

East Porterville Water Supply Project

Updated on April 24, 2018

County: Tulare

Population: 755 homes (estimated 2,500 people) Challenges:

Dry or contaminated drinking water wells

Consolidation date: March 2017 through February 2018

Residents of the small, unincorporated community of East Porterville in Tulare County had wells that became dry or contaminated during California's five-year drought. Homes without access to safe potable water received deliveries of tanked water and bottled water. At a monthly price tag of \$650,000, this temporary solution was unsustainable for both the state and community members.



Photo 1: The first home to receive a permanent water connection

A partnership of state agencies, local agencies, and community development specialists worked to connect 755 homes to a safe, reliable, permanent water supply. All households participating in the East Porterville Water Supply Project have now been connected to the City of Porterville's municipal water system.

Construction on the \$48 million East Porterville Water Supply Project kicked off in early 2016 with the installation of new distribution lines to connect homes in East Porterville to the neighboring City of Porterville's municipal system. The project was conducted in two phases. The first phase connected about 300 homes that were receiving emergency water deliveries and was completed in March 2017. The second phase connected about 450 additional households that still had access to water in their wells, but who wished to avoid the possibility of future water insecurity. Of the 1,100 homes eligible for the project in both phases, a total of 755 took advantage of the offer.

“The goal was to get a permanent supply of safe water to the residents who were without water, or without safe water, as soon as possible,” said Eileen Sobeck, executive director of the State Water Resources Control Board. “The significant impact of the drought on access to safe drinking water for hundreds of local families could not have been addressed without extraordinary collaboration between state and local governments and the local community groups. We hope success of the partnerships here will assist in developing new ways of working together and avoid future drought impacts to communities like East Porterville.”



Photo 2: State Board staff answers community questions

Three state agencies—the Department of Water Resources (DWR), the State Water Resources Control Board, and the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services partnered with Tulare County agencies and community organizations such as Self-Help Enterprises and Community Water Center to deliver a permanent solution to the East Porterville’s water crisis.

“It’s such a relief to have water flowing from the faucet and the shower again. It’s so easy to take it for granted, until it’s gone,” said Amelia Arroyo who received a water connection in January 2017.

View more project photos in [DWR’s photo gallery](#) and a [new video](#) telling the story of the East Porterville Water Supply Project.