



California County Café – Office Hours

– Specializing in Drought Resilience

2/19/2025



Welcome and Setting Intention

Office Hours - An opportunity for an informal conversation about the issues and questions that are on your mind.

- ✓ Join the conversation - share your questions, experience and learn from other perspectives and experiences.
- ✓ Make a connection - use the chat to connect with other participants.
- ✓ County focused - While all are invited to join, this gathering will focus on supporting county staff.



Technical Assistance Providers

Jennifer Strauch, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Rural Development



Water & Environmental Programs

Decentralized Systems

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Rural Decentralized Water Systems Grant Program

This program helps qualified nonprofits and tribes create a revolving loan fund to increase access to clean, reliable water and septic systems for households in rural areas.

- **Eligible Areas:** Rural areas and towns with populations of 50,000 or less, Tribal lands in rural areas, Colonias
- **Funds usage:** Grant funds may be used to help a nonprofit create a revolving loan fund for eligible individuals who own and occupy a home in an eligible area. The fund may be used to construct, refurbish or service individually-owned household water well and septic systems.
- **Matching Funds:** Yes, the nonprofit must contribute at least 10%.
- **Link to fact sheet:** <https://www.rd.usda.gov/media/file/download/rd-fs-rus-decentralizedwatersysgrant.pdf>

Other USDA Rural Development Programs to consider:

- **Single Family Housing Programs**

- <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-programs>

- **Community Facilities**

- <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program>

- **Other Water and Environmental Programs**

- <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-environmental-programs>
 - Colonia's only- <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-programs/individual-water-wastewater-grants>
 - Search Grant for predevelopment- <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-environmental-programs/search-special-evaluation-assistance-rural-communities-and-households-grant-14>

*THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME
WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU!*

FOR MORE INFORMATION: www.rd.usda.gov/ca



Outreach and Guidance on Consolidation

Sierra Ryan, Water Resources Program Manager, County of Santa Cruz





Environmental Health Division

Santa Cruz County SB 552 Implementation

Sierra Ryan, Water Resources Program Manager

Background

- In 2022 Santa Cruz County adopted its Drought Response and Outreach Plan
- Received SAFER funds to provide water quality testing for domestic wells
- Received SB 552 DWR funds to improve the DROP
 - Conduct a feasibility analysis for small water system consolidation
 - Create a Guide to Consolidation for individual wells and water systems

Well Water Quality Testing

- Santa Cruz County partnered on outreach with the Central Coast Drinking Water Well Testing Program (*Central Coast Program*).
- Outreach included bilingual fliers, posters, press releases, social media posts, and news articles, and door-to-door knocking.



**FREE
DRINKING WATER
WELL TESTING**

for Santa Cruz County

The testing is focused on common groundwater contaminants known to pose health effects.

Well Water Quality Testing outreach

- Targeted locations for mailers (by post office route), posters, and door to door outreach were identified using disadvantaged community maps and water quality risk maps
- The County contracted with Community Water Center for door-to-door training.
- Hired bilingual intern from the area

