RAINBOW
MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT
COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER
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Helping the Community Grow with Agriculture Grant Programs

Agriculture has been at the root of Rainbow Water's operations since it was founded by a group of farmers in 1953. As a small rural community serving Bonsall, Rainbow, parts of Oceanside, Vista and Fallbrook, Rainbow Water remains steadfast in continuing the rich agricultural legacy of the land and works to identify new ways to keep the legacy by providing grant opportunities for growers. Read below for grant programs available for growers.

Regional CropSWAP

The Regional CropSWAP or Sustainable Water for Agricultural Production, a regional program focused on reviving the agricultural community through crop conversion projects, has reopened funding for agriculture projects.

Rainbow Water experienced incredible success with the Regional CropSWAP program within the first two months of the launch in Spring 2024, and agriculture customers have received over $1 million in reserved grant funding to revitalize their properties. As a result, the program has been extended, and customers are encouraged to apply online to submit new projects. The program administrators will review the projects and follow up once the projects are complete.

The program offers growers the opportunity to switch to water-efficient crop varieties, implement irrigation efficiency upgrades, upgrade avocado rootstocks for improved tree health, or rejuvenate avocado trees through stumping. Completion of a comprehensive crop upgrade will optimize water use, boost crop productivity, and sustain the agriculture community for the future.

Space is limited for funding. Read more about the program and apply online:
rainbowmwd.ca.gov/regional-cropswap-program

The Fruit Guys Community Fund

The Fruit Guys Community Fund is a Northern California-based community initiative that began in 2012 as a non-profit project to revive local farms with grant funds. Today, Fruit Guys offers grant funding for small farms and sustainability projects across the United States.

2026 Grant Application Details:

- Applications open December 1, 2025
- Grants for up to $5,000 for small farms of 250 acres or less
- Applicants must be farm owners
- Farms must be active for at minimum of two years
- One application per farm accepted per cycle
- Grants are awarded in May 2026 and projects completed by December 2026

For more information and to subscribe to The Fruit Guys newsletter, visit:
fruitguyscommunityfund.org/apply/



Around the District

Highlights from the General Manager: New Water Rates for 2026

Rainbow Water's Board of Directors took action at the October meeting for water rates that go into effect on January 1, 2026. The Rainbow Water Board approved a variable rate increase of less than 4% (see table below) and voted to keep the fixed charges unchanged for another 12 months. This will mark a **30-month period, through January 1, 2027, of no fixed charged increases.** The variable rate adjustment will recover costs associated with a rise in the wholesale water purchase rate from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California that will also go into effect on January 1, 2026.

Rainbow Water last evaluated water rates in July 2024 with no increases implemented over the past 18 months. This was largely due to the cost savings from the switch in wholesale water providers that the voters of the District approved in a November 2023 election, and was fully implemented in late 2024. Although there were upfront costs to making the switch, which included construction of water distribution facilities and an "Exit Fee," the long-term financial benefits are continuing as anticipated.

Variable Rate	2025 $/HCF	2026 $/HCF	Total Increase
Residential	$6.23	$6.42	$0.19, 3.05%
Agriculture	$4.91	$5.10	$0.19, 3.87%

As shown above, the total increase is $0.19 per hundred cubic feet (HCF) of water that passes through the customer meter. An HCF is equal to 748.8 gallons, meaning the overall increase is a fraction of a penny per gallon used. As we witness numerous agencies around the County needing to pass through much larger, even double-digit increases to water rates in 2026 and beyond, the cost pressures at Rainbow Water are far less.

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Rainbow Water's Holiday Office Closures
Rainbow Water's office will be closed on Tuesday, Nov 11, Thursday, Nov 27, and Friday, Nov 28. Online bill pay and water emergency response will still be available.



New California Law to Eliminate Water Waste for Non-Functional Turf

California is making moves to eliminate water waste with introduction of state law AB 1572 to conserve limited natural resources and encourage sustainable landscaping. In 2023, Assembly Bill 1572 was passed to ban use of potable (drinking) water to irrigate non-functional turf on public, government and commercial properties including homeowner associations. The effort is part of the State Water Resources Control Board's adoption of the Make Conservation a California Way of Life regulation for water agencies to meet unique efficiency goals to reduce the need for emergency water during droughts. The regulation will prevent water overuse in areas where turf is ornamental (for appearance only) and the public cannot access turf for recreational purposes.

How will AB 1572 help save water?

Approximately 51,000 acres of Metropolitan Water District's Southern California's estimated 218,000 acre service area is categorized as non-functional turf. The new law will replace non-functional turf with native plants or gardens and **reduce water use by an estimated 10 percent** according to a report from the Los Angeles Times. The non-functional turf areas include slopes, parkway medians, small decorative areas and along sidewalks. The ban is not immediate and will be completed in phases.

When will the phased implementation start?

- January 2027: Local government, public agency and school sites
- January 2028: Commercial, industrial and other institutional properties
- January 2029: Common areas of homeowner associations and similar sites
- January 2030: Local government & public agency properties located in disadvantaged communities

What are non-functional turf areas?

- Highway, street medians and parkways
- Grass surrounding school sites or office buildings
- Grass on sloped areas not suitable for recreational use
- Grass in parking lots or HOA common areas

Save Water on What Matters, Not Unused Turf

Rainbow Water's commercial and institutional customers are encouraged to jump start turf removal by applying for turf rebates. Rainbow Water has partnered with the County of San Diego to bring a temporary rebate incentive increase. The rebate can be combined with Metropolitan Water District's rebate for a total of **$7 per square foot for commercial turf removal** through March 1, 2026. Commercial turf removal applications submitted after March 2026 will have a rebate of $4 per square foot. Additional rebates are available for irrigation controllers, native California plants, rain barrels and personalized landscape assistance.

★ **The non-functional turf ban does NOT apply to Rainbow Water residential customers.**

MORE INFO

Learn more about non-functional turf and apply for rebates online
rainbowmwd.ca.gov/nft



New Water Rates for 2026 Cont'd

The lower costs of imported water purchases through Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD), coupled with strong fiscal management from Rainbow Water's Board of Directors and management team have resulted in significant financial benefit to our customers.

In just one year since we completed the transition to EMWD, the avoided costs are nearly $8 million. These are real dollars that we did not need to collect from our customers through rate increases in 2025, showcasing Rainbow Water's commitment to our core mission of providing high-quality water in a fiscally sustainable manner.

Spread Holiday Cheer in Our Community

Looking for a way to give back this holiday season? Rainbow Water is proud to partner with two organizations who uplift our local community all year long.

Annual Toy Drive for Boys & Girls Club of North County

Share a little holiday magic with a gift donation. Drop off unwrapped gifts for children ages 7–17 at Rainbow Water District headquarters and help make the holidays brighter for local youth. Gifts and gift card donations will be accepted until December 12.

Fallbrook Food Pantry Donations

For over 20 years, the Fallbrook Food Pantry has shared the spirit of giving through their Adopt-a-Family program. Make this holiday special for families in our community by dropping off non-perishable holiday food items at Rainbow Water District headquarters.

Make the holidays merry for families in our community



Donations accepted until Dec 12
Drop off at Rainbow Water District
3707 Old Highway 395, Fallbrook
Mon - Fri, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
For more information and a list of donation items visit:
rainbowmwd.ca.gov/holiday-giving

RAINBOW MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT SINCE 1953

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