

## **DRAFT**

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### **CENTRAL COAST WATER AUTHORITY APPOINTS PETER THOMPSON NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Buellton – Dec. 22, 2025 – The Central Coast Water Authority (CCWA) is pleased to announce that the Board of Directors has appointed Peter Thompson as the new executive director, effective May 15, 2026. Before serving as executive director, Thompson will serve as the associate director from Feb. 9, 2026, to May 14, 2026.

Ray Stokes, CCWA’s current executive director, will retire in 2026 after nearly 30 years with CCWA and 13 years as its executive director. “As I conclude my career at the Central Coast Water Authority, I’m excited for what lies ahead for the Authority,” said Stokes. “The selection of Peter Thompson as the next executive director is an excellent choice, and I’m certain that with Peter’s extensive background and knowledge of the State Water Project, CCWA will build on the foundations established over the past 35 years to ensure the Authority is able to continue to deliver high-quality supplemental water to the entities it serves in Santa Barbara County.”

Thompson brings 25 years of leadership experience in California’s water sector, with a proven track record in advancing regional and state-level water initiatives. Serving as assistant general manager of the Antelope Valley–East Kern Water Agency (AVEK), general manager of the Antelope Valley State Water Contractors Association (AVSWCA), and administrator of the Antelope Valley Watermaster, Thompson has deep expertise in State Water Project governance, interagency collaboration and complex water resource strategy. In these roles, Thompson worked closely with California Department of Water Resources leadership, legislators, boards and regulatory agencies to ensure reliable water supplies for communities. Dedicated to finding common ground at the intersection of water supply operations, multi-agency governance and state-level policy, Thompson champions cooperative solutions for California’s water future.

“As the State Water Project enters a new era of policy changes, financial challenges and capital investment, it is critical that CCWA maintain its statewide leadership. Peter’s experience and unique understanding of the complex State Water Project will ensure that CCWA continues to be a strong voice in these critical decisions,” said CCWA Board Chair Eric Friedman. “In addition, Peter has an extensive background in water storage and diversification that will benefit the Central Coast as we work to enhance local water security for the residents served by CCWA. On behalf of the CCWA Board of Directors, I am excited to have Peter join CCWA and look forward to working with him to ensure safe, reliable and affordable water for the residents we serve.”

Thompson added, “I am deeply honored to step into this role and serve the Central Coast communities. CCWA’s leadership, staff and board have built a strong foundation of success in overcoming the complexities of water management in our state, and I am committed to continuing that legacy. While we face significant hurdles ahead, including subsidence along the State Water Project and increasingly

variable hydrology, I am confident in our ability to navigate them together. Through strategic projects, clear advocacy and inter-agency collaboration, we will ensure a resilient future for our region.”

Thompson received a bachelor’s of science in business administration – management from Western Governors University, holds a certificate in special district governance from the California Special Districts Association Leadership Academy, as well as Water Treatment Operator V and Water Distribution Operator V certifications from the California State Water Resources Control Board.

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*The Central Coast Water Authority (CCWA), formed in August 1991, is charged with operating the local treatment and conveyance facilities associated with the State Water Project and contracts with the State of California’s Department of Water Resources to deliver State water to San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties. The facilities consist of the Polonio Pass Water Treatment Plant in San Luis Obispo County and a pipeline from the treatment plant to Lake Cachuma in Santa Barbara County.*