Free water quality testing program available for Santa Cruz County residents

Share

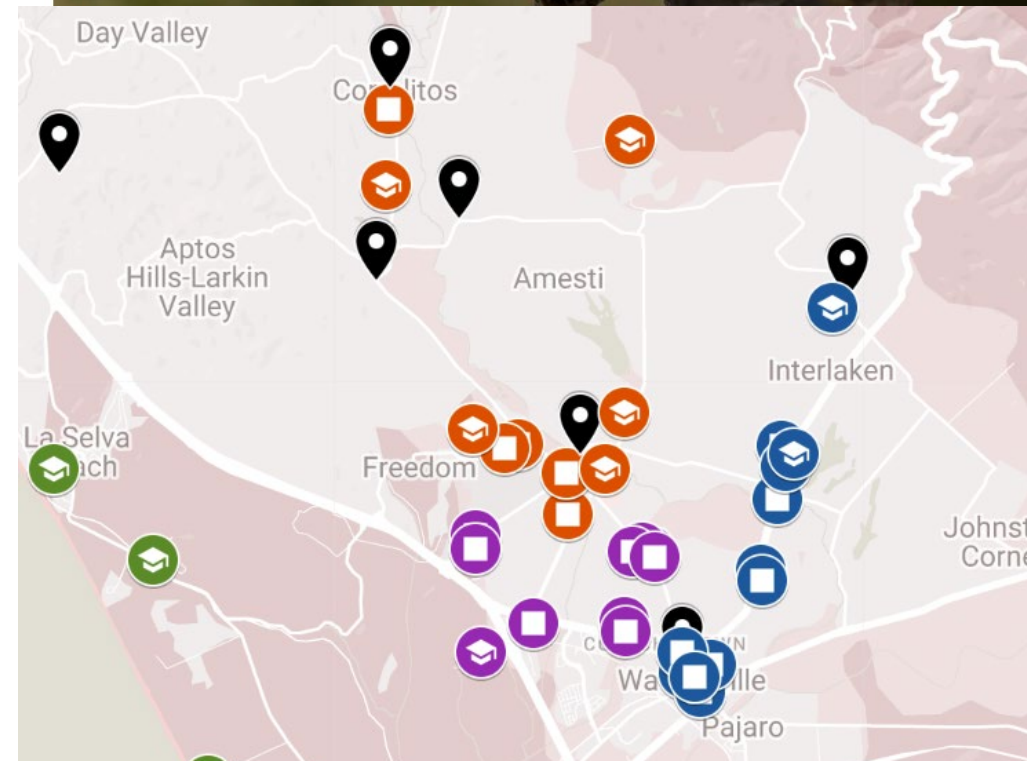


KSBW ACTION NEWS 8

Updated: 4:43 PM PDT May 2, 2024

Infinite Scroll Enabled

By Naveed Habibelahian





The outreach effort far exceeded expectations



- ~50 wells anticipated to apply
- More than **160** well owners have applied
- 70 wells tested and 18 exceed a drinking water standard
- Bottled water and treatment systems were offered to eligible households
- Groundwater elevations compared to well log where available



Language from Drought Response and Outreach Plan

While there are many resources available from the state, additional resources should be developed at the County level to provide more information to local systems about important considerations and process.

The County cannot force consolidation, but will help facilitate the process if it is desired by all parties.

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY DROUGHT RESPONSE AND OUTREACH PLAN (DROP)

