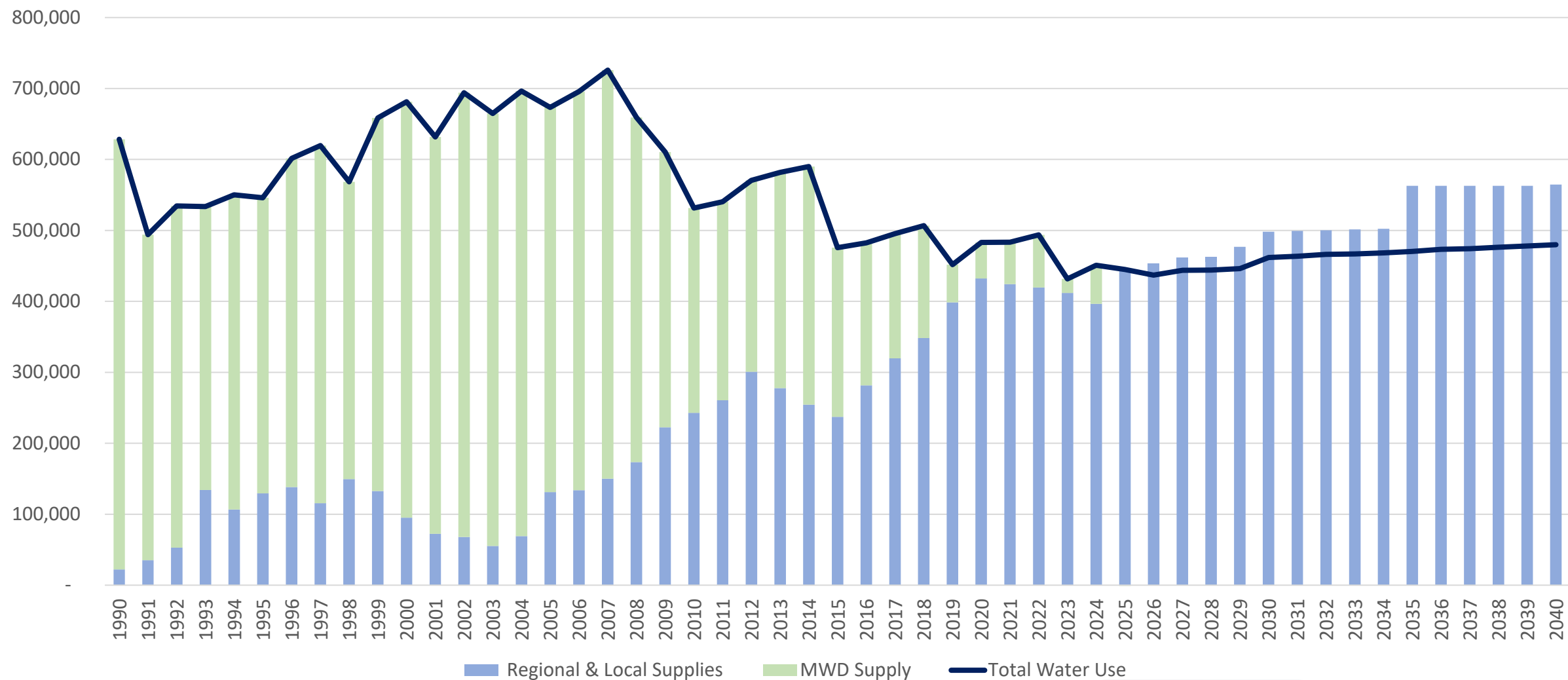
Principal Water Resources Specialist

San Diego County Water Authority

- Wholesale water provider for **22 member agencies** and **3.3 million people**
- **2nd largest** Metropolitan Member Agency
- Limited naturally occurring local supplies
- Historically reliant on imported water
 - **95%** in 1991
- Major Supply Diversification strategy as a result of drought in the 1990s

