2026

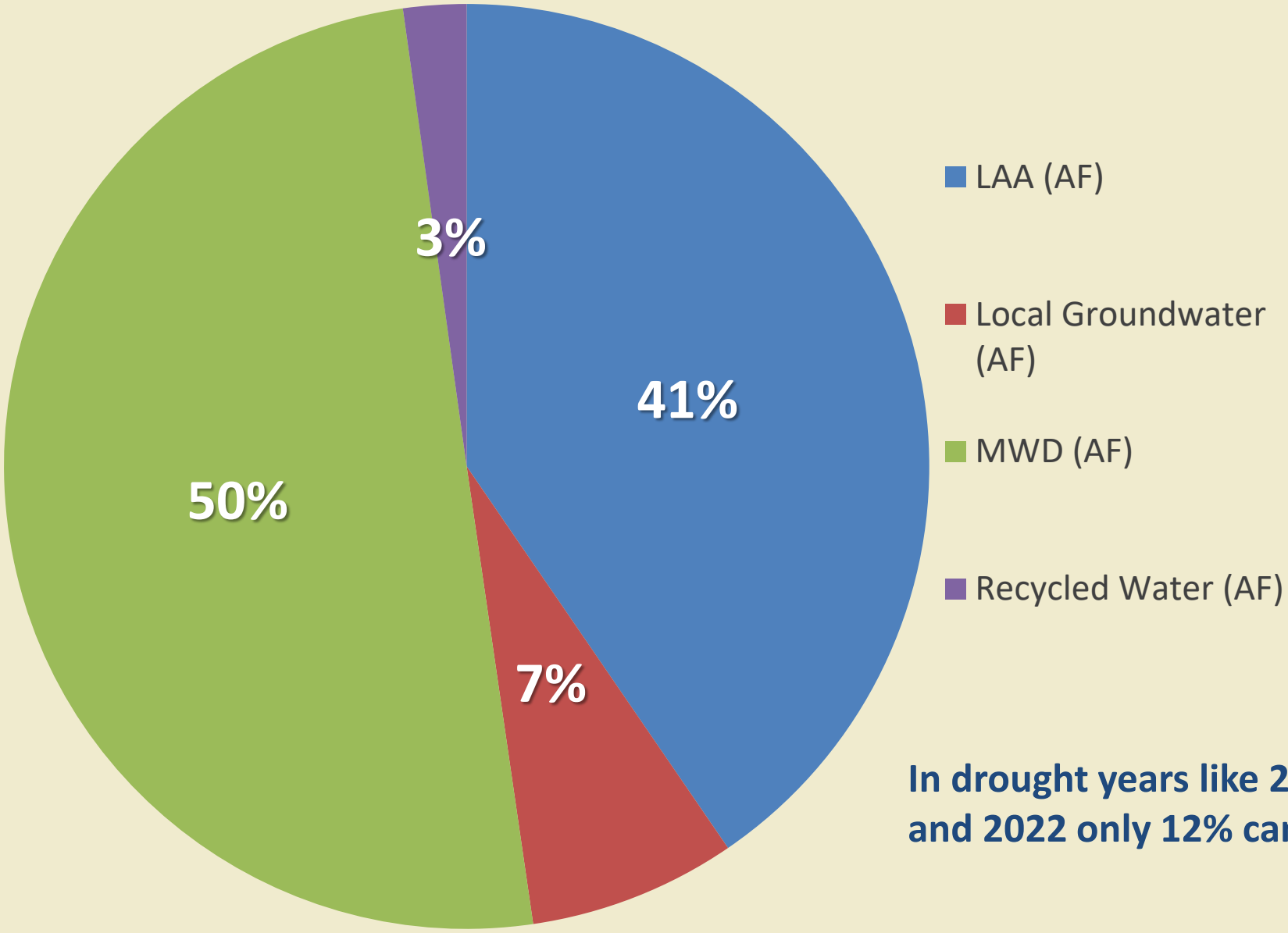
Los Angeles Water Supplies: Mono Basin Update

LA DWP Los Angeles Department of Water & Power

LA's WATER PORTFOLIO

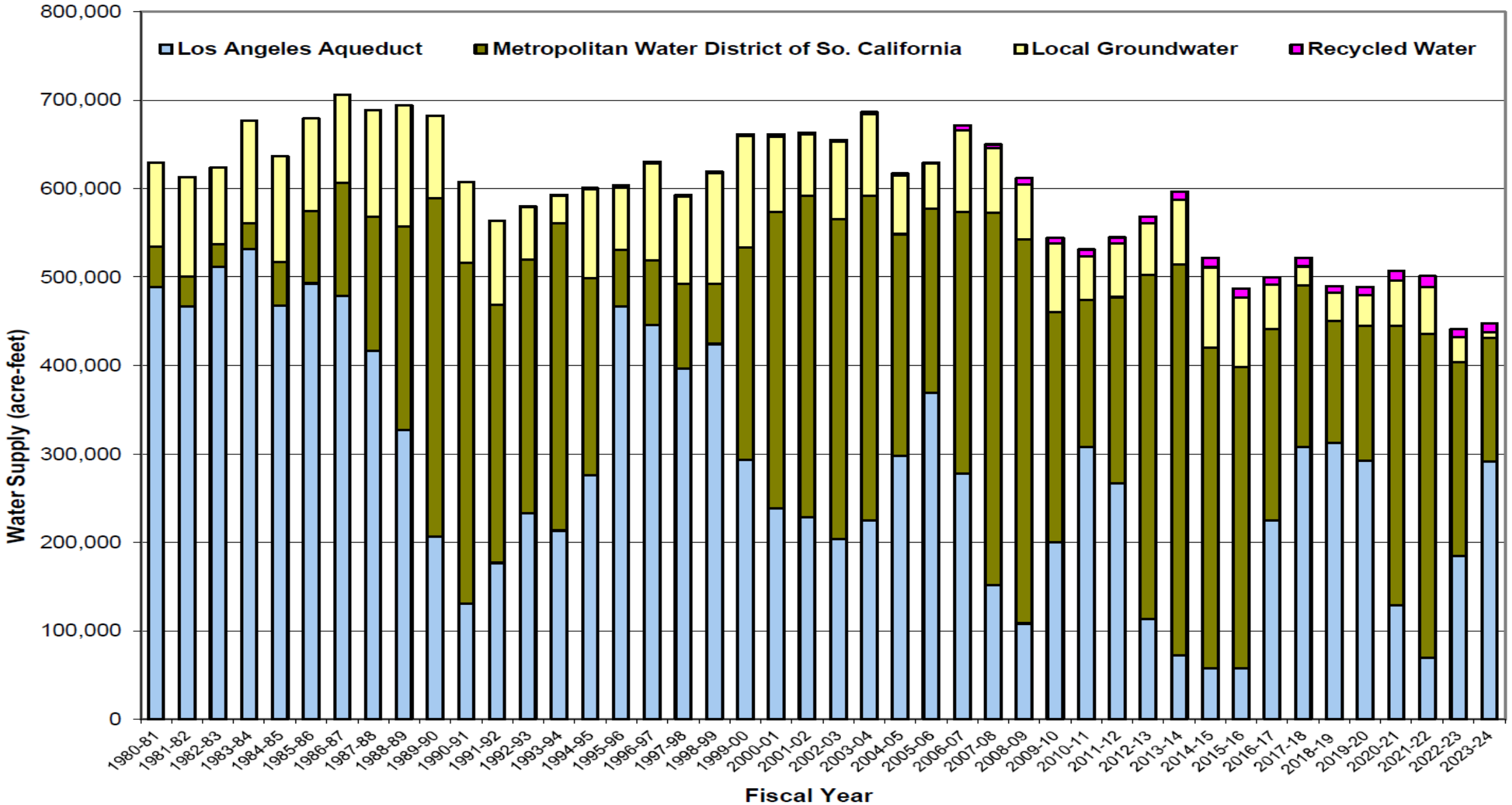
- Provide high quality water to approx. 4 Million Angelinos.
- Diversified Portfolio.
- The City of Los Angeles receives water from several sources:
  - City Owned:
    - Eastern Sierra via the L.A. Aqueduct
      - Includes Mono Basin exports
    - Local supplies (conservation, groundwater, stormwater capture, recycled water)
  - Purchased water: (from MWD)
    - The State Water Project
    - The Colorado River

LA's Water Supply Portfolio (5 Year Average)



In drought years like 2014, 2015, and 2022 only 12% came from LAA.

