

## What Does the Dry Winter Mean for Our Water Supplies?

June 2021



This winter has been especially dry throughout the state, including in Santa Barbara, which has received 42 percent of normal rainfall. Despite the dry winter and growing concern regarding statewide drought conditions, the City's water supply outlook is positive as a result of its diverse water supplies. Santa Barbara's water sources include: Lake Cachuma, Gibraltar Reservoir, ocean desalination, groundwater, imported water through the State Water Project, and recycled water.

A consistent supply of desalinated water since 2017 has helped the City meet demands during the most recent drought, and enabled the City to build up a surplus of water in Lake Cachuma. Additionally, rainfall in 2017, 2019, and 2020 filled Gibraltar Reservoir in those years. Currently, the City has enough water stored in Lake Cachuma to supply the community for the next two and a half years with Lake Cachuma supplies alone. The City can continue to let groundwater basins rest and recover.

Water conservation throughout Santa Barbara continues to be strong. The community's water use currently averages 24 percent less than pre-drought (2013) water use. Many customers made permanent changes to conserve water during the last drought, such as replacing lawns and sprinklers with water wise landscaping, or making plumbing upgrades. As a result, water demands are not expected to fully "rebound" to pre-drought conditions.

The City's 2020 Enhanced Urban Water Management Plan (EUWMP), expected to be adopted by Council on June 29, 2021, is an important planning document that sets the vision for the City's water supply and management for the next 30 years. It includes updated water demand projections that define a "new normal" based on post drought water demands as well as updated population and economic drivers for City water use. The EUWMP is the product of rigorous analyses that considered the environmental, economic, and social impacts of the City's water management strategy, and included stakeholder input throughout the development process.

For more information on the City's water supplies and the Enhanced Urban Water Management Plan, visit [www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WaterVision](http://www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WaterVision)