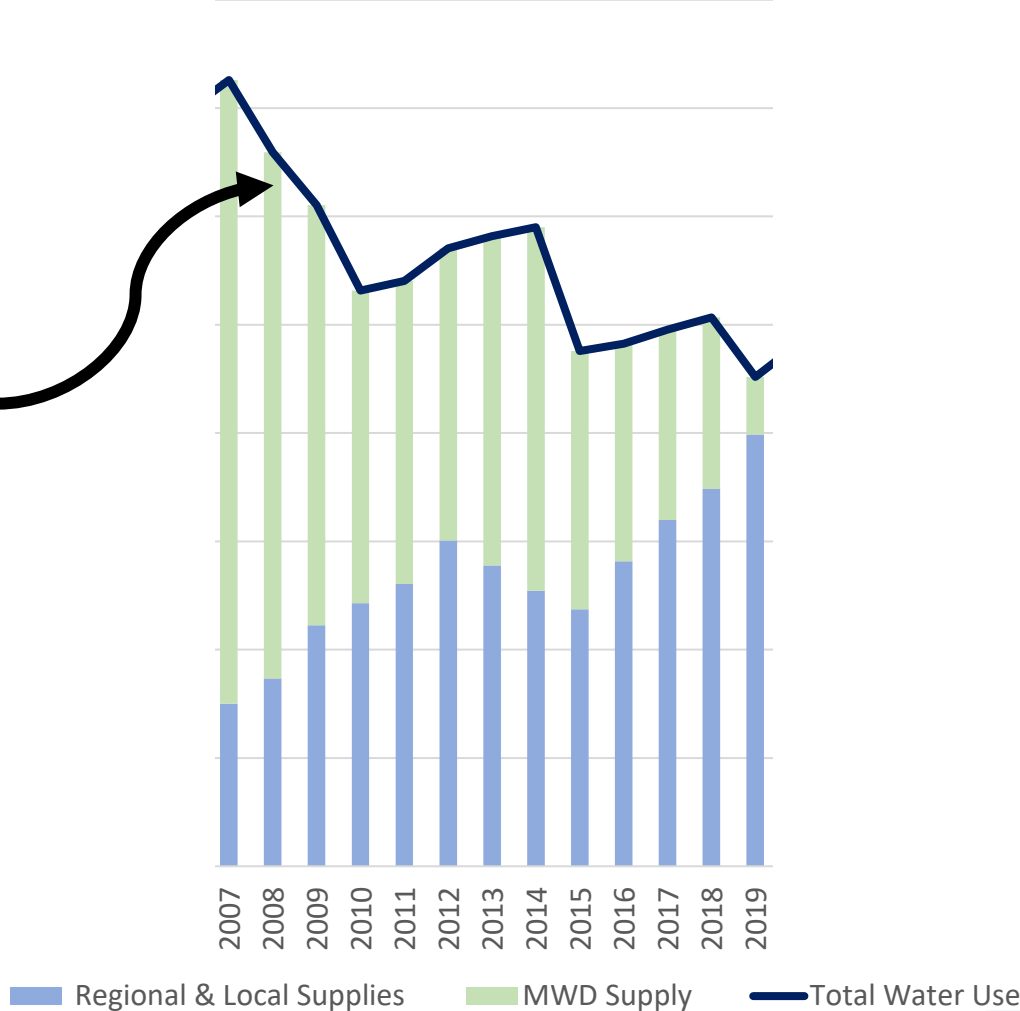


Past, Present, and Future: Adapting to Change



Past, Present, and Future: Adapting to Change

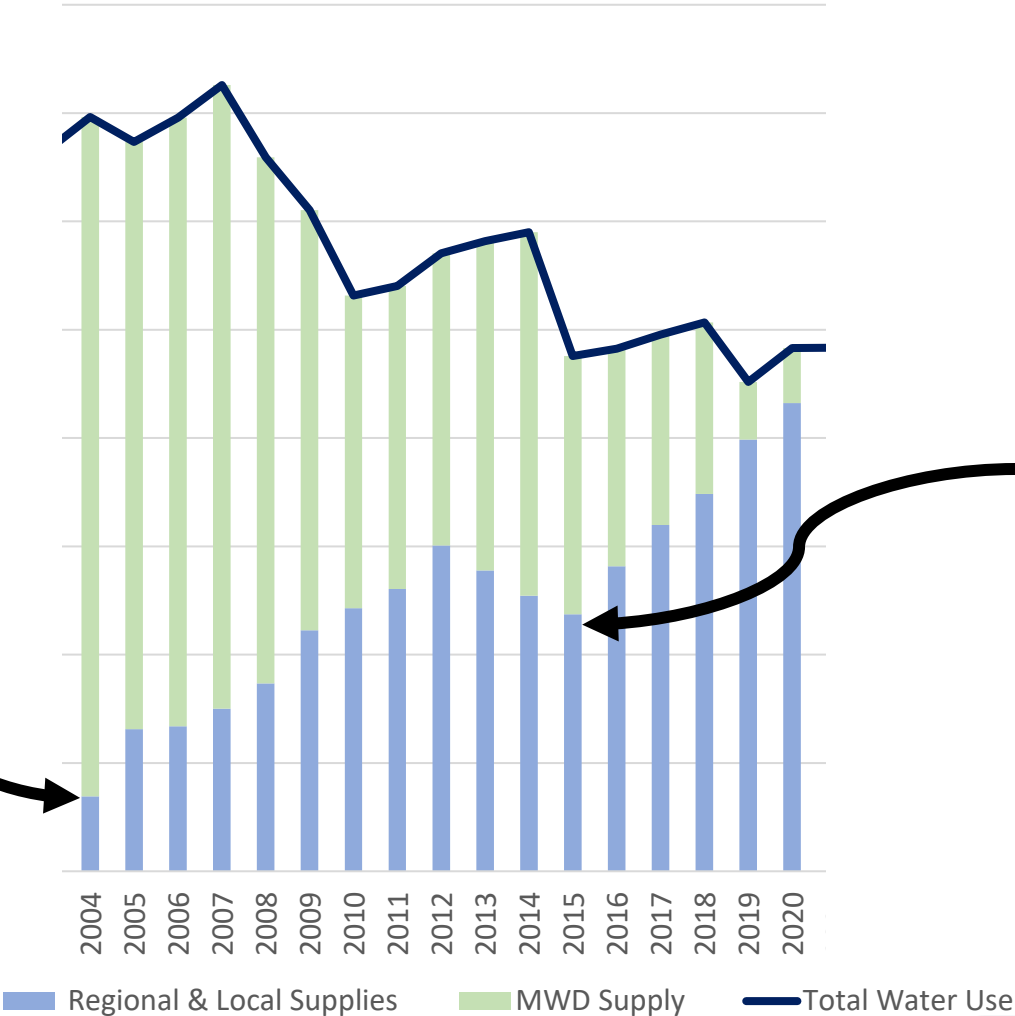
Historic Investments in Water Use Efficiency
50% decline in per capita use since 1990