Historical Water Supply



Background: State Water Resources Control Board Decision 1631

- **1940** - City of Los Angeles is authorized to commence water diversions from Mono Basin Creeks.
- **1994 -** The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) conducted a lengthy evidentiary hearing and issued Decision 1631 (D1631) to balance public trust resources at Mono Lake and the surrounding area with the City's beneficial uses of water and power production.
- **D1631** and subsequent SWRCB orders have reduced LADWP diversions by 85% with the following goals.

  - Minimum stream and channel flows during Wet, Dry, and Normal hydrologic years
  - Riparian habitat and fishery protection
  - Minimum Grant Lake reservoir storage
  - Extensive Monitoring and reporting plans developed with CA Dept. Fish & Wildlife and approved by SWRCB
  - Per license agreement, current MB exports are tied to lake level through a tiered system

Gradually raise Lake Elevation to 6,391 ft

- Waterfowl habitat
- Brine shrimp and flies
- Enhance scenic aspects
- Air quality

<u>Thinking back in 1994</u>:
"Evidence shows that there are other sources of water reasonably available to Los Angeles" (1994)

MONO BASIN TODAY

- For 30 years, LADWP has worked collaboratively to improve the environment in the Mono Basin. To date, LADWP has invested more than $50 million and has 64 ongoing, in progress, or complete restoration efforts in the Mono Basin alone.
- As a result, while the entire state grapples with the impacts of climate change, the ecological condition of the Mono Basin continues to be restored:
  - Riparian habitats are healthy.
  - Fish populations are thriving.
  - Bird life is colonizing the area.
  - Lake levels have increased at Mono Lake — while every other Western terminal lake continues to decline.

"D-1631 is unusual, innovative, and successful at Mono Lake. "

(Geoff McQuilken 2016, Friends of Great Salt Lake)