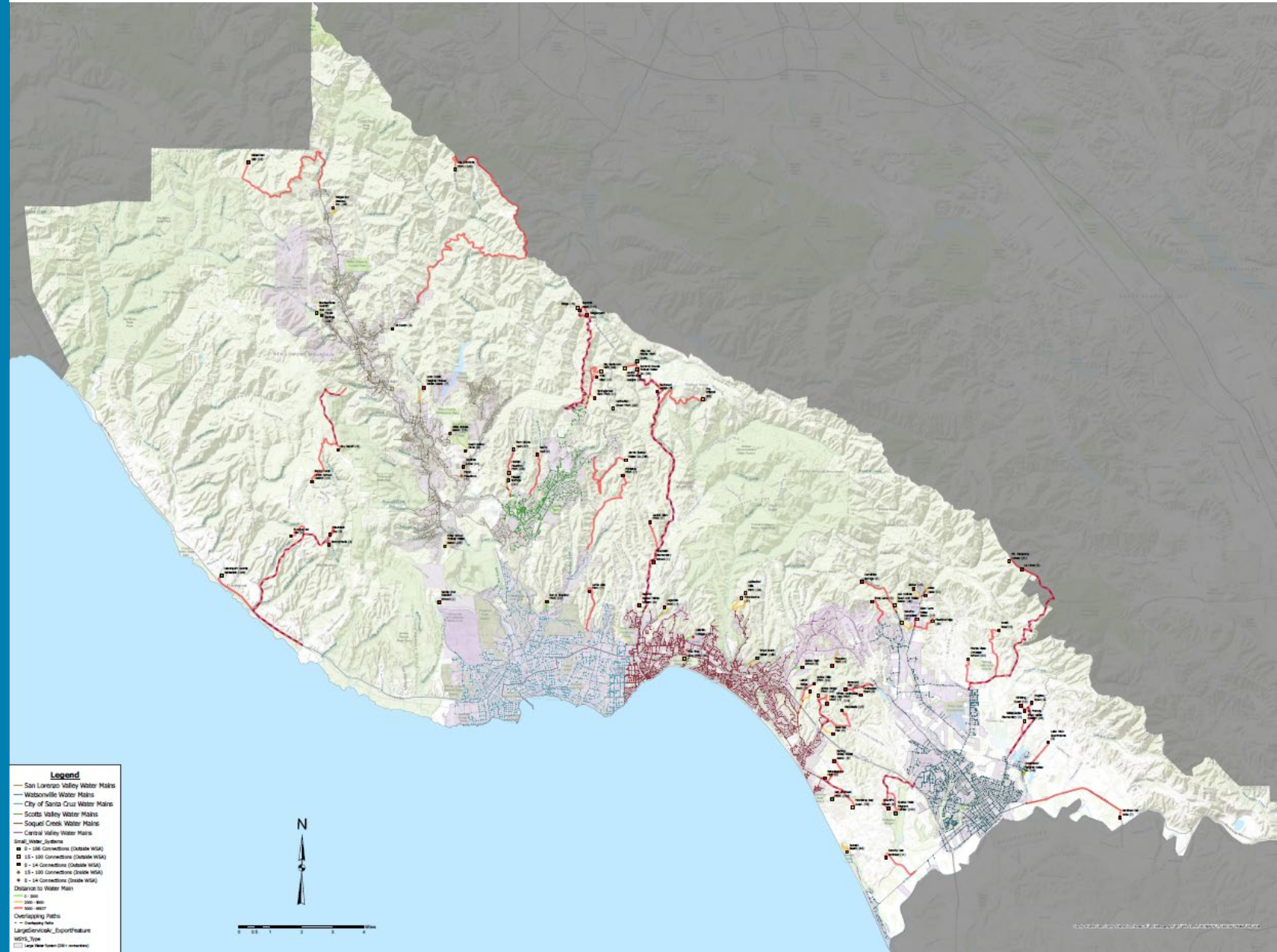
for Small Water Systems and
Domestic Wells