Past, Present, and Future: Adapting to Change



**Start of QSA
Water Supply
Deliveries**

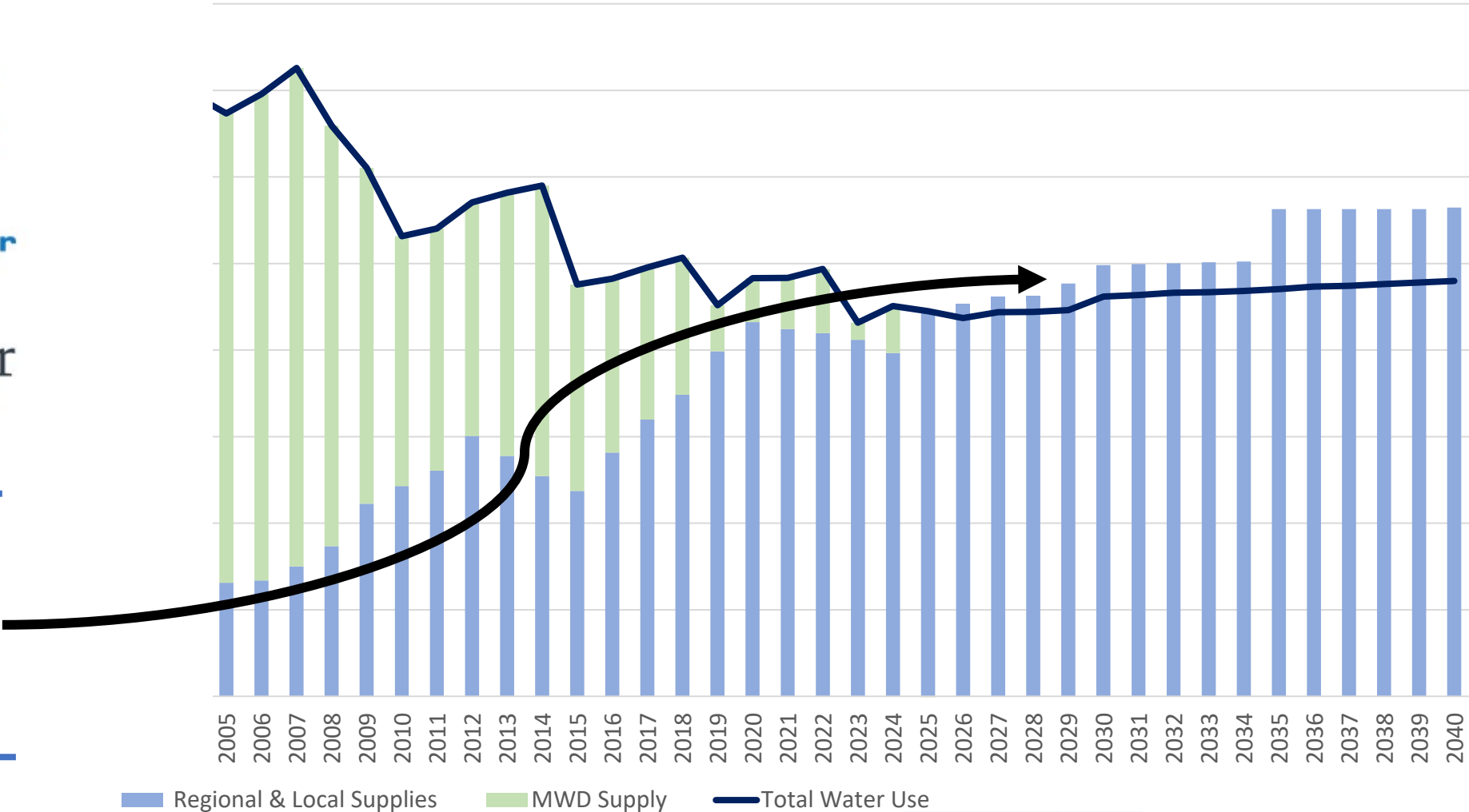


