



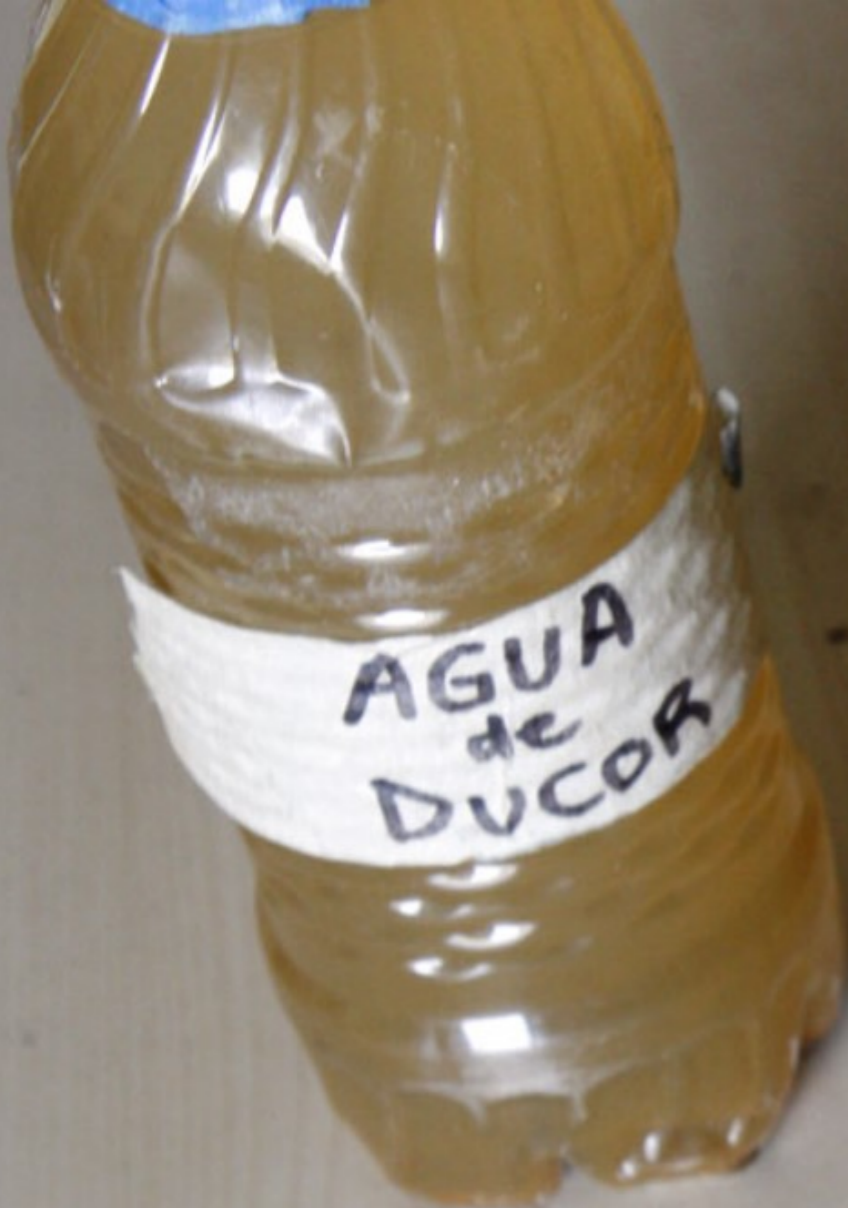
# SB623: A Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund for California