Santa Cruz County Environmental Health
Water Resources Division

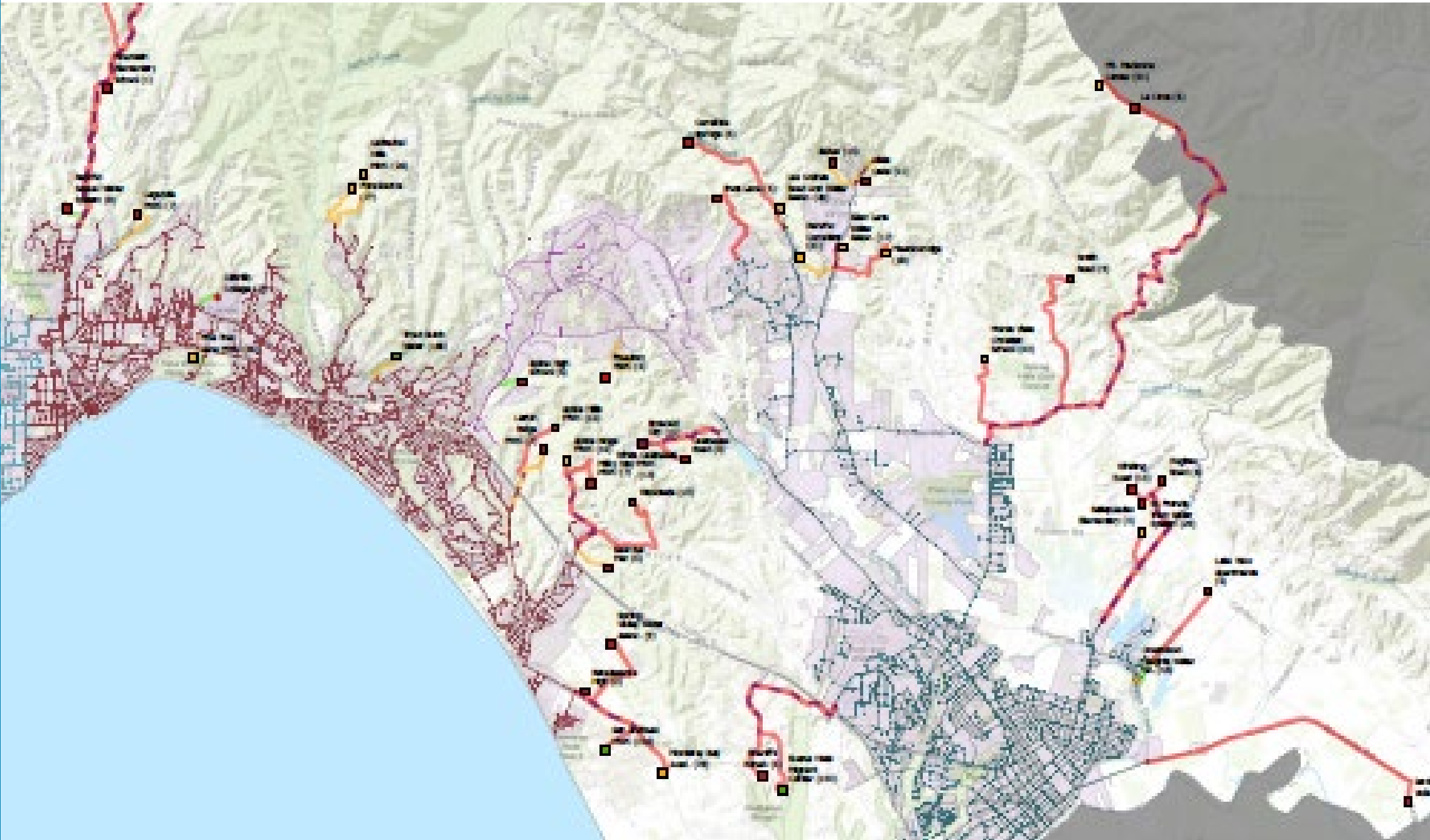
701 Ocean St, Room 312
Santa Cruz, CA 95060