**Commissioning
Of Carlsbad
Desalination Plant**

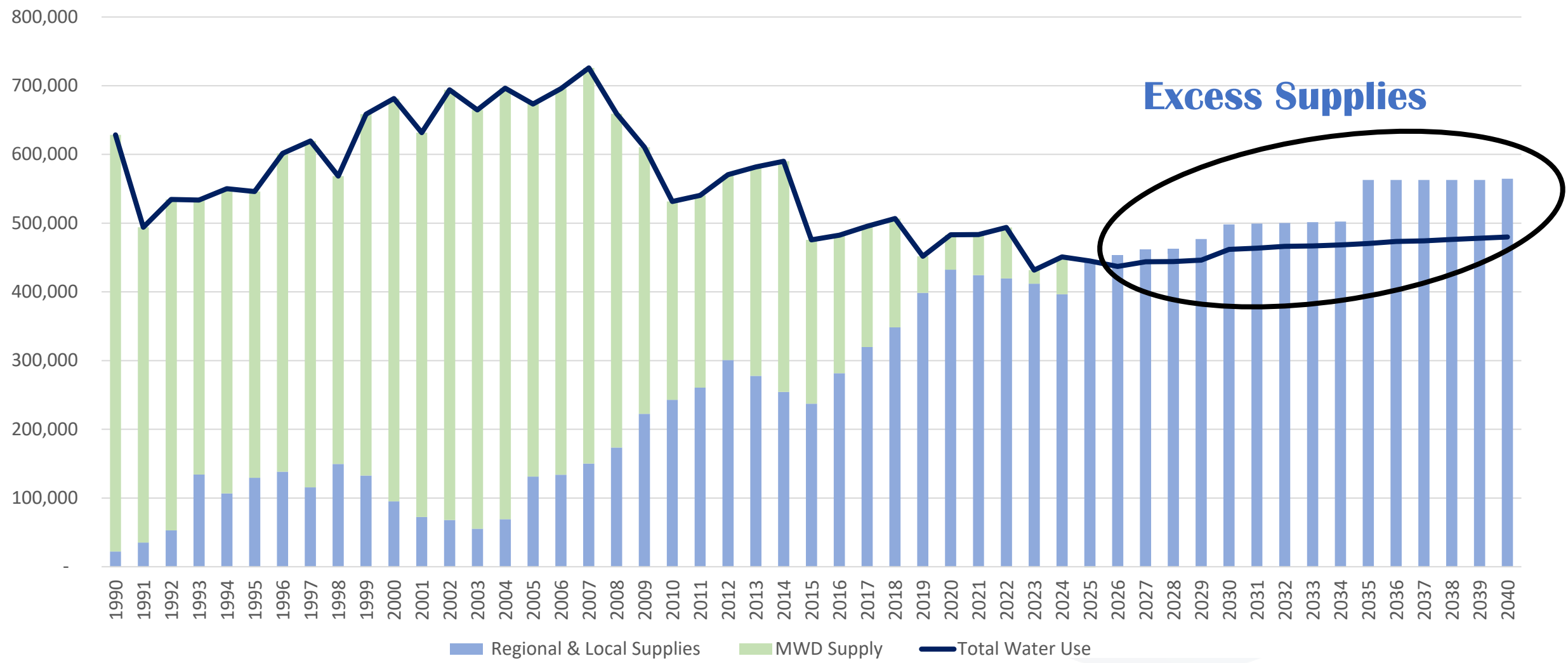
Past, Present, and Future: Adapting to Change