Laurel Firestone



COMMUNITY WATER CENTER  
EL CENTRO COMUNITARIO POR EL AGUA





**More than 300 communities and schools** lack access to safe drinking water in CA

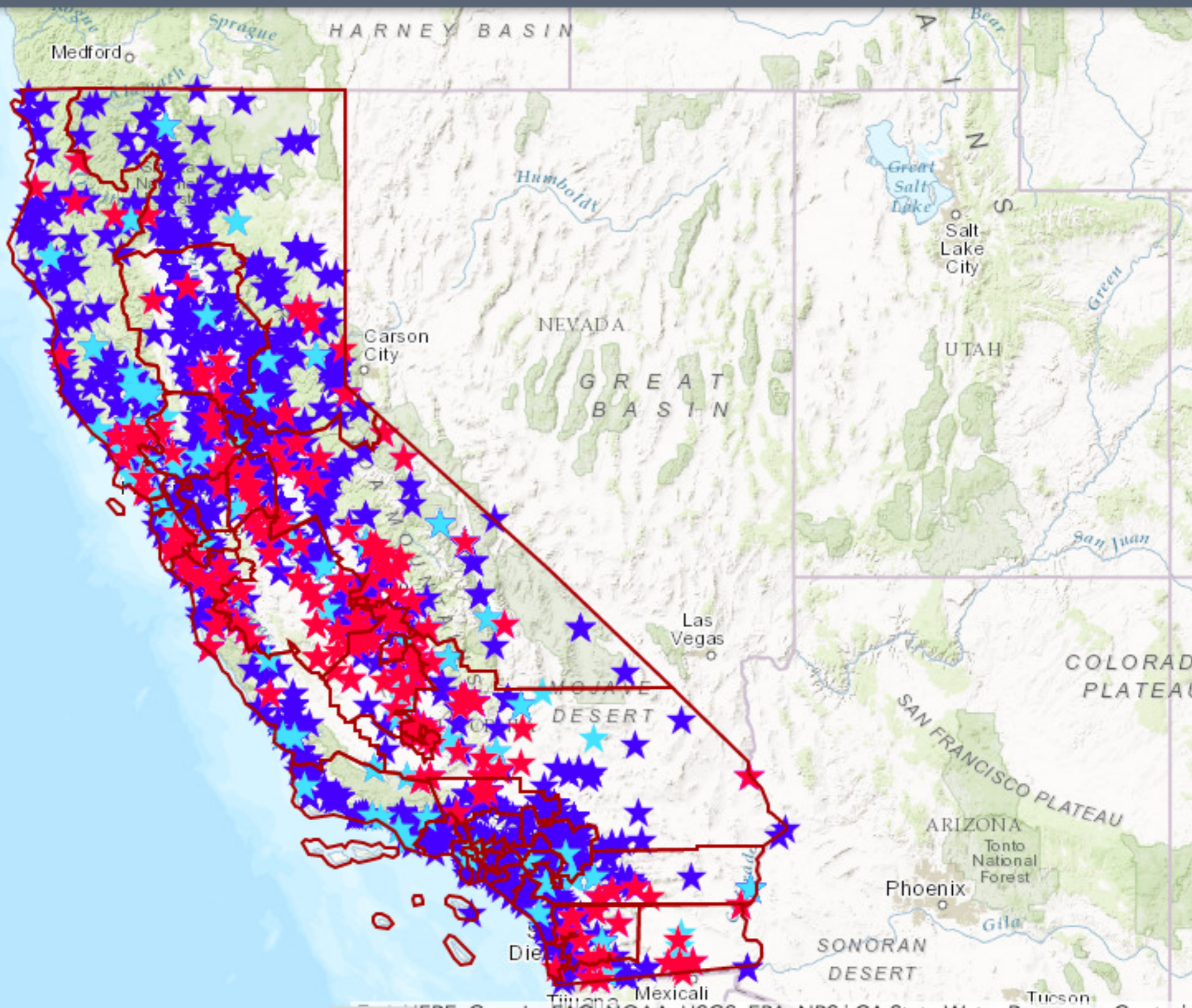
SWRCB



**COMMUNITY WATER CENTER**  
EL CENTRO COMUNITARIO POR EL AGUA



Address





Arsenic and nitrate drinking water contamination disproportionately impacts **low-income and Latino communities**


