

California Latino Capitol Association Members Learn About Water Issues

ACWA and the California Latino Water Coalition presented a California Water 101 briefing to a packed house of California Latino Capitol Association Foundation members Sept. 28 at the state capitol.

The briefing and luncheon were co-hosted by CLCA, ACWA and the California Latino Water Coalition and provided an overview of California water supply and infrastructure along with a panel of regional perspectives. Sponsors also included Santa Clara Valley Water District, Municipal Water District of Orange County, Northern California Water Association, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Friant Water Authority, Orange County Water District, Cordoba Corporation, and The Nature Conservancy.

ACWA Executive Director Timothy Quinn gave a brief history of the state and federal water systems and highlighted key local issues. “It is the investments of our grandparents, and while it is a world-class system, it is facing challenges,” he said.

Ron Gastelum, executive director of Cordoba Corporation, moderated the “Regional Perspectives on Water Supplies and Issues” panel.

David Guy, president, Northern California Water Association, kicked off the panel discussion giving the Northern California perspective. Guy compared California water to a mosaic saying that we must take care of all of the pieces, including the Sacramento Valley, and that the whole state needs investments in water supply reliability.

The next panelist was Jay Ziegler, director of external affairs and policy for The Nature Conservancy, who gave an environmental perspective. The Nature Conservancy is among the largest landowners in the Delta, from Cosumnes to Staten Island to the Suisun Marsh. “We can’t get back to the Delta of 100 years ago,” said Ziegler. “So how do we get a functional habitat?”

Mario Santoyo, CLWC director and assistant general manager, Friant Water Authority, was next, providing the Central Valley perspective. Santoyo explained how water is an important issue for the Latino community.

Tom Martinez, government relations manager, Santa Clara Valley Water District, gave the Silicon Valley perspective, also highlighting the large Latino community and the reliance of both the Bay Area and the Silicon Valley on the Delta and both the State Water Project and Central Valley Project.

The final panelist was Roger Patterson, assistant general manager, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. He stressed the importance of also investing in recycling, desalination and conservation projects, which Southern California has already started doing. “You turn on the tap, and water comes out,” he said. “People don’t realize how many sources play a role in that.”

The briefing was well received by the CLCA members, with many participants asking about water-related job opportunities and staying afterward to ask detailed questions of the panelists. The group expressed interest in hosting more detailed briefings to dive deeper into the details of California’s water and infrastructure issues and challenges. — *ACWA Outreach Specialist Ellen Martin* ■■■



The Regional Perspectives on Water Supplies and Issues panel included Jay Ziegler, The Nature Conservancy; Tom Martinez, Santa Clara Valley Water District; California Latino Water Coalition Director Mario Santoyo, Friant Water Authority; David Guy, Northern California Water Association; and Roger Patterson, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.



The “California Water 101” briefing and luncheon were co-hosted by ACWA, the California Latino Water Coalition and the California Latino Capitol Association Foundation.



Among participants in the California Water 101 briefing were, from left, ACWA Executive Director Timothy Quinn, California Latino Water Coalition Director Mario Santoyo, and Ron Gastelum, executive director, Cordoba Corporation.