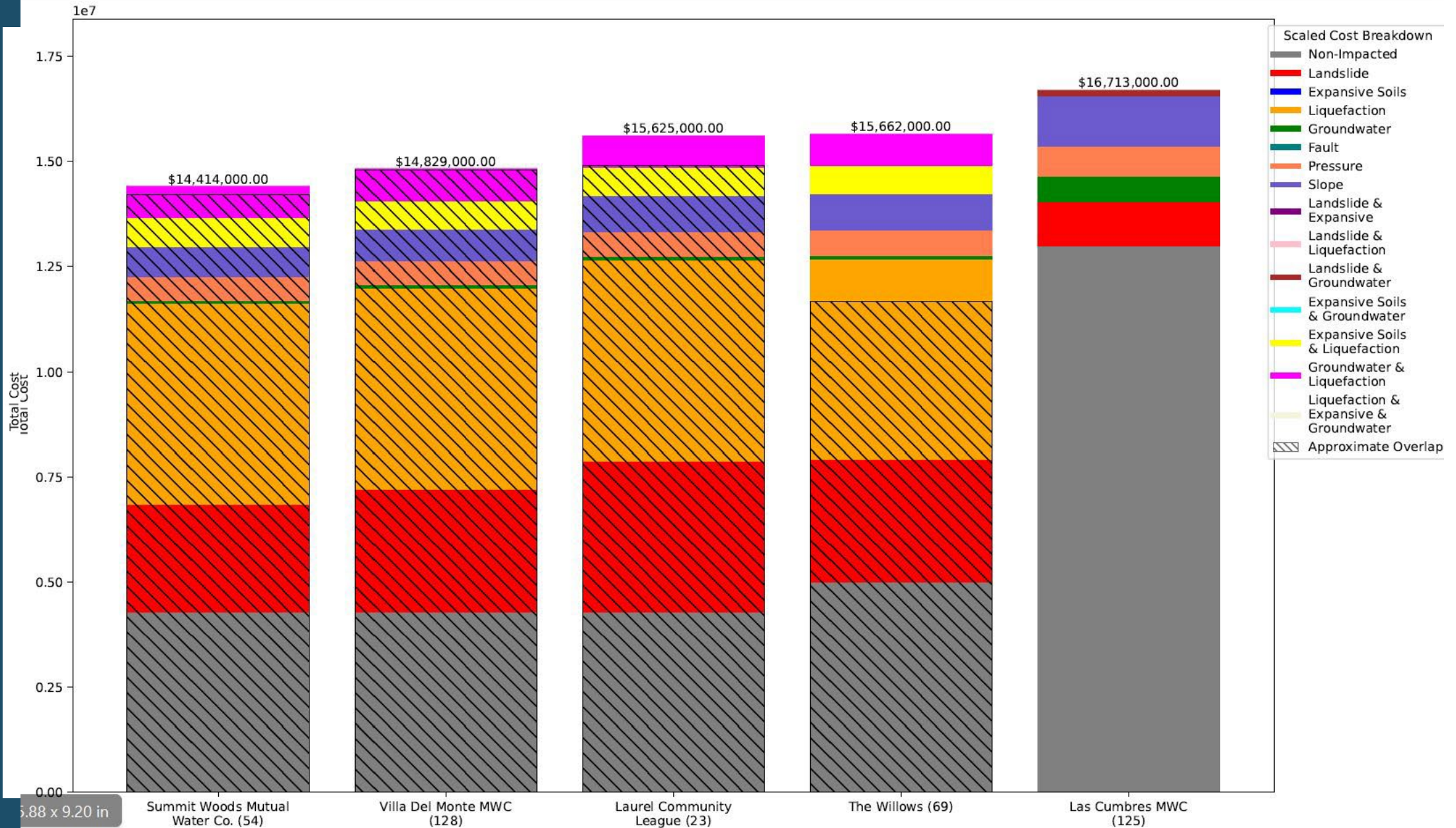
Feasibility Analysis for Consolidation



Feasibility Analysis for Consolidation



Taking cost into account:



Next Steps



- Survey feasible small water systems about interest in and barriers to consolidating/interties
- Work with large systems, LAFCO, and State Water Resources Control Board to understand process
- Hold workshop at next Drought Task Force meeting (April 2nd)
- Develop Brochure

Questions?

Thank You





Your Questions

Orit Kalman - Facilitator



County Discussion Opportunities

March 19, 2025, 9-10am : California County Café Gathering

April 2, 2025, 9-10:30am: Webinar on the Water Shortage Vulnerability Scoring and Tool

→ Focused on **small water systems** scoring update

→ Previous webinar on **domestic wells and state small water systems** [recording](#) & [presentation](#) available

Resources:

- General questions on developing short-term response actions - Reference the [DWR County Drought Resilience Plan Guidebook](#)
- For specific questions about your county - Reach out to DWR at CountyDRP@water.ca.gov





Closing - Thank you!

Next steps - we will follow up with an email to counties for future gatherings, invitation to share in upcoming gathering.