Balazs et al. 2011



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POR EL AGUA



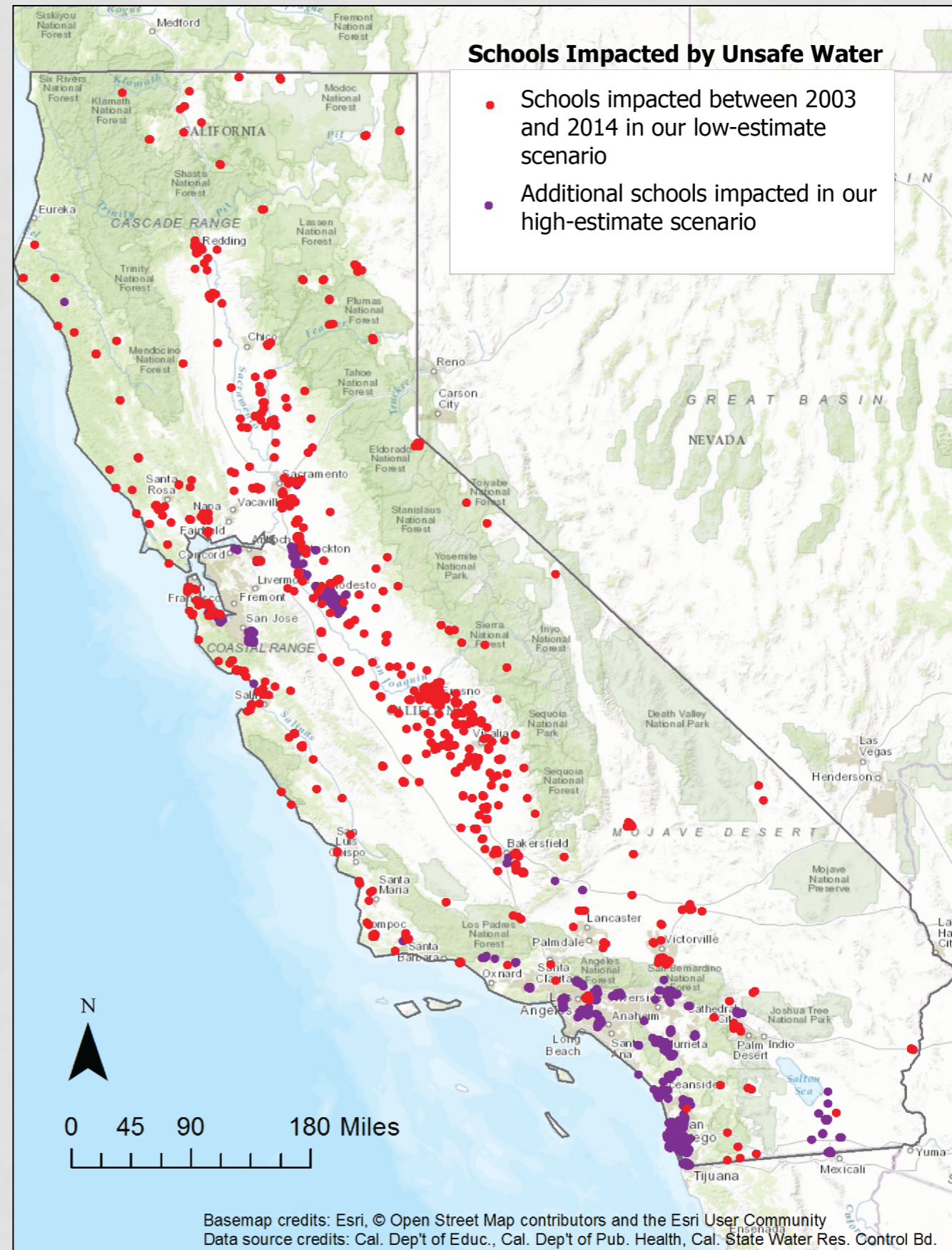


Some residents  
spend up to 10%  
of their  
household  
income on  
drinking water.



