



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **GRANT TO SUPPORT BIG BASIN WATER**

The County of Santa Cruz is pleased to announce an \$850,000 state grant to help assure access to safe drinking water for the community served by Big Basin Water Company for the immediate future.

The emergency one-time grant was sought by the Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience in response to the urgent drinking water supply, safety and reliability situation faced by ratepayers of Big Basin Water, a privately-owned utility now operated under a court-appointed receiver, Serviam by Wright LLP. The receivership was sought by the County and obtained by the State Water Resources Control Board and Office of the Attorney General due to water outages, chronic supply shortfalls and substandard infrastructure.

"This funding is good news for Big Basin customers, but we still have a long way to go as we work together for permanent and positive change," Supervisor Bruce McPherson said. "I'd like to thank the state and members of our delegation who advocated for this grant, including Sen. John Laird and Assemblymember Gail Pellerin."

"This funding, which my office has worked to secure for many months alongside State and County officials, helps address some but not all of the operational deficiencies facing the Big Basin drinking water system," said Serviam's Nicolas Jaber, attorney and project manager for the court-appointed receiver overseeing Big Basin Water Company. "The grant also funds overdue retrofits for failing infrastructure and key engineering and investigative efforts, which will provide the foundation for a transition of ownership and control to a responsible entity. On behalf of Big Basin's drinking water customers, I express my gratitude for this critical showing of support."

The funding may be used to address system deficiencies, including drinking water shortages and necessary system upgrades. The grant is available through the Department of Water Resources' Small Community Drought Relief Program, and can be used for expenditures incurred between October 31, 2023 and December 31, 2024. The program was created by the Budget Act of 2021.