



Orange County Water Independence Sustainability and Efficiency (OC WISE) is a coalition of individuals, businesses, labor, community groups and non-profit organizations united to support and advocate for all forms of new water for Orange County. The coalition was formed as a direct response to both the unpredictability of the County's water supply and the need to develop new supplies capable of ensuring adequate water for the County. Orange County's current population of 3.114 million people is expected to grow by 300,000 by 2020 (with the state reaching the 50 million mark by 2049). Given the County's semi-arid environment and perpetual drought cycle, the County and state are currently experiencing, OC WISE believes relying on current water sources is unsustainable. All forms of new water: conservation, recycling and seawater desalination should be supported and developed.

Approximately fifty percent of Orange County's water supply is imported from northern California and the Colorado River. These water sources are not considered to be reliable or sustainable for future generations. In 2014, the State Water Project (SWP) cut its deliveries to zero then raised them to 5 percent. While 2015 deliveries are being projected in the 10-15 percent range, the Sierra snowpack remains severely below normal levels with 98 percent of the state, including Orange County, remain in severe drought. Thirty-one percent of the water used in North and Central Orange County is from the Colorado River. Demands on Colorado River deliveries are perpetually stressed. Deliveries from the Colorado were at their lowest ever in 2014; 2015 is expected to be the same or provide even less water.

Local water sources are likewise severely challenged. The Groundwater basin is reaching unsustainable levels of overdraft. According to both the Bureau of Reclamation and the Orange County Water District (OCWD) Santa Ana River flows are drying and are unlikely to provide future yields above minimum entitlement.

The OCWD manages the groundwater basin under northern and central Orange County which supplies 20 cities and more than 2.3 million Orange County residents with water. In the absence of new supply development, the District is predicting an unsustainable water shortage by 2035.

OC WISE was formed to respond to all of these issues and will serve to advocate for all forms of new water for the County.