## UNSAFE WATER IN SCHOOLS

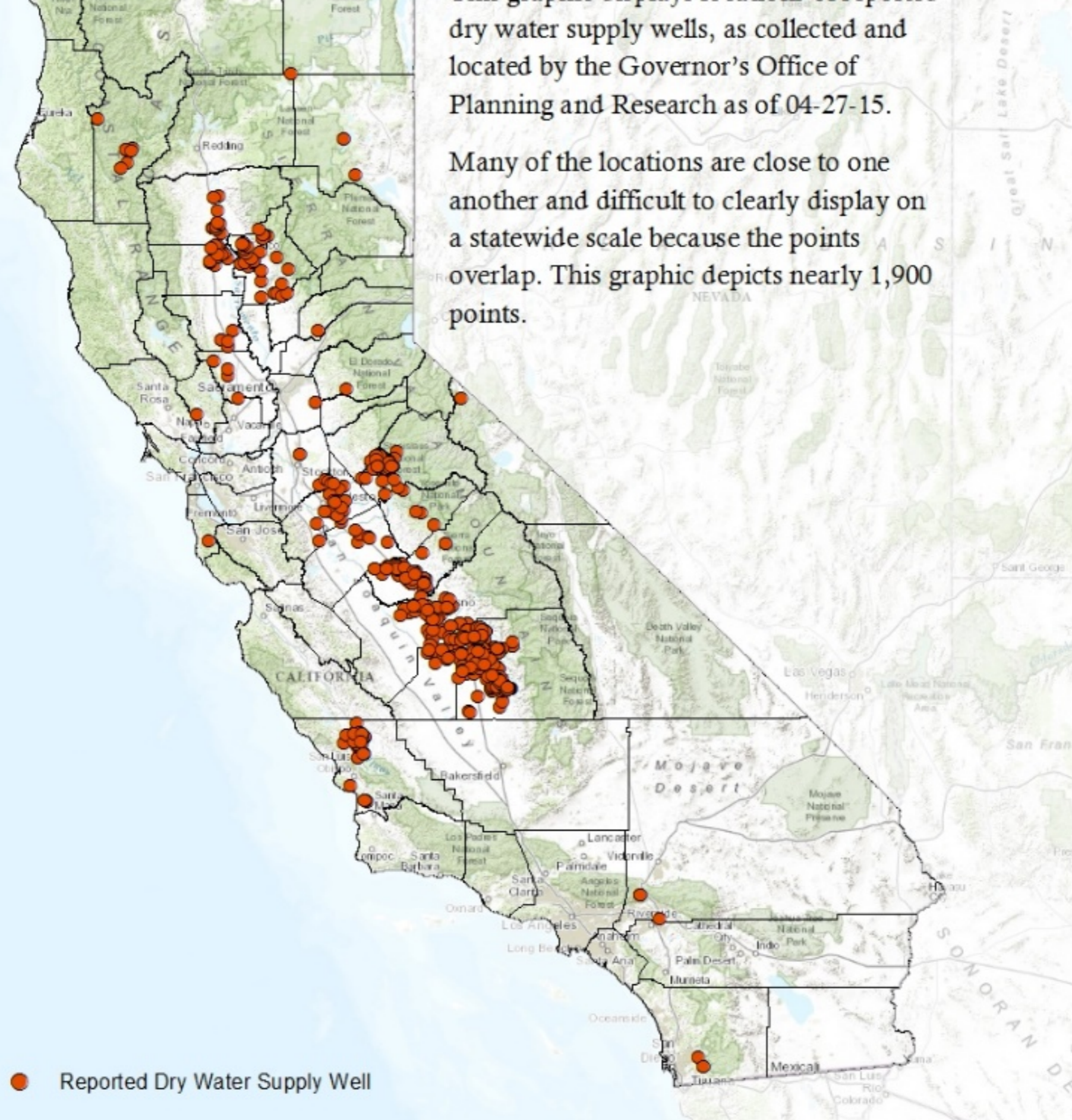
- **979 - 1,688 schools** may have been impacted by unsafe drinking water between 2003 and 2014.
- As many as **1 in 4 schools** in the Central Valley have been impacted by unsafe water





dry water supply wells, as collected and located by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research as of 04-27-15.

