



**COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER**  
**NOVEMBER 2024 . ISSUE 239**



Detachment saves our customers from SDCWA's **14% Rate Hike**

## Rainbow Water Completes Historic Detachment from SDCWA

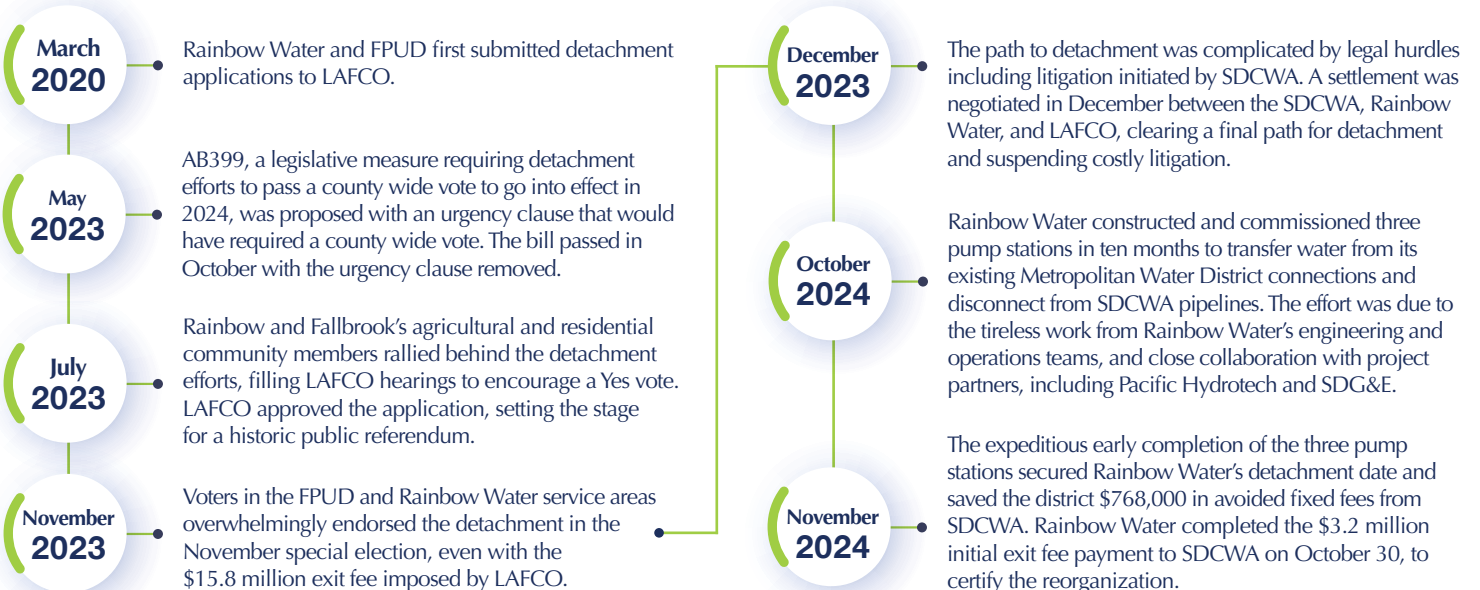
Rainbow Water finalized its detachment from the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) on November 1, marking a significant step in its commitment to securing cost-effective and reliable water supplies for its customers. As part of the last requirement by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), Rainbow Water completed the \$3.2 million exit fee payment to SDCWA, to certify the reorganization.

Rainbow Water now purchases treated water from the Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) in Perris, CA. The move shields Rainbow Water's customers from the looming SDCWA rate hikes of 14% in 2025, which equates to approximately \$6 million in avoided costs this year that would have been passed through to Rainbow Water customers without detachment. An additional 16% rate increase is proposed by SDCWA in 2026. New development projects in the Rainbow Water service area will also benefit, with capacity fees set to decrease by 31-48% from current levels, reflecting the elimination of previous SDCWA-imposed charges.

