

# San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority

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The San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority serves 28 member public agencies, 26 of which contract with Reclamation for water supply from the CVP. These agencies deliver water to approximately 1.2 million acres of farmland, 2 million California residents, and millions of waterfowl dependent upon the nearly 200,000 acres of managed wetlands within the Pacific Flyway.

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*(The following is a media release by the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority  
on board action to fill key management positions)*

## **San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority Fills Key Management Positions**

Los Banos, CA - The San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority (Water Authority) Board of Directors voted today to approve an employment contract for Federico Barajas to fill the position of its Executive Director, replacing Assistant Executive Director Frances Mizuno who has been serving on an interim basis since June 1. Barajas leaves his position as Deputy Regional Director, Mid-Pacific Region, at the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, a position he has held since 2016 and will begin with the Water Authority effective on December 10.

During his more than 25 years at Reclamation, Barajas filled numerous roles managing the critical water infrastructure serving major parts of California, Nevada and Southern Oregon. Barajas brings with him a remarkable level of experience in federal water policy, engineering and administration, assets that will benefit over a million acres of farmland, 2 million urban water users in the Silicon Valley, and 200,000 acres of managed wetlands within the Water Authority service area.

While at Reclamation, Barajas oversaw CVP operations and had direct oversight of all Central Valley Project offices. He cultivated excellent working relationships with state and local governments, public water agencies, regulatory agencies, and environmental groups. He built relationships with the State Department of Water Resources, State Water Contractors, as well as tribal governments.

Barajas worked to oversee implementation of the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation

(WIIN) Act, which added flexibility to water operations in the Delta in order to maximize water deliveries while complying with all aspects of the federal Endangered Species Act and other applicable law. He has worked on capital infrastructure projects and played various roles on large Reclamation projects, including installation of temperature control curtains at Whiskeytown Lake, construction oversight during levee repairs in partnership with the Army Corps of Engineers, providing oversight during the joint federal project at Folsom Dam, and management oversight during Safety of Dams corrective actions at several Reclamation facilities.

"I am excited about joining the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority team" said Barajas. "I am committed to building strong partnerships and working with the Water Authority team on key water-related issues and opportunities that lie ahead. I want to commend the board for initiating a strategic planning effort that will help set a strategic path forward for the Water Authority."

"We are very excited to have Federico taking on the role of the executive director of the Water Authority," said Water Authority Board Chairman Cannon Michael. "Federico brings to the job an exceptional combination of knowledge, experience and proven leadership. Both the board and staff are impressed with his extensive knowledge of western water and the Central Valley Project, his 25-years of work within Reclamation, and his well-honed management skills. His knowledge, background and relationships make him the ideal person to help address the numerous challenges and opportunities faced by the members of the Water Authority."

In addition to Barajas, the Water Authority hired J. Scott Petersen, effective on January 2, 2019, as the organization's Water Policy Director. Petersen formerly served as Legislative Director for then-Congressman Dennis Cardoza from 2011 to 2013 and has served for the past six years as Deputy Chief of Staff for Congressman Jim Costa.

During his tenure with Congressman Costa, Petersen worked on numerous issues affecting water resources and natural resources policy, including WIIN Act legislation, the Non-federal Reservoir Operations Improvement Act, keeping rescheduled water in San Luis Reservoir for SLDMWA-member agencies in 2014, as well as regulatory and administrative relief totaling over 1 million acre-feet of additional water supplies for San Joaquin Valley water agencies. Petersen also worked on the 2018 and 2012 Farm Bills, with efforts resulting in increased funding for multi-purpose conservation projects specifically benefiting groundwater recharge and increasing funds for specialty crop programs.

In addition to his experience on federal water policy, Petersen is a registered civil engineer and oversaw capital projects, including water pipeline projects, storm water drainage projects, sewer improvements, and retention basins while working for TKE Engineering in Riverside, CA.

"I'm looking forward to joining the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority as Water Policy Director," said Petersen. "Family farms, cities, businesses, and the environment depend on a reliable water supply from the Authority to sustain them. Unfortunately, variable hydrology resulting from a changing climate, coupled with well intentioned, but ultimately ineffective water resources policies have led to less reliable water supplies for Authority member agencies and their customers, as well as harm to California's ecosystems and native fisheries. The Authority has a long history of working constructively and collaboratively to improve California water policy and I look forward to continuing that proud tradition."

"I have known Scott for many years and have a great deal of respect for his abilities, knowledge and character," said Michael. "We are extremely excited for him to join the team here at the Water Authority. Scott is a critical thinker and is able to work with diverse groups of stakeholders to create lasting solutions. His skills will be essential in assisting the Water Authority in our role of effectively delivering water to our agricultural, urban and environmental water users," he said.

In addition to filling the two vacancies, the board approved the promotion of Rebecca Akroyd to General Counsel. Akroyd joined the Water Authority as Deputy General Counsel in November 2017, and has been serving as Interim General Counsel since June 1, 2018.

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Banta-Carbona ID, Broadview WD, Byron Bethany ID, Central Calif. ID, City of Tracy, Columbia Canal Co. (a Friend), Del Puerto WD, Eagle Field WD, Firebaugh Canal WD, Fresno Slough WD, Grassland WD, Henry Miller RD #2131, James ID, Laguna WD, Mercy Springs WD, Oro Loma WD, Pacheco WD, Panoche WD, Patterson ID, Pleasant Valley WD, Reclamation District 1606, San Benito County WD, San Luis WD, Santa Clara Valley WD, Tranquillity ID, Turner Island WD, West Side ID, West Stanislaus ID, Westlands WD