Mono Basin Stream Restoration

1987

Rush Creek at Old Highway 395

2020

2000

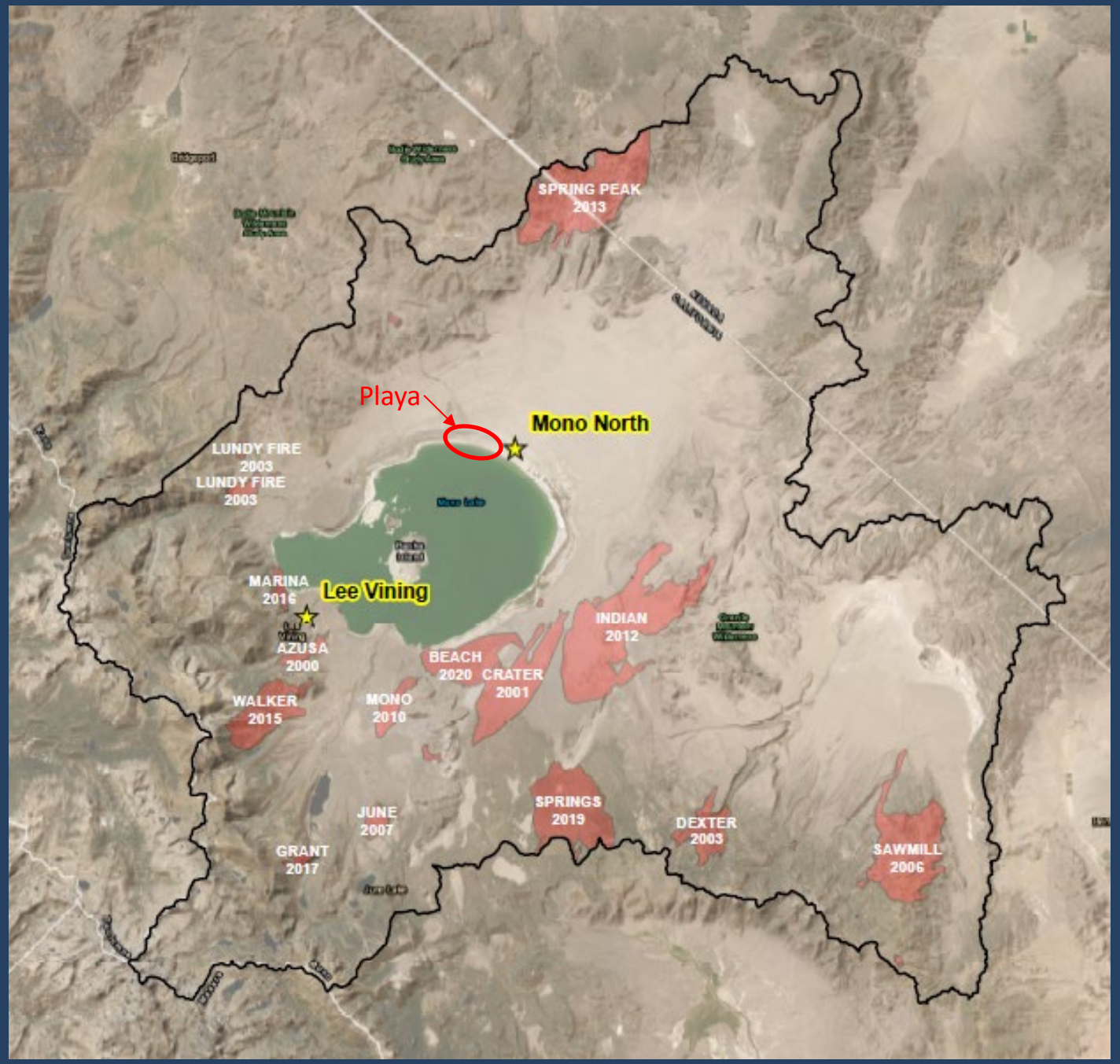
Lower Rush Creek

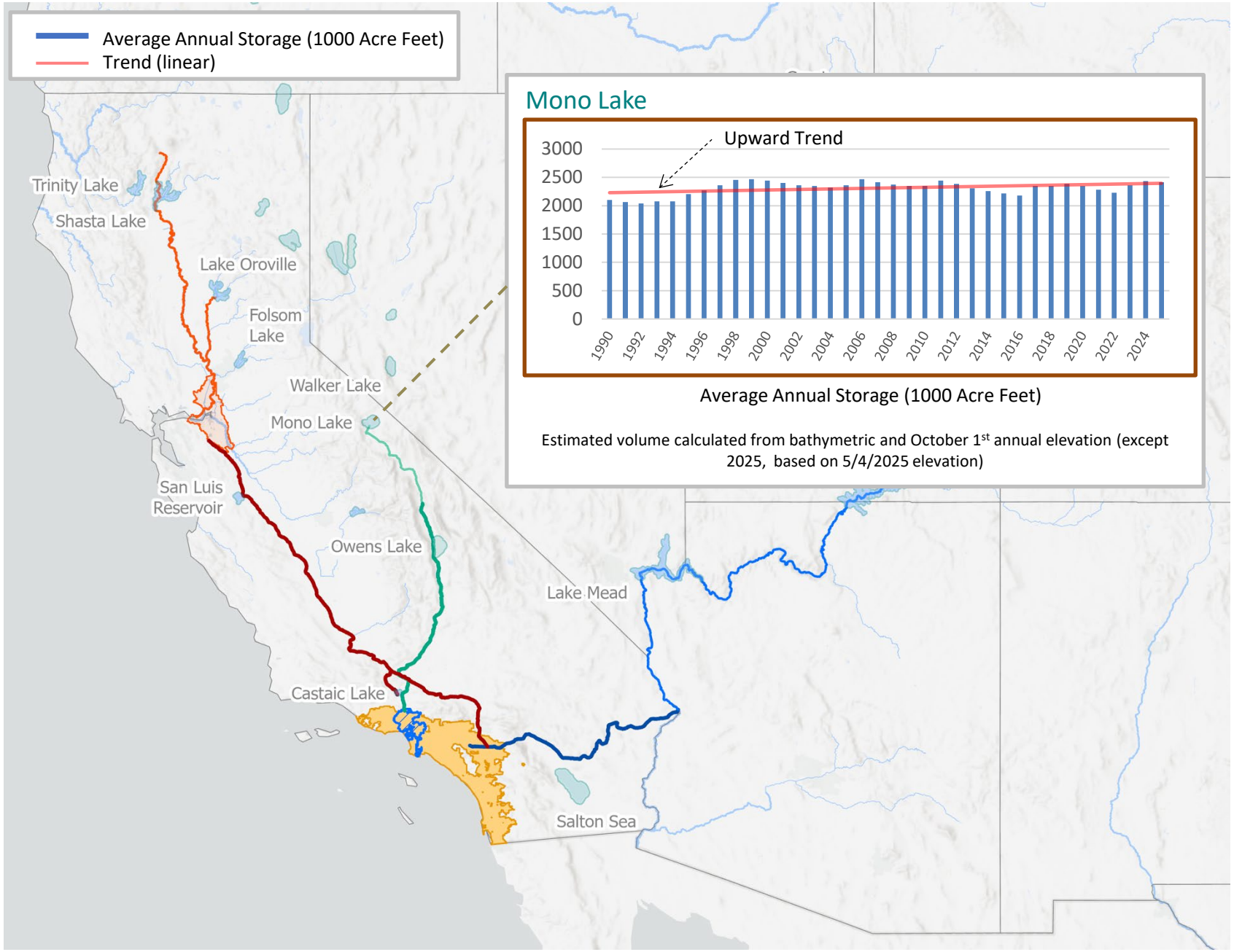
2020


PROTECTED
Lee Vining Creek | Mono County
Rush Creek | Mono County
Image Sources: OLIN (top L), Geosyntec (top R), LADWP (bottom)

Air Quality – not a concern

- **<u>ZERO PM10 exceedances of NAAQS at the Lee Vining (Population center) monitor over the past decade</u>**
