



**PALMDALE WATER DISTRICT**

A CENTURY OF SERVICE

## **PRESS RELEASE**

---

June 26, 2025  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

**Judy Shay**  
Public Affairs Director

d: 661-456-1041

c: 661-297-3011

[jshay@palmdalewater.org](mailto:jshay@palmdalewater.org)

# **PWD CELEBRATES START OF PALMDALE DITCH PIPELINE CONSTRUCTION**

*Palmdale, CA* – Palmdale Water District (PWD) broke ground today on a multi-million-dollar project that will convert the Palmdale Ditch, built in the 1880s, to an enclosed pipeline.

The groundbreaking event at Lake Palmdale was attended by dozens of people, including representatives from the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), offices of local legislators and regional water agencies, and community members. Wearing hard hats and armed with blue shovels, PWD Board members made the ceremonial scooping of dirt to mark the beginning of construction of the *Palmdale Ditch Conversion: Upgrading the Flow* project.

“Projects like this are crucial for making the state’s water infrastructure more climate resilient, particularly during periods of drought,” said Julé Rizzardo, Branch Manager for the DWR’s Financial Assistance

(more)

Branch. “Palmdale Water District’s Ditch Conversion project prevents valuable water loss and conserves groundwater supplies, ensuring more water supply to support local communities.”

Two years ago, DWR’s Urban Community Drought Relief Program awarded PWD \$17.58 million for the ditch conversion that was estimated to cost \$22.58 million. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation’s Water SMART Water Energy Efficiency grant program provided an additional \$5 million for the project that would convert 7.5 miles of the open ditch to a pipeline system.

“Today is a wonderful day for Palmdale Water District,” said PWD Board President Kathy Mac Laren-Gomez. “We are embarking on a project that will save significant amounts of water and, in turn, reduce costs for our ratepayers. My fellow Board members and I appreciate DWR and the Bureau of Reclamation supporting our community and our goals to reduce water waste.”

In about 12 months, about 1.5 miles of the pipeline will be completed. Due to greater environmental and inflationary costs than initially estimated, PWD needs an additional \$24.5 million to complete the project that will make it possible to transfer greater amounts of water from Littlerock Dam to Lake Palmdale, where water is stored before it is moved to Leslie O. Carter Water Treatment Plant for treatment and distribution. An enclosed pipeline will increase the flow from 18 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 60 cfs and decrease water loss from seepage, evaporation and overspill from an open, dirt ditch.

“On average, we will save more than 1,500 acre-feet, or 19%, of the total supply from the

(more)

Littlerock Dam’s diversion to Lake Palmdale,” said PWD Assistant General Manager Scott Rogers. “That is a lot of water that needs to be saved, especially when we experience drought conditions.”

The Palmdale Ditch, which runs 8.5 miles long, has about one mile enclosed in pipes, tunnels and culverts. It was first built in the 1880s by PWD’s predecessor, the Palmdale Irrigation Company, and included a wooden trestle over Little Rock Creek.

“The Palmdale Ditch continues to serve the District after more than 140 years and several iterations,” said PWD General Manager Dennis D. LaMoreaux. “By making this investment to turn it into a pipeline, the Palmdale Ditch will continue to be a critical part of the infrastructure for many decades ahead.”

Following today’s groundbreaking, Garney Construction will start laying the pipes at Lake Palmdale then southeast toward Littlerock Dam. The project is designed by New York-based Hazen and Sawyer.

Since 1918, the Palmdale Water District has provided high-quality water at a reasonable cost. We pride ourselves on providing great customer care; advocating for local water issues that help our residents; educating the community on water-use efficiency; and leading our region in researching and implementing emerging technologies that increase operational efficiency. For more information about PWD, visit [www.palmdalewater.org](http://www.palmdalewater.org).

###