Member Agency Investments in Advanced Water Purification



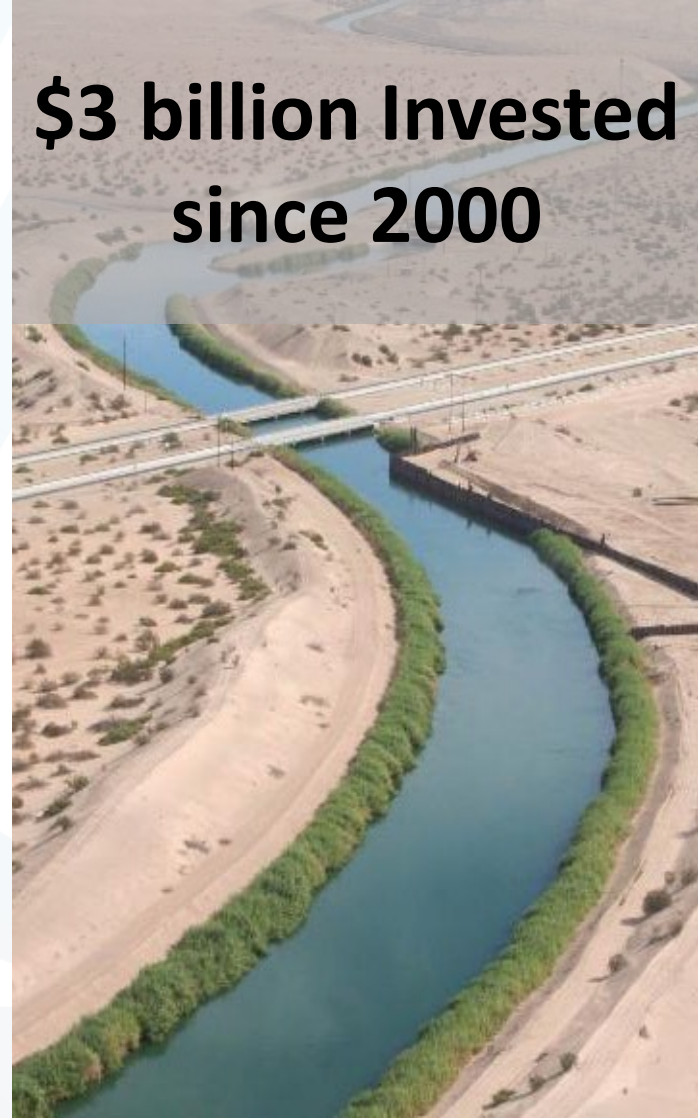
Past, Present, and Future: Adapting to Change



Turn rough waters into your path forward

- Develop a program that allows for adaptability
- Program Development Goals:
 - Maximize Ratepayer Investments
 - Leverage Investments in conservation & local supplies
 - Long-term durability & predictability
 - Minimize or eliminate new infrastructure costs
- Opportunity with the Settlement of Water Authority & Metropolitan litigation
- Exchange Framework Established in **2025**

