



Media Release

New state-funded water treatment system will eliminate PFAS from Tustin's drinking water

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TUSTIN – As the federal government announces plans to weaken regulation of “forever chemicals” in drinking water, Governor Gavin Newsom announced Friday the city of Tustin received a new, state-funded water treatment system removing [per- and polyfluoroalkyl compounds \(PFAS\)](#). The new water system was unveiled by the State Water Resources Control Board, the City of Tustin, and the Orange County Water District (OCWD).

“I’m proud to share the City of Tustin will now receive drinking water clean of ‘forever chemicals’ that have been associated with negative health impacts,” said Governor Gavin Newsom. “As the state works to bring more water systems like the one announced today to fruition, California is leading by example in prioritizing the wellbeing of our communities.”

Commonly referred to as “forever chemicals,” PFAS are comprised of 12,000 human-made substances that have been used for commercial and industrial purposes and persist in the environment. PFAS can accumulate within the human body over time and have been linked to increased cancer risk and several other health impacts in laboratory studies.

“PFAS have only been recognized as a threat to public health fairly relatively recently,” said State Water Board Chair, E. Joaquin Esquivel. “But with increasing data substantiating the need to eliminate these compounds from our drinking water, the board is moving quickly to support projects similar to the one we are marking here today.”

Since 2022, California has received a total of \$269 million from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for State Revolving Fund allocation to help public water systems like Tustin’s provide drinking water that is free from emerging contaminants, such as PFAS. The \$29.5 million water treatment system announced today received a \$10 million grant from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, a federal-state partnership that helps public water systems finance drinking water infrastructure projects. This project also received another \$11.5 million in additional federal funding.

“We are grateful to the State Water Board for this grant to support a new PFAS treatment facility in Tustin,” said OCWD President Denis R. Bilodeau, P.E. “OCWD did not create the PFAS problem, but we are tackling it head on by partnering with our



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water retailers to build treatment systems to ensure our communities continue to receive drinking water that meets all state and federal standards."

Tustin's new water system is one of seven projects led by OCWD to address PFAS in Orange County's drinking water. The board has provided a total of \$28.5 million from the State Revolving Fund to support the other six. Nearly all of the projects are either complete or nearing completion.

In addition to providing financial support for water systems, the board has been [investigating](#) and assessing the presence of PFAS in water systems and groundwater statewide for several years. Based on this research, it launched protective health advisories for four kinds of PFAS that established response levels and notification levels to ensure transparency and protect human health. Last year, the board [expanded testing for PFAS](#) to nearly 4,000 wells in disadvantaged communities and is leveraging this data to [map PFAS contamination](#) and inform water treatment strategies.

Photo - Tustin PFAS Ribbon Cutting:



(left to right) Mike Grisso, Tustin Director of Public Works / Erik Weigand, OCWD Board Member / Lee Fink Tustin, City Council Member / John Nielsen, Tustin Mayor Pro Tem / Denis Bilodeau, OCWD Board President / Joe Karkoski, Deputy Director State Water Board / Austin Lombard, Tustin Mayor / Ryan Gallagher, Tustin City Council / Ray Schnell, Tustin City Council



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The State Water Board's mission is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper resource allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations.