

California Water Institute celebrates 25 years of regional collaboration and impact

The California Water Institute at Fresno State will mark its 25th anniversary, celebrating a quarter century of bringing together diverse stakeholders to advance solutions to California's most pressing water challenges.

Since its founding in 2000, the institute has fostered regional collaboration across sectors, including researchers, communities, agencies, farmers, advocates, and policymakers. The institute recognizes that stronger solutions emerge when people work together.

"As we celebrate 25 years, we honor the partnerships that have defined the California Water Institute since its beginning," Director Laura Ramos said. "Water challenges in California are complex, and progress happens when we work side by side instead of in silos. Our past has shown the power of collaboration, and our future depends on strengthening those connections to ensure reliable and sustainable water for the Valley and the state."

25 years of impact and collaboration

Over the past 25 years, the California Water Institute has led and supported projects that highlight the power of working together, including:

- **An integrated regional water management plan** for the San Joaquin Valley, which brought together 19 regional groups to develop shared strategies for improving water reliability, efficiency, and sustainability. This effort strengthened collaboration among agencies, communities, and stakeholders, laying the groundwork for a more comprehensive Valley-wide water management plan.
- **A regional consolidation feasibility study** exploring solutions for small rural water systems in Fresno County that struggled to provide safe, reliable, and affordable drinking water. By examining opportunities for consolidation with larger systems, the project supported the state's commitment to the human right to water and protected vulnerable communities from system failures and contamination risks.
- **A regional climate resiliency strategy** to capture extreme runoff events for groundwater recharge. By mapping recharge sites, engaging water users and communities, and coordinating groundwater sustainability agencies, water districts, and flood agencies, the project is building a collaborative framework to turn flood risks into long-term water security.

25th anniversary celebration

To honor this milestone, the California Water Institute will host a 25th anniversary celebration on Friday, Oct. 24, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the Jordan Agricultural Research Center at Fresno State. The open house event will bring together community members, partners, and local leaders to highlight the institute's legacy of innovation, education, and collaboration. Featured speakers include Rep. Jim Costa and Fresno State President Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval. The event is free and open to the public. For more information or to RSVP, go to <https://cvent.me/x9dP2G>.