

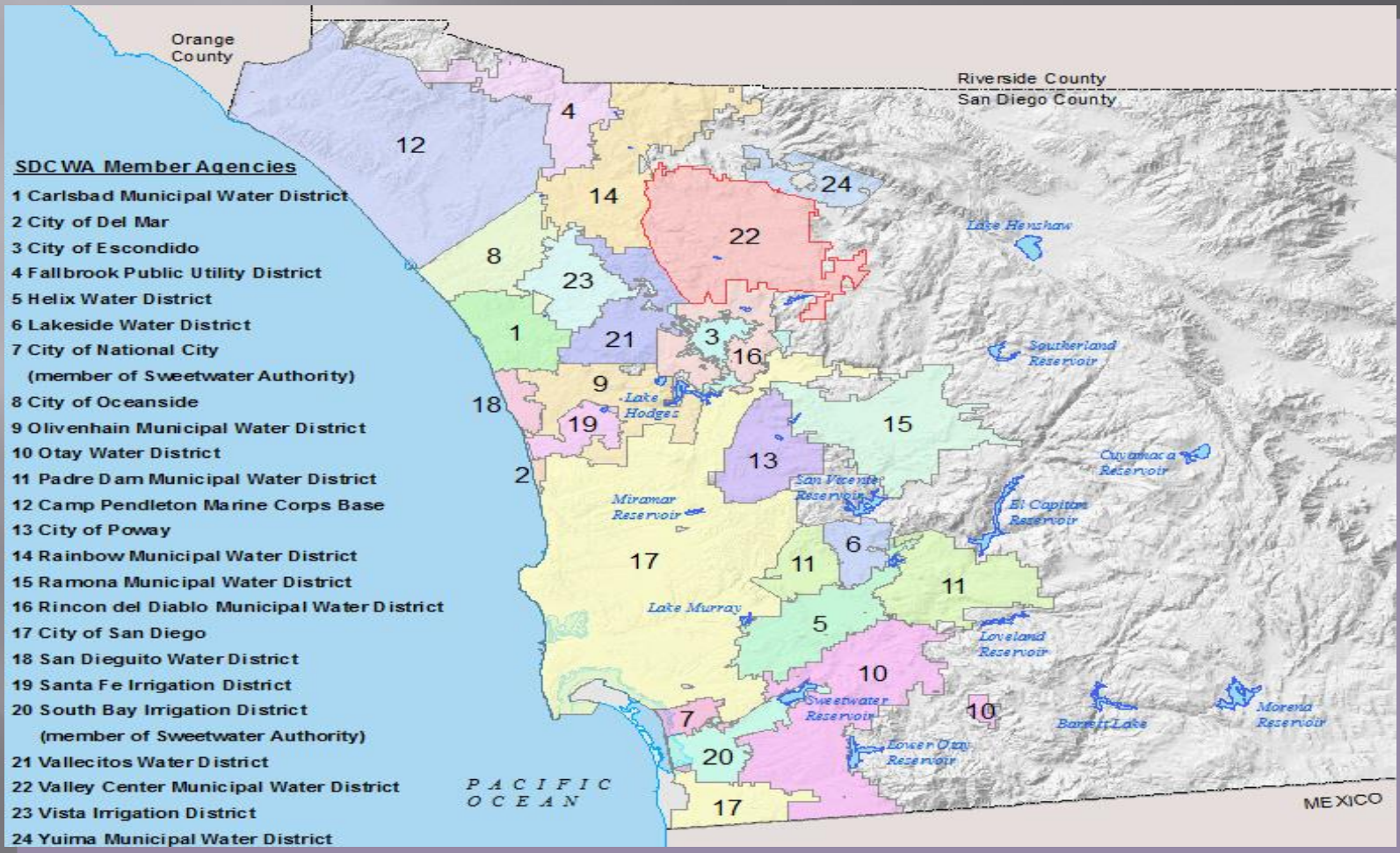
2015 DROUGHT RESPONSE -  
IMPLEMENTING THE  
INEXPLICABLE ON THE  
INCREDULOUS

*Gary Arant*  
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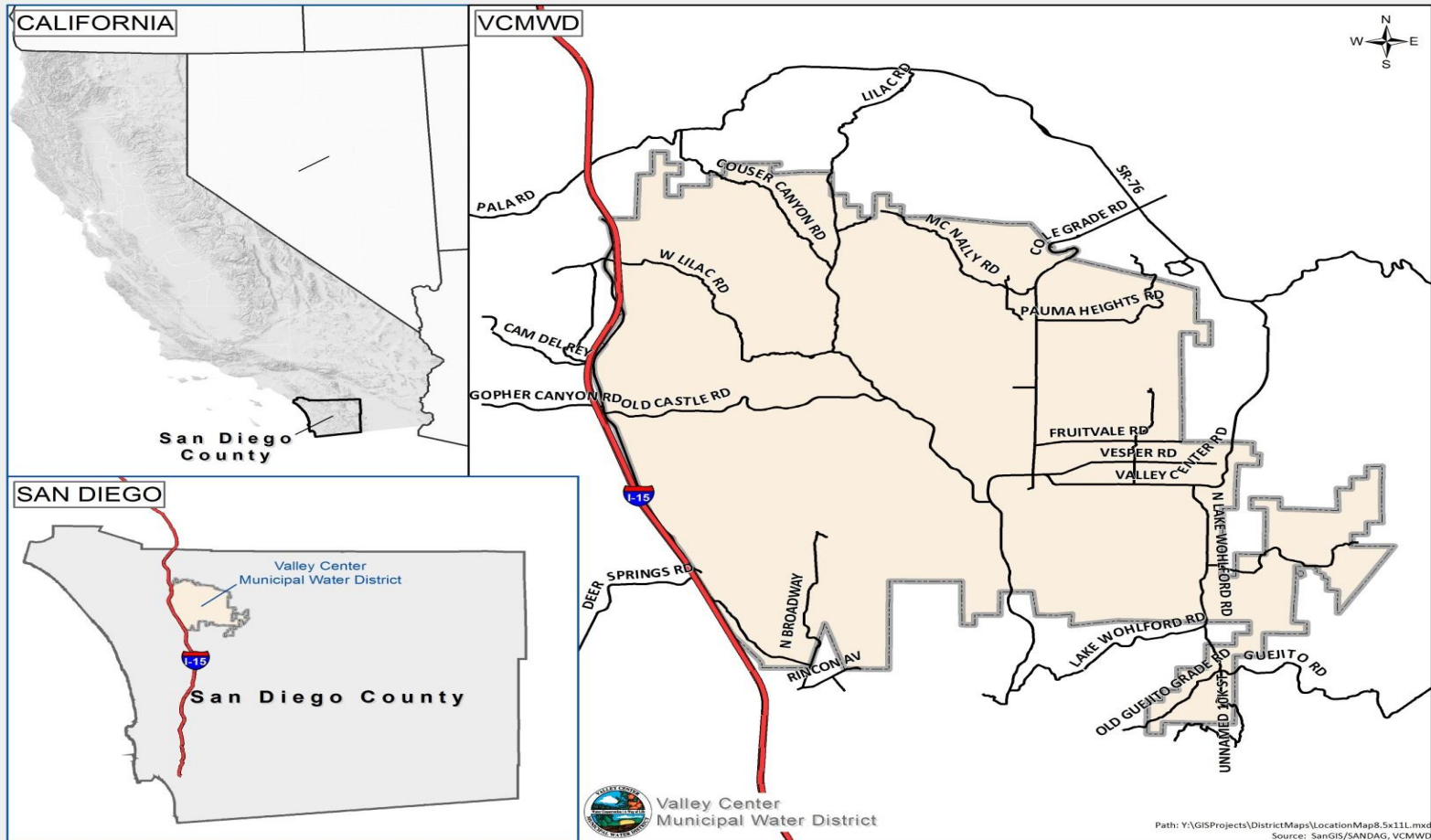
# VCMWD – 2015 Drought Response

- ▣ VCMWD was formed in 1954 to take CRA water from the then recently completed 1<sup>st</sup> San Diego Aqueduct;
- ▣ Today, the District serves 26,000 people through 10,000 water service connections in its 100 square mile territory;
- ▣ The District also operates two small wastewater reclamation facilities serving 2,700 homes/businesses.

