



SAN GORGONIO PASS  
WATER AGENCY  
*A California State Water Project Contractor*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Water Leaders County-Wide Partner on Advanced Firefighting System

### *Remote Water Storage Frees Up First Responders*

BEAUMONT, CA (May 6, 2024) – San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency (SGPWA) will coordinate a Heli-Hydrant project alongside several local water districts to bolster firefighting efforts in a challenging fire-risk region. Heli-Hydrants allow firefighting helicopters to refill water from strategically located water tanks. This life-saving investment enables firefighters to control blazes faster in catastrophic fire situations.

The San Gorgonio Pass Area has a history of significant fires, sometimes resulting in tragic loss of life and disasters. Firefighting helicopters currently lack access to many nearby water sources. The Heli-Hydrants offer a vital solution, increasing water availability close to the fires.

Heli-Hydrants are installed on existing water district tanks and reservoirs. Unlike conventional water supplies, Heli-Hydrants are remotely controlled by pilots and do not require ground support crews. This frees up firefighters to focus on the initial attack. Due to Fifth District Supervisor Yxstian Gutierrez' leadership, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors approved \$1.8 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to install six Heli-Hydrant locations covering both sides of Interstate 10.

"In recent years, devastating wildfires have threatened the safety of our community," said Fifth District Riverside County Supervisor Yxstian Gutierrez. "We have a responsibility to protect our residents and find innovative solutions to combat these growing threats. By collaborating with key agencies, we are enhancing our firefighting capabilities and ensuring our community's safety."

SGPWA will oversee the Heli-Hydrant endeavor, including funding administration and project delivery. SGPWA will partner with local water entities and the County's Fire Department, which approves specific locations. Supporters include the Riverside County Fire, and Cal Fire. Beaumont Cherry Valley Water District, City of Banning, High Valleys Water District, Banning Heights Mutual Water Company and Cabazon Water District will host the Heli-Hydrant sites.

"When the region comes together to protect residents and resources, we can accomplish great things," SGPWA President Mickey Valdivia said. "We are grateful to all the partner water agencies that help ensure we are regionally well-prepared in the face of the next emergency."

Learn more at [www.sgpwa.com](http://www.sgpwa.com).

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**About San Geronio Pass Water Agency**

Formed in 1961, SGPWA is a State Water Contractor that serves a 225-square-mile area of western Riverside County. The service area includes the cities of Calimesa, Beaumont, and Banning, and the communities of Cherry Valley, Cabazon, and the Banning Bench. In addition to importing State Water Project (SWP) water from Northern California to augment local groundwater sources, the Agency builds local system infrastructure, participates in water transfers, partners in statewide water projects and collaborates on regional water reliability and conservation efforts.