Many of the locations are close to one another and difficult to clearly display on a statewide scale because the points overlap. This graphic depicts nearly 1,900 points.



Sources: Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, TomTom, Intermap, IPC, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), and the GIS User Community





→ Almost **12,000** Californians have run out of water during the drought.

State of California Household Water Supply Shortage Reporting System



East Porterville, CA

2015-16 CA spent \$148 million in  
emergency drinking water funding in Tulare  
County alone



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POR EL AGUA





COMMUNITY WATER CENTER

EL CENTRO COMUNITARIO POR EL AGUA

Advancing community-driven water solutions through organizing, education, and advocacy





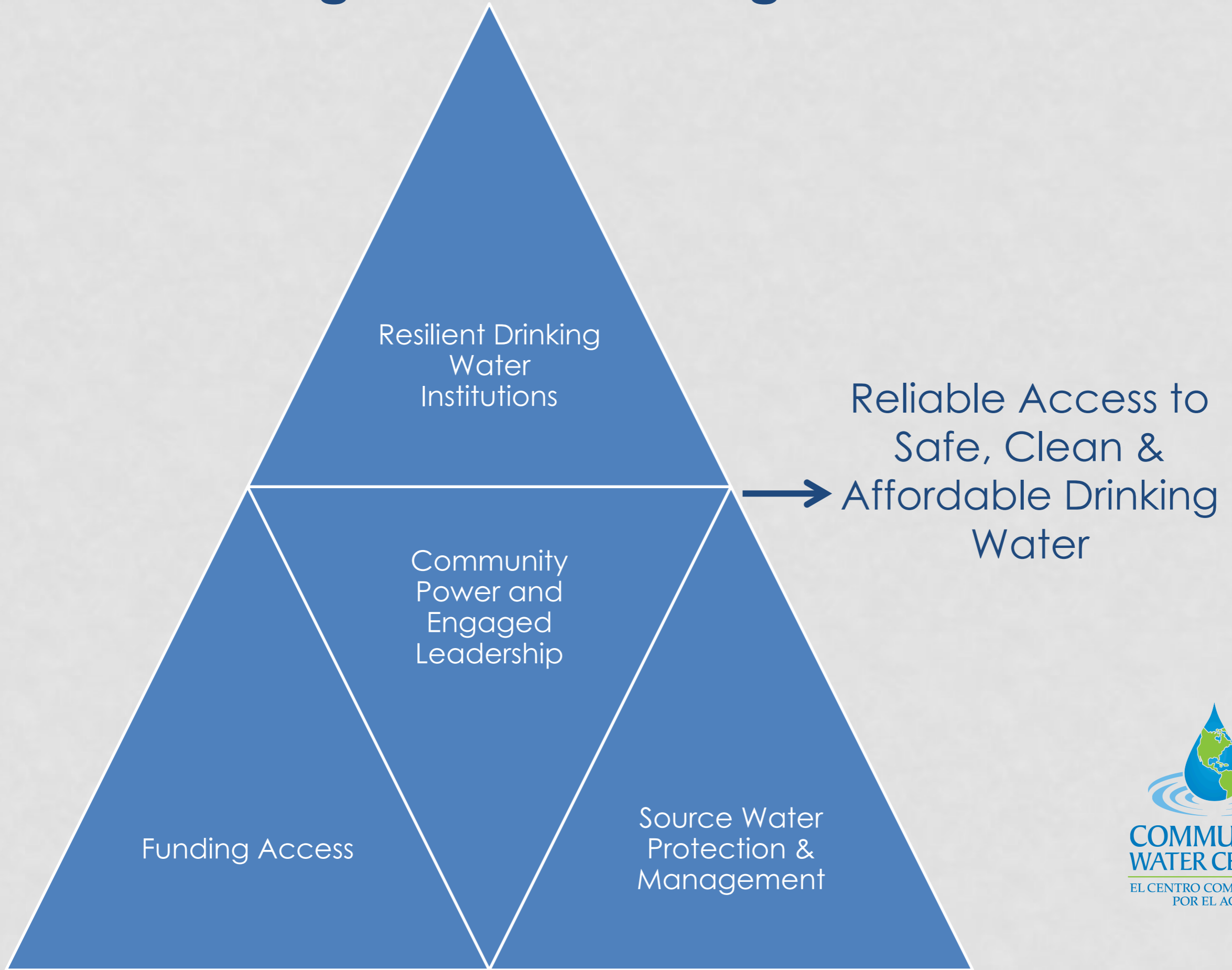
# 2012 Human Right to Water Act

- “Every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes.”





# Securing the Human Right to Water





# New Policy Tools

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- Human Right to Water
- Proposition 1 Water Bond
- Office of Sustainable Water Solutions
- New Consolidation Powers
- Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
- Dairies & Irrigated Lands Regulatory Programs
- School testing and funding programs



# Remaining Funding Barriers

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- **Communities not being able to afford to provide safe drinking water**
  - O&M,
  - capital, planning, technical assistance
  - emergency replacement water
- **Families/households not being able to afford a basic provision of drinking water**
  - AB401 – low income ratepayer assistance



# OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE





# CASE STUDY: LANARE



# Solutions moving forward

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- **SB623: Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund**
  - Leverage sources of capital \$
  - Build on Technical Assistance at SWRCB
  - Cover funding gaps (esp. O&M)
- **Implement Complementary Programs / Powers**
  - Promote more resilient institutions
  - Protect source water
  - Improve information access (private wells, lead in schools, etc.)
  - Address Ratepayer Affordability - LIRA Program(s)



# SB623: Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund

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## **Broad Eligibility in order to:**

- Fill gaps for those that need it most
- Secure long-term sustainability and cost effectiveness of drinking water services and infrastructure