- Northeast shore is roughly 25 miles away from humans.
- 2000 - PM Monitoring begins at Mono Shore Site, **modeled to be site of maximum impact**
- Monitoring data demonstrate that burn scars and other natural sources (not caused by DWP) are more prevalent than playa sources.





Mono Lake Today

D-1631 states: *"The rate at which the water level of Mono Lake rises will depend in large part upon future hydrology."*

- In 2024 lake level jumped ~5' highlighting hydrology as a driver.
- While saline lakes across the western US have declined, Mono lake has steadily risen.
- **Lake levels have increased by nearly 10 ft since 1994.**

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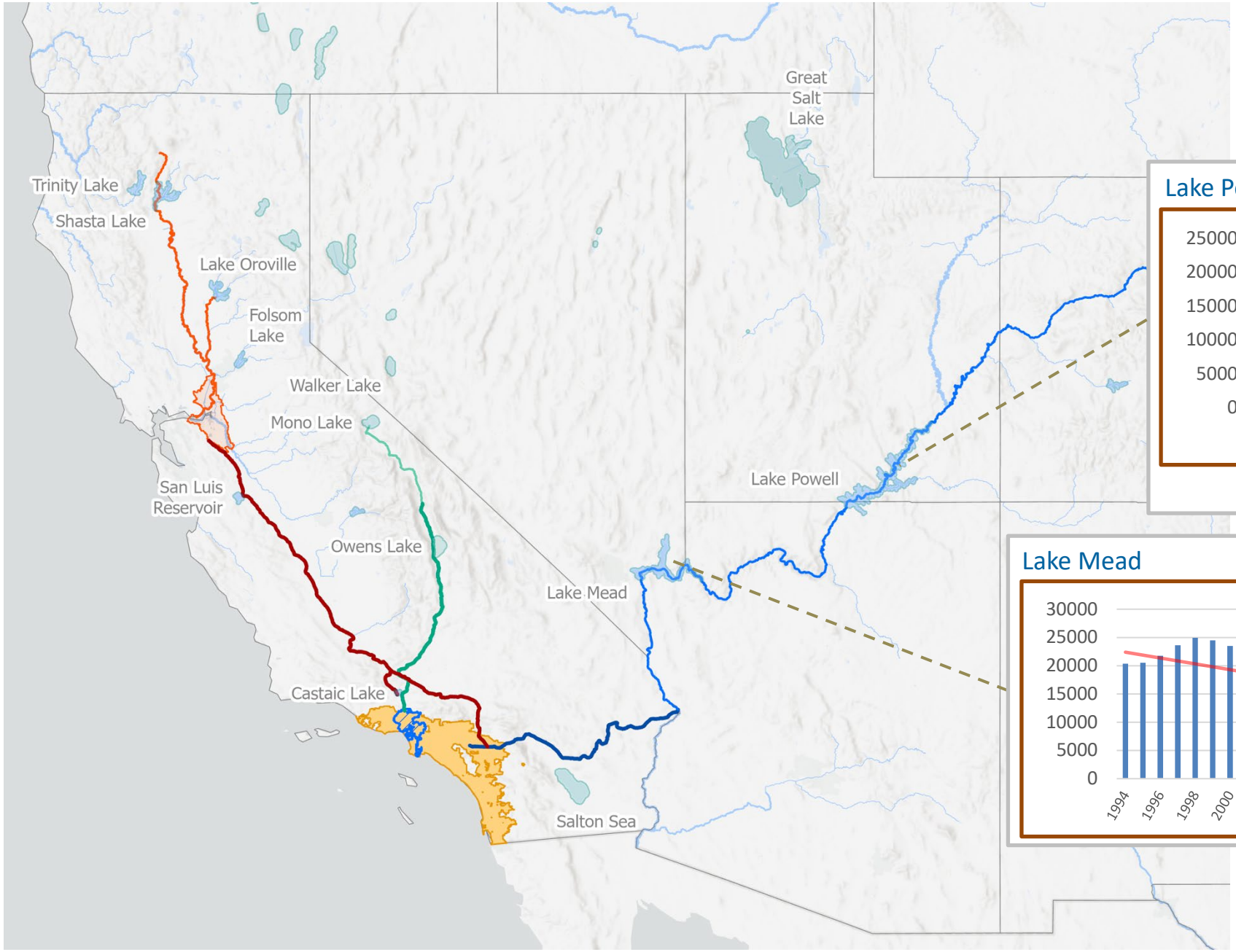
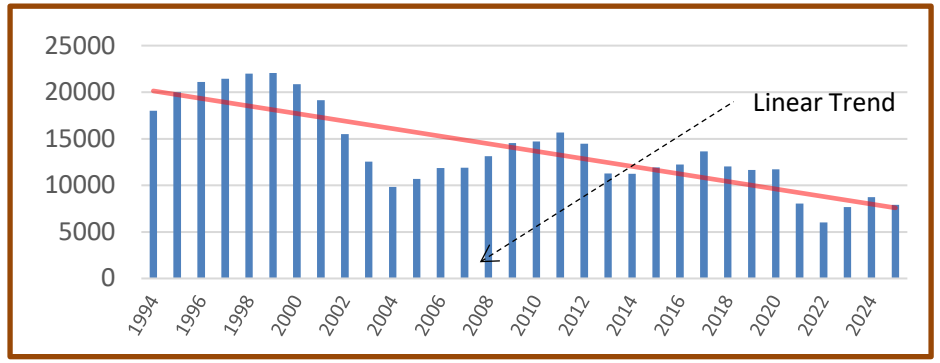
Status of reservoirs and lakes in the West