**\$3 billion Invested
since 2000**

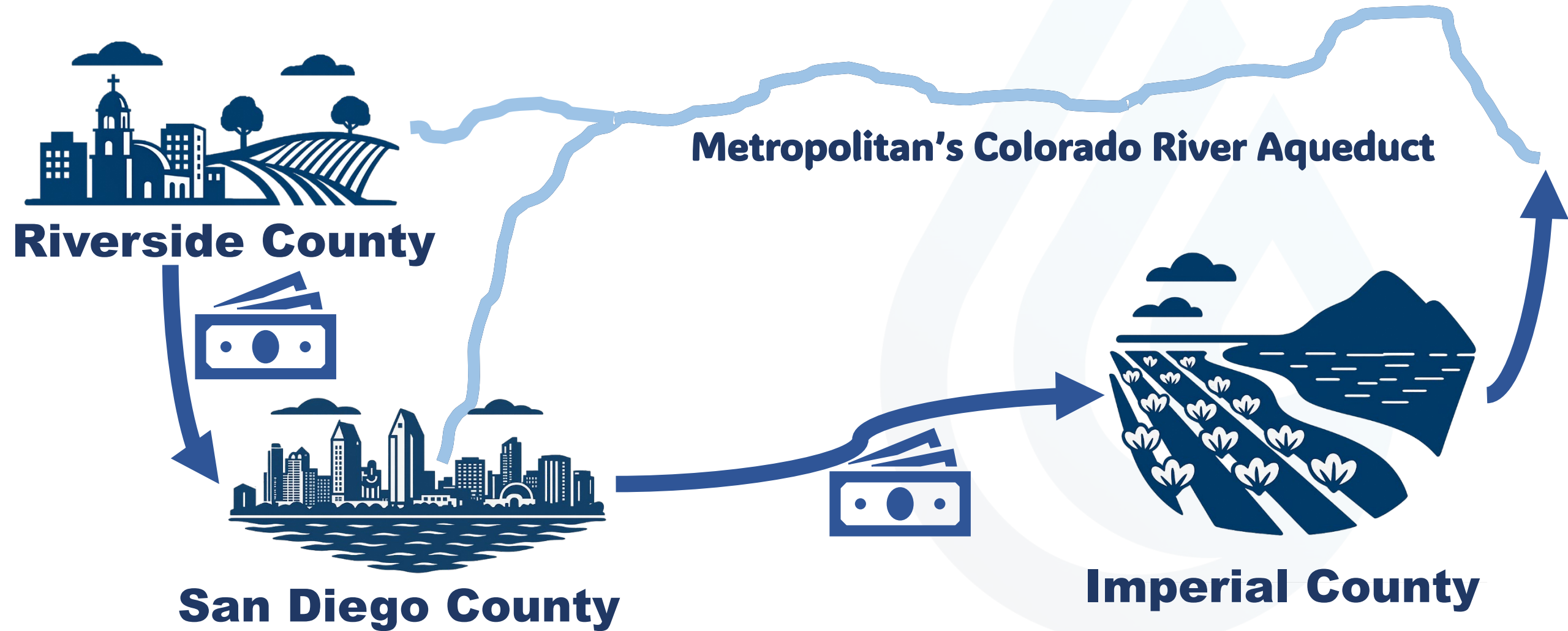


A New Model for Regional Collaboration

- Two agencies looking for long-term reliability and resilience
- **2026** - Landmark Agreement with Western MWD & Eastern MWD
- First-of-its kind regional exchange agreement
 - Delivers **20,000** AF/year through **2047**
 - Uses existing infrastructure and supplies
 - Reduces need for new capital investment
 - Scalable model for future partnerships



Exchanges: A Cost-Effective Tool for Partnerships



Shared Benefits Across the Region

- **San Diego County Water Authority**
 - Optimizes existing supplies and infrastructure
 - Strengthens financial stability
- **Riverside County Water Agencies**
 - Secures reliable drought-resilient supply
 - Avoids capital project costs
- **Metropolitan Water District**
 - Fully utilizes conveyance system
 - Advances regional drought resilience



**San Diego County
Water Authority**



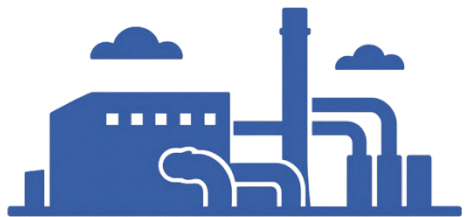
Expanding the Model Across State Lines



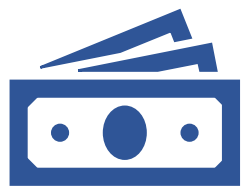
- MOU signed to develop opportunities
- Leverages investments in reliable supply
- Enables framework for voluntary, compensated transfers
- Initial pathway centered on Arizona partnerships
- Focused on exchange of Desal & AWP