## **Prioritizes:**

- Disadvantaged communities and low-income domestic well users that
  - Consistently fail to provide an adequate supply of safe drinking water
  - Must charge rates that are above an adopted affordability threshold in order to provide safe water
- Non-capital costs that can't be covered by other sources of \$

## **Transparency:**

- Annual needs assessment
- Fund implementation plan developed and adopted in consultation with a broad multidisciplinary stakeholder group
- Regular public review and assessment of the Fund



# SB623: Sustained funding shall come from:

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- Increase to the existing fertilizer mill fees and fees on dairy producers
  - CDFA also to establish a new fee for other non-dairy CAFOs
  - Estimated to raise \$30M annually for 15 years and \$10M annually after that
- New safe drinking water fee assessed monthly on drinking water bills
  - The monthly safe drinking water fee is capped at a maximum of \$.95 cents for most water users
  - Exemption from the fee for low-income households (under 200% of the federal poverty level)

Combined fees will raise an **estimated total of \$140 million annually** for the first two years, and thereafter can be kept consistent or reduced by the State Water Board based on the annual need assessment

**Fees CANNOT be adjusted to exceed the caps identified in statute.**



# SB 623: Developing better data and assistance

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- Collect and analyze existing local data on private wells and state small systems
- Identify high risk areas
- Support outreach and private well testing for low-income households and state small systems





# Widespread Support

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- More than 100 diverse organizations support SB 623, including agriculture, EJ, environmental groups, public health, cities, water districts, counties, labor, etc.
- Polling shows Californians want government action to address this issue and 72% of Californians would support a small monthly fee of \$1 or more to help solve California's drinking water problems, even if it is outside of their own system or region.



**THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW!**



# Community Water Center: Because clean water is a right, not a privilege.



Join the movement and  
find out more online!

[CommunityWaterCenter.org](http://CommunityWaterCenter.org)

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