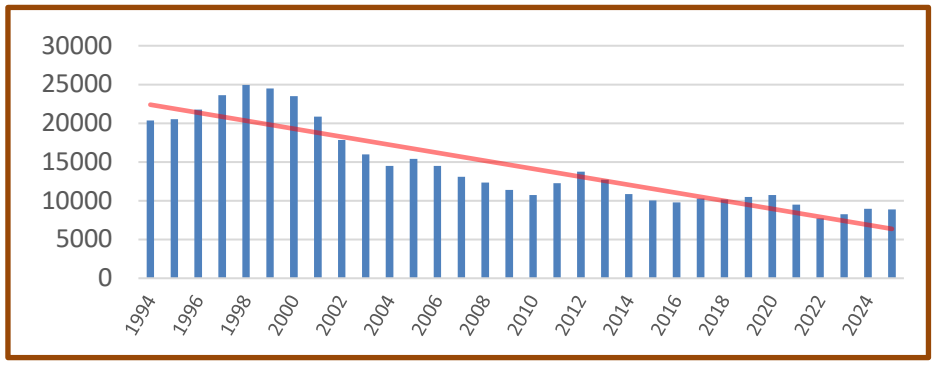


Lake Powell



Average Annual Storage (1000 Acre Feet)

Lake Mead



Note: 2025 data includes averaged monthly storage, January to April 2025

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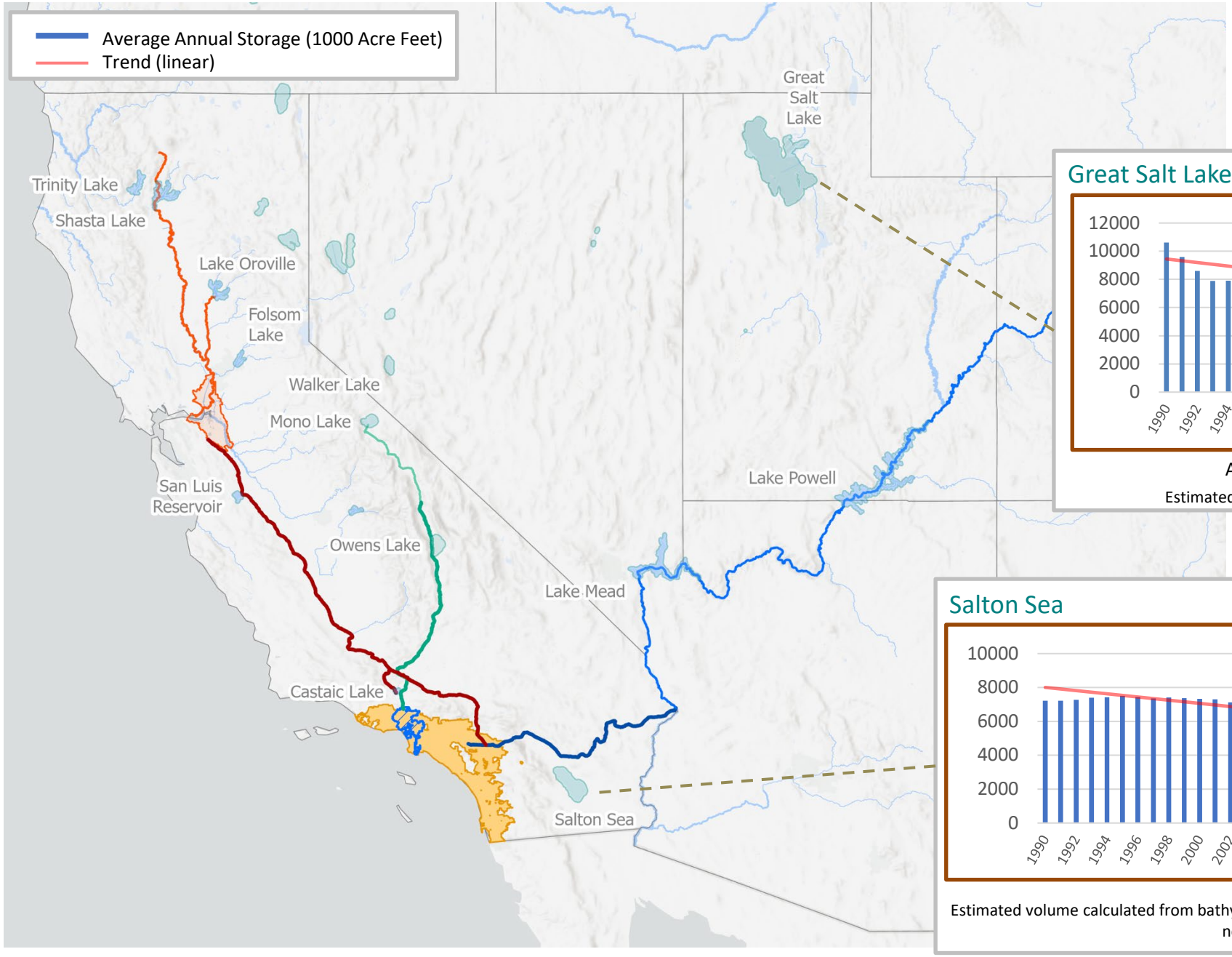
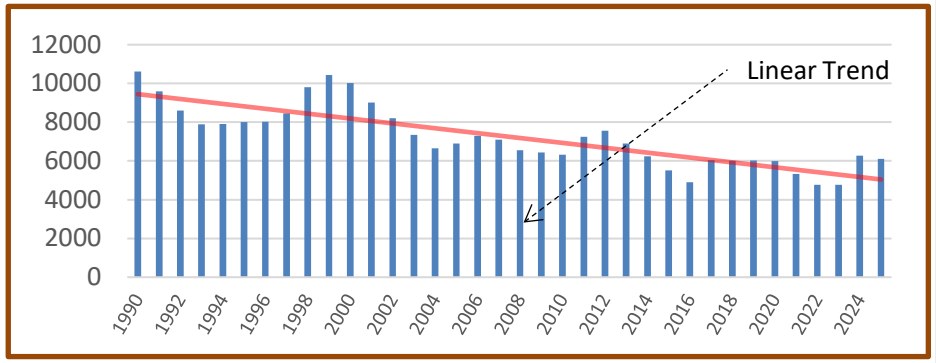


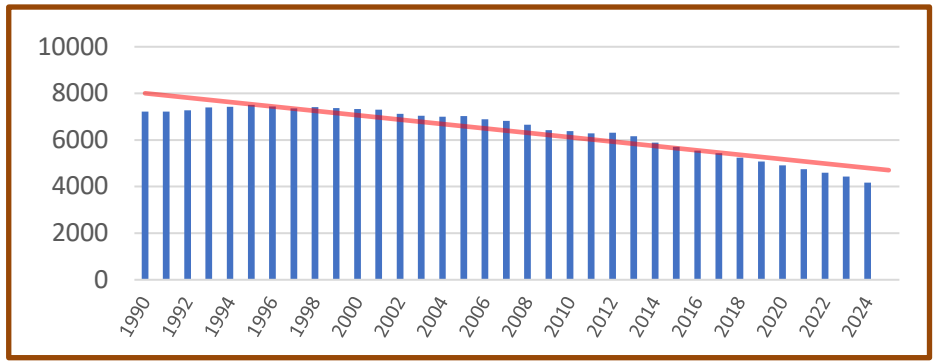
Great Salt Lake



Average Annual Storage (1000 Acre Feet)

Estimated volume based on elevation levels at Saltair Boat Harbor.

Salton Sea



Estimated volume calculated from bathymetric data and year-end elevation values. 2025 data not yet available.

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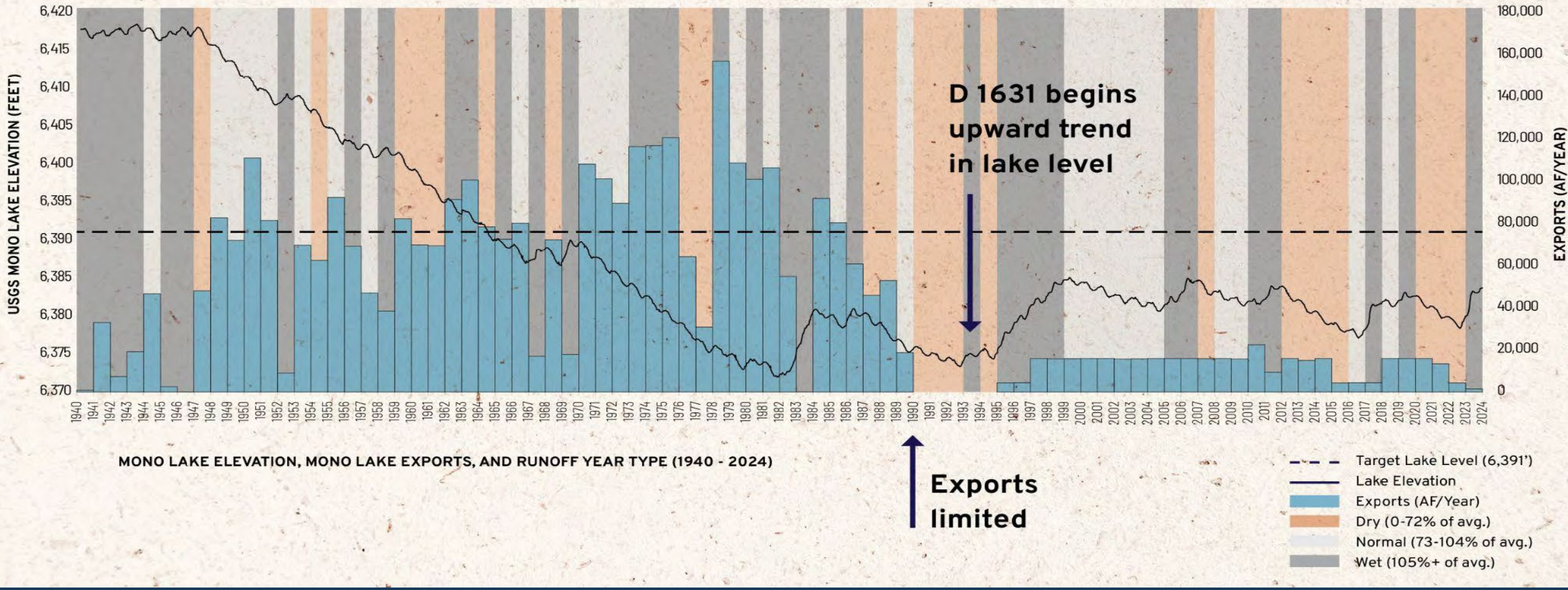