Colorado River Exchange



**CARLSBAD
DESALINATION PLANT**



CALIFORNIA

ARIZONA



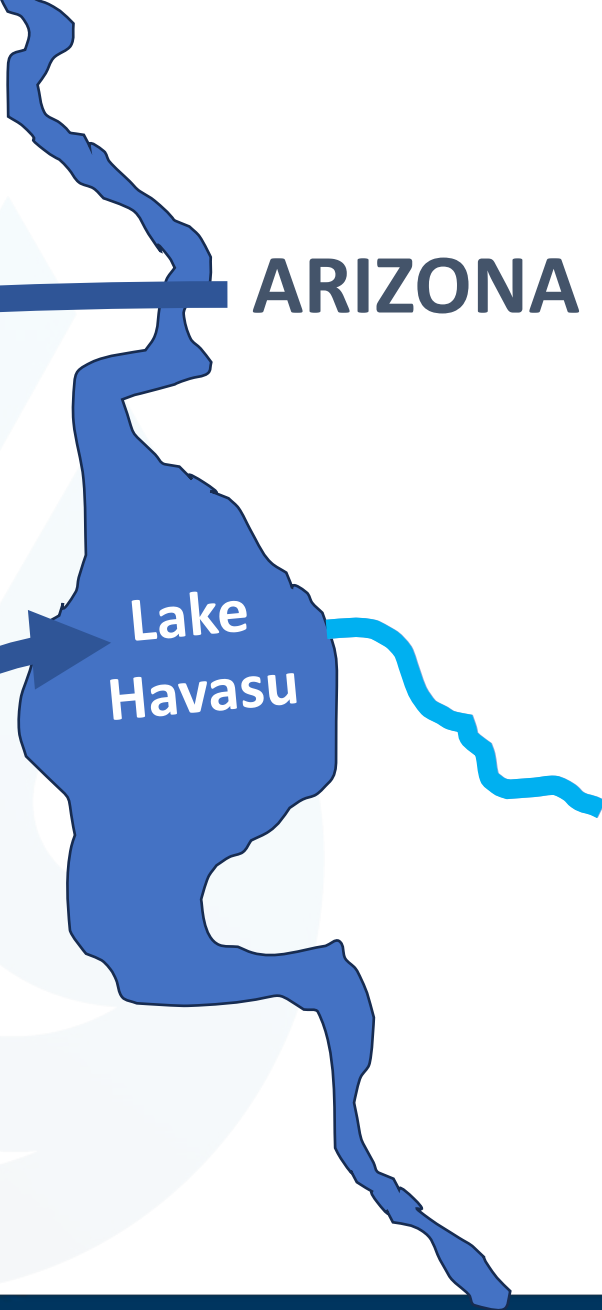
San Diego County



Imperial County



Lake
Havasu

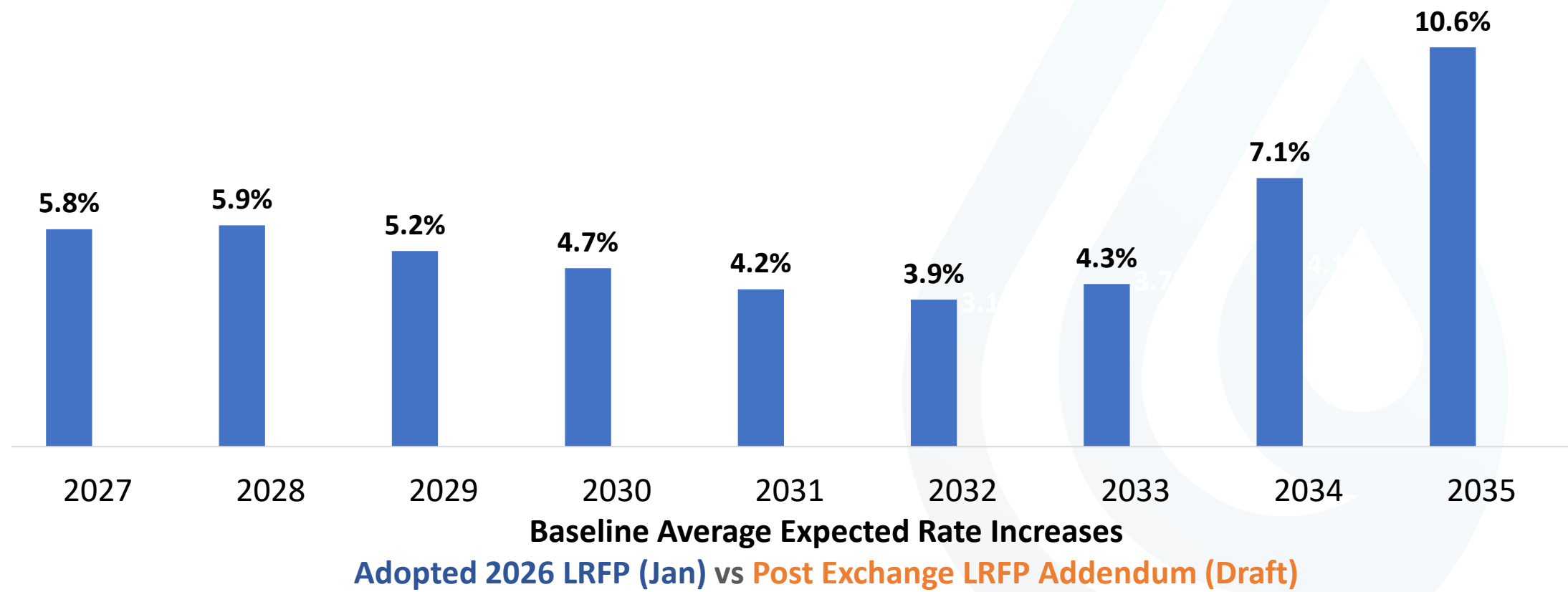


Growing Interest in Scalable Solutions



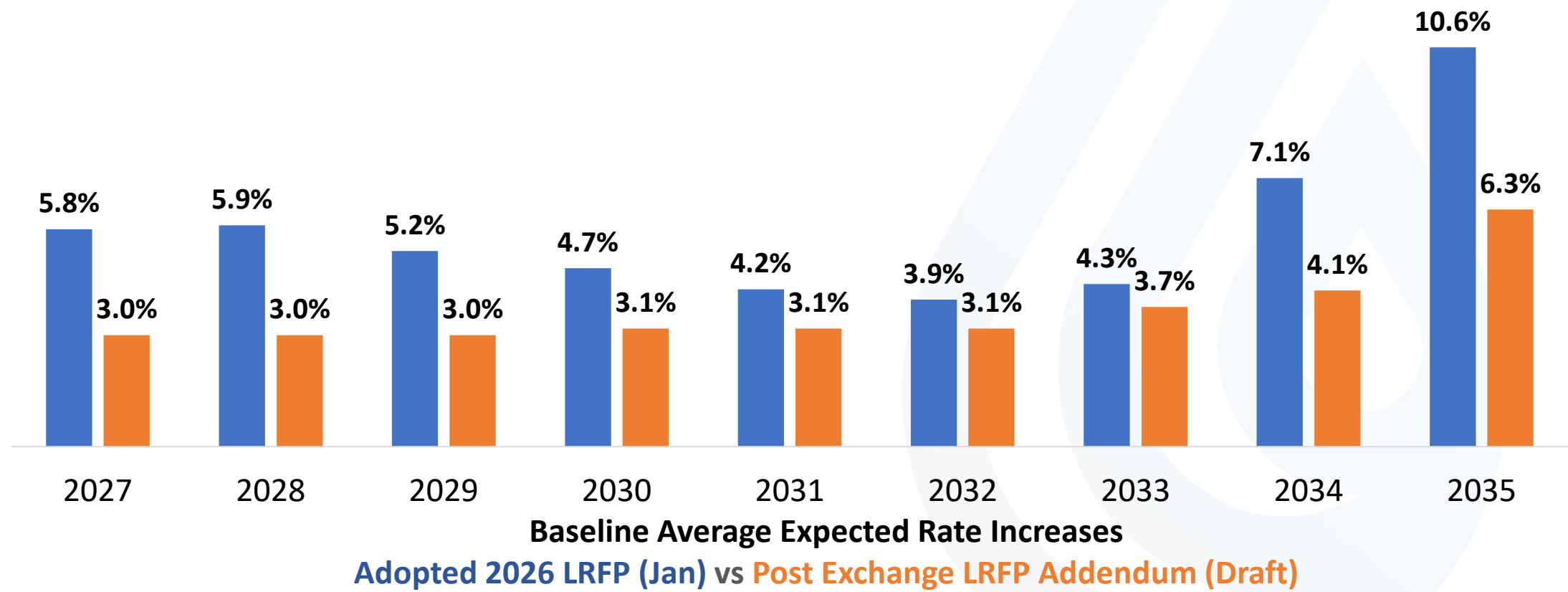
- Site visits from Arizona, Utah, and federal partners
- Engagement with Reclamation and regional stakeholders
- International interest, including Mexico delegation

Innovation is Affordability



*Addendum, updating the 2026 LRFP (Adopted January), is expected to be finalized in November 2026

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New Era of Water Management

- Partnerships are key
- Optimization of existing supplies and infrastructure is efficient
- Programs are important for facilitating partnerships
- Adapting to changed conditions is important for the future of water management.



Thank You!



@sdcwa



SanDiegoCountyWaterAuthority



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