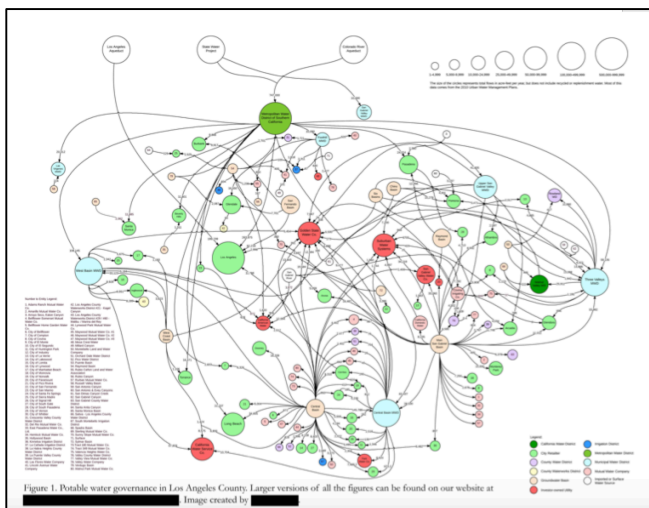


POLICY FACT SHEET: LA COUNTY WATER SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

Nearly 100 public and private entities (with over 3,000 connections) are involved in the management of potable water supplies in metropolitan Los Angeles. Suppliers include city agencies, special districts, Investor Owned Utilities (IOUs), Municipal Water Districts (MWDs), and Mutual Water Companies (MWCs). These organizations receive water from many sources, including imports from outside the region, groundwater, and recycled water. They also have varying regulations, jurisdictions and management structures.

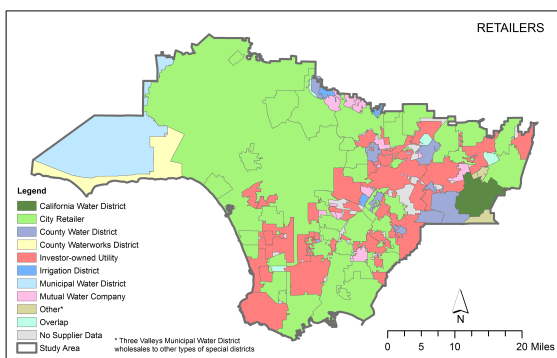
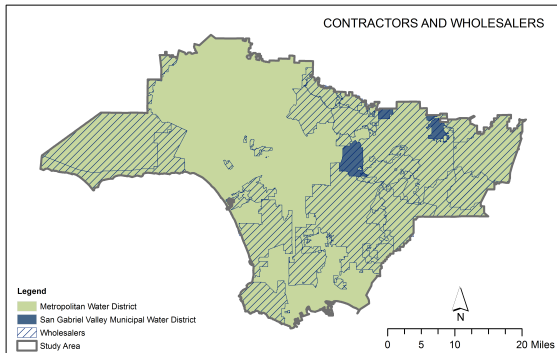
There are three types of water suppliers in L.A. County: contractors receive annual allocations of imported water from the State Water Project and Colorado River authorities; wholesalers purchase and resell water from contractors or other wholesalers; and retailers sell water directly to residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural customers.



The complex flowchart of water supply agencies in Southern Los Angeles County

The lack of standardized, accessible, well-maintained and centralized data for these many entities across the county presents significant management challenges. There is no central repository or public authority in charge of maintaining such information. Without accessible data, it is difficult to compare performance across entities. The lack of data also makes it difficult to track progress for water conservation, equal service provision, or meeting regulatory requirements such as emergency drought measures. **A regional body should have authority and resources to compile such information, ensure that suppliers maintain standardized records, and make data publicly accessible.** Such policy measures would strengthen future water management in L.A.

Moreover, there is presently no **regional agency tasked with overseeing all of these suppliers**. This results in a **lack of supervision, transparency and accountability**, which leads to uneven and **inadequate understandings of water quality, distribution and service provision**.



Mapping Large Water Contractors and Wholesalers (top) and Retailers (bottom)

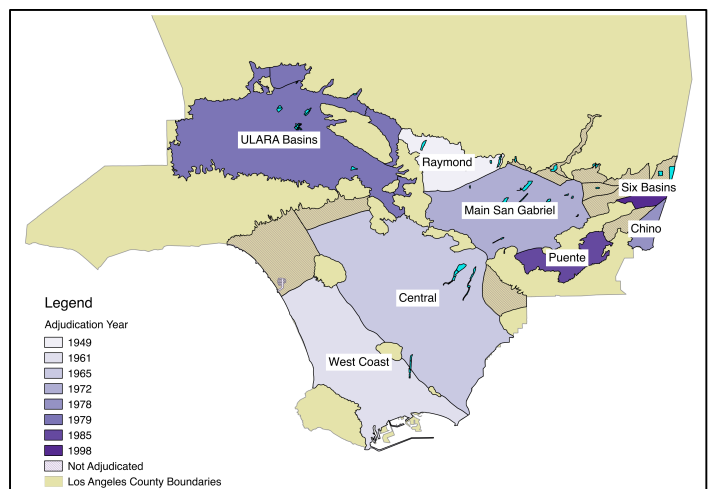
Vulnerabilities arise from knowledge gaps regarding system operations, inadequate data reporting, and differing organizational governance rules.

To date, the system has proven resilient over time, maintaining supplies despite Southern California's highly variable rainfall. However, **the lack of coordination and oversight may inhibit responsiveness to new challenges especially climate change and worsening droughts.**

Such a fragmented system can also lead to **uneven water provision**, as each retailer sets its own prices and water conservation policies. Our research finds that monthly water rates in the Los Angeles metropolitan region range from **\$20 to \$131** for a **single-family home using an average amount of water.**

Groundwater is essential to the region.

There are **23 groundwater basins** and 7 adjudicated groundwater areas located fully within L.A. County. Across the basins, over 300 different parties have pumping rights, ranging from large cities to small property owners. Groundwater *adjudications* regulate pumping rights across these entities. The earliest adjudication was finalized in the Raymond Basin in 1949, while the Central Basin just recently amended its judgment. We found that control of groundwater rights has changed over time. Since adjudications were finalized (1949-1998, depending on the basin), we found a **trend toward greater control of groundwater rights by public institutions**, as well as a **consolidation in rights held by large pumpers**. In addition, groundwater access varies widely. Some cities such as Monterey Park depend entirely on groundwater, while L.A. City obtains only about 15% of annual demands through groundwater. The historic allocation of groundwater rights presents challenges for achieving local water reliance in suppliers throughout the county.



Adjudicated groundwater basins in L.A. County