## Path to Detachment

Rainbow Water and the neighboring Fallbrook Public Utility District (FPUD) sought this departure to protect the community from unsustainable wholesale water rate increases that have hit the agricultural sector hard. Over the past decade, agricultural sales dropped by nearly 9,000 acre feet (-54%) annually in Rainbow Water's service area alone, significantly impacting water sales revenue to the District, which impacts all customers. From the beginning, Rainbow Water and FPUD faced numerous challenges, including securing a critical approval vote from LAFCO.

*The Rancho Amigos pump station was one of three pump stations recently commissioned to make detachment possible.*





## Customers Have a Greater Voice

The detachment milestone strengthens Rainbow Water customers' representation in regional water governance and offers financial advantages. Residents will now have a greater voice in wholesale water costs, as they will have the opportunity to vote for a member of the Eastern Municipal Water District Board of Directors, in addition to voting for their division representative on the Rainbow Water Board of Directors.

Customers have been at the forefront of all decision making during the process for detachment. Post-detachment, customers have equitable and fair rates across all water rate classes. There will be an immediate capacity fee reduction realized by eliminating the SDCWA pass-through and treatment fees. The savings benefits customers and is a bonus incentive for developers who formerly paid capacity fees for new land development.

### What to Expect with EMWD

In the next coming weeks, Eastern Municipal Water District will send letters to customers about the change on property tax bills where the former water wholesaler SDCWA tax will be replaced by EMWD and the net result is a lower tax bill. There is no action needed from customers and the letter is for informational purposes only.

## New, Equitable Agriculture Rates

The Permanent Special Agricultural Water Rate (PSAWR) Program, a special SDCWA rate class, will not apply to Rainbow Water customers. Former PSAWR customers will no longer be prioritized for drought or water shortage allocations, which was a primary condition of the PSAWR program. The PSAWR program also required onerous eligibility requirements that most agricultural customers did not meet.

The board will consider changes to agriculture rates at the November 19 board meeting. Make your voice heard and attend the board meeting to give feedback on the agriculture rate decision.

## We Want to Hear From You

### Board Seeks Input from Customers on Reinvestment Options

Rainbow Water's early detachment from SDCWA led to an additional savings of \$768,000 in fixed fees. The Board is seeking participation in public meetings to give input on the best use of these funds. We invite you to share your opinion at the upcoming board and committee meetings online or in person at the Rainbow Water office.

November 19 at 1 p.m. - Comms & Customer Service Committee  
November 19 at 2 p.m. - Board of Directors

For more information and to watch the meetings online visit:  
[rainbowmwd.ca.gov/meetings](http://rainbowmwd.ca.gov/meetings)



## Post Detachment FAQs

### Who is My Local Water Provider?

Rainbow Water remains your local provider. We treat and deliver water to over 9,000 water customers and 3,472 sewer customers within an 82-square mile service area which includes unincorporated San Diego County communities of Rainbow, Bonsall, and portions of Vista, Oceanside, and Fallbrook.

### Where Do We Get Our Water?

Rainbow Water customers will still receive the same safe and reliable water, with the only change being the water wholesaler has changed from SDCWA to Eastern Municipal Water District in Riverside County. Rainbow Water imports 100% of its water from Metropolitan Water District's Robert A. Skinner Water Treatment Plant (pictured above) in Temecula, Riverside County.

### What Will Change on My Bill?

The water bill was updated in July to a simplified listing of charges. View an updated breakdown of the bill at: [rainbowmwd.ca.gov/understanding-your-water-bill](http://rainbowmwd.ca.gov/understanding-your-water-bill)

### What Programs are Available?

Customers will continue to have access to all rebate programs from the Regional CropSWAP program; Metropolitan Water District's Be Water Wise; and SoCal WaterSmart campaigns including turf and tree rebates. For more information on these programs visit: [rainbowmwd.ca.gov/rebates](http://rainbowmwd.ca.gov/rebates)

Rainbow Water will remain a member of the North County Water Agencies and participate in the annual elementary student poster contest program.

### More Information

Rainbow Water's Customer Service team is available Monday thru Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to answer questions, update your emergency contact information, and take bill payments. Call (760) 728-1178.

3707 Old Highway 395, Fallbrook, CA 92028  
Customer Care & After Hours: 760.728.1178  
Office Hours: Mon-Fri 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
[RAINBOWMWD.CA.GOV](http://RAINBOWMWD.CA.GOV)