# VCMWD - 2015 Drought Response



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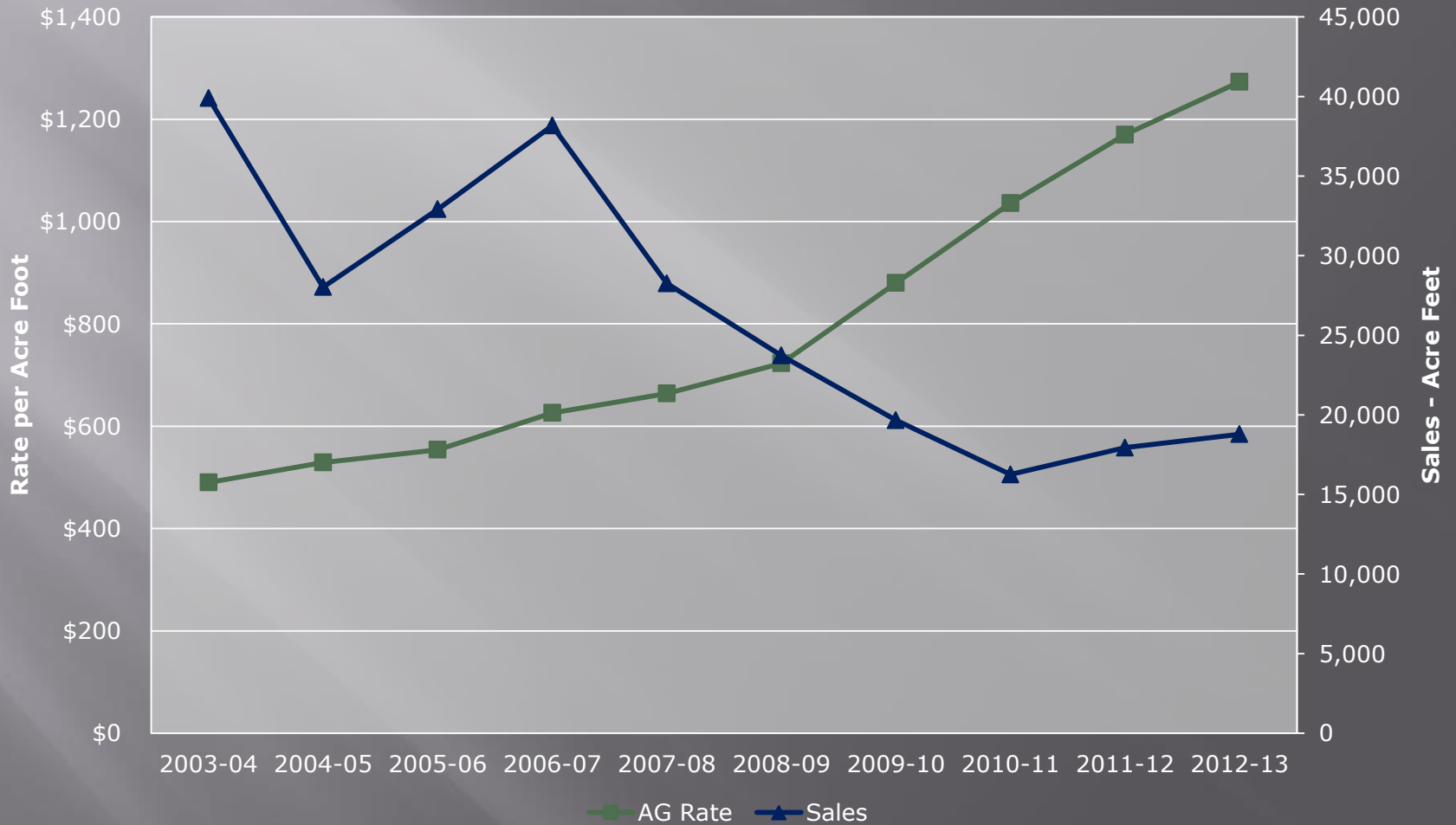
# VCMWD - 2015 Drought Response

- ▣ VCMWD serves a rural/agricultural community, with 70% of deliveries going to commercial agriculture - avocados, citrus, flower, nursery and wine grapes;
- ▣ Though the average annual deliveries today are in the range of 24,000 AF to 28,000 AF, in FY 2003-2004 the District delivered just under 50,000 AF with 40,000 going to agriculture.

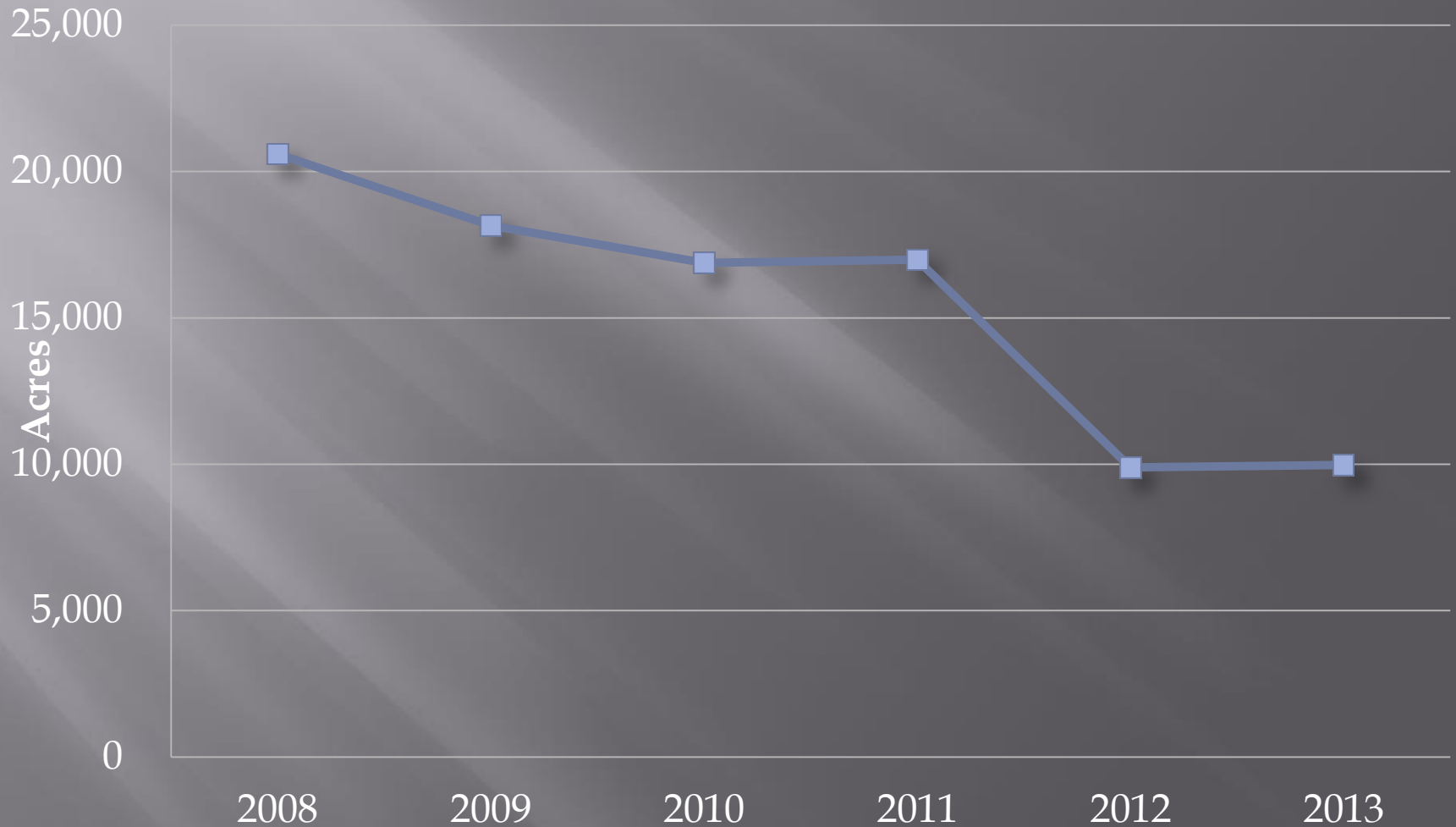
# VCMWD – 2015 Drought Response

- ▣ Deliveries have declined due to rapid wholesale price increases, market forces, storm water regulation, regulatory drought impacts (2009-2011), loss of the MWD – IAWP Pricing (2012), and growers shifting to higher-value/lower water use crops;
- ▣ VCMWD has already met its SBX-7X, 20% by 2020 conservation goals and usage continues to drop.

# VCMWD - 2015 Drought Response



# VCMWD - 2015 Drought Response





# VCMWD – 2015 Drought Response

- ▣ SWRCB Emergency Drought Regulatory Framework placed VCMWD in the top tier of mandatory reductions – 36%;
- ▣ Placement based upon 285 gpcd as measured between July – September of 2014 when the Governor was calling for a voluntary 20% reduction and the SWRCB had only just adopted the increased mandatory use provisions.

# VCMWD – 2015 Drought Response

- ▣ In response to the SWRCB Framework/Draft Regulations, it was pointed out that VCMWD:
  - Serves a rural community with large residential lots and with commercial agriculture, located some 30 miles inland and subject to higher temperatures than coastal areas;
  - Has already reduced water usage by over 40% and met its 20% x 2020 reduction goals

# VCMWD – 2015 Drought Response

...that:

- The commercial agricultural activity on over 10,000 acres in our service area was a significant part of the \$1.9 billion farm-gate ag economy of San Diego County, and was not *“ornamental landscaping;”*
- Commercial Agriculture located within urban water suppliers should be exempted from the 36% requirement as directed by the Governor in his April 1, 2015 Executive Order;

# VCMWD – 2015 Drought Response

.....and, that:

- Due to \$\$\$ billions invested in water supply reliability by MWD/SDCWA in reclamation, storage, conservation, transfers, and seawater desalination, VCMWD would have access to nearly 100% of water needed to meet its domestic/commercial demands for FY 2015-2016.

# VCMWD – 2015 Drought Response

- ▣ Final regulations adopted by the SWRCB on 5/5/15:
  - Exempted VCMWD's commercial agriculture (Ag still required to reduce by 15% as per the SDCWA – Transitional Special Agricultural Water Rate - TSAWR);
  - Domestic/Commercial required to reduce usage by 36% compared to 2013;
  - On 5/14/15, SDCWA set our supply availability at 96.5% of normal domestic/commercial demands.

# VCMWD – 2015 Drought Response

- ▣ So here is the problem:

How to convince 26,000 people that even though there is enough water to essentially meet all of their needs, they must, none-the-less, reduce usage by:

36%

# VCMWD – 2015 Drought Response

- ▣ This task has become exponentially more difficult since our customers are aware that:
  - Adjacent and nearby communities are only being required to reduce usage by 28%, or 24%, 20%, 16%, and 12%.

# VCMWD – 2015 Drought Response

- ▣ So what have we done:
  1. Stopped trying to explain the inexplicable;
  2. Join our customers in their incredulity and blame it on Sacramento;
  3. Direct mailing to all of our customers;
  4. Set up a Water Waste Hotline;
  5. Advertised frequently in local print media;
  6. Implemented mandatory use provisions - two days a week watering; watering hours and time limits; run-off prohibitions, etc.



# VCMWD – 2015 Drought Response

- ▣ So what have we done...
  7. Field patrols, starting at 5:00 am to 10:00 pm – weekdays, weekends and holidays.
  8. Starting a 10:00 pm to 7 :00 am patrol to catch those truly committed to saving their lawns.
  9. Equipped our patrollers with I-pads to photograph and document the mandatory use violations.
  10. Send out a series of letters, advisory, notice of complaint and then notice of fines up to \$1,000 and meter flow restrictions.

# VCMWD – 2015 Drought Response

## ▣ Results:

- *Since August of 2014* our domestic/commercial gpcd has dropped 60% from 272 to 109, as reported for June, 2015
  
- *Since June 1, 2015* – we have:
  - Logged over 650 patrol hours;
  - Processed over 1,570 waste reports;
  - Mailed 618 advisory letters;
  - Mailed 174 Notices of Complaint; and
  - Levied 12 fines

# VCMWD – 2015 Drought Response

- ▣ On July 13, 2015, we reported to the SWRCB a **39.1%** reduction in domestic/commercial potable water production compared to June, 2013;
- ▣ As of July 19, 2015, average daily production was 38.3% less than for July 2013 – on track;
- ▣ Evidently our “brute force,” 36% water usage reduction program against an actual supply shortage of 3.5% is working, ***for now***.

# VCMWD – 2015 Drought Response

- ▣ For the long-term:
  - Customers are aware of the discrepancy between the actual supply available and the mandatory cut;
  - Customers are aware of lower reduction levels for friends and in some cases, neighbors in nearby communities;
  - Our credibility with customers has been severely damaged – credibility we might need in an actual emergency or supply shortage.

# VCMWD – 2015 Drought Response

- ▣ For the long-term...
  - Customers now realizing that investments in infrastructure and alternative water supplies are not paying off in terms of a more reliable water supply;
  - It may be hard to garner public/ratepayer support for higher water rates needed for future resource investments without an identifiable reliability benefit.

# VCMWD – 2015 Drought Response

- ▣ For the long-term...
  - The next round of SWRCB Drought Regulations should base shortage response on actual shortage conditions;
  - Regions having made the investments in water supply diversification and reliability should be the ones “rewarded” by the SWRCB;
  - Regions that have not made the investments, should be encouraged to do so.

# VCMWD – 2015 Drought Response

- ▣ For the Long-Term.....

In going forward, it is hoped there will be as much interest and energy being invested in positive steps to secure the reliability of our state's water supply as there is in using the current crisis to increase top-down control over water supply management and uses.

2015 Drought Response -  
*Implementing the Inexplicable  
on the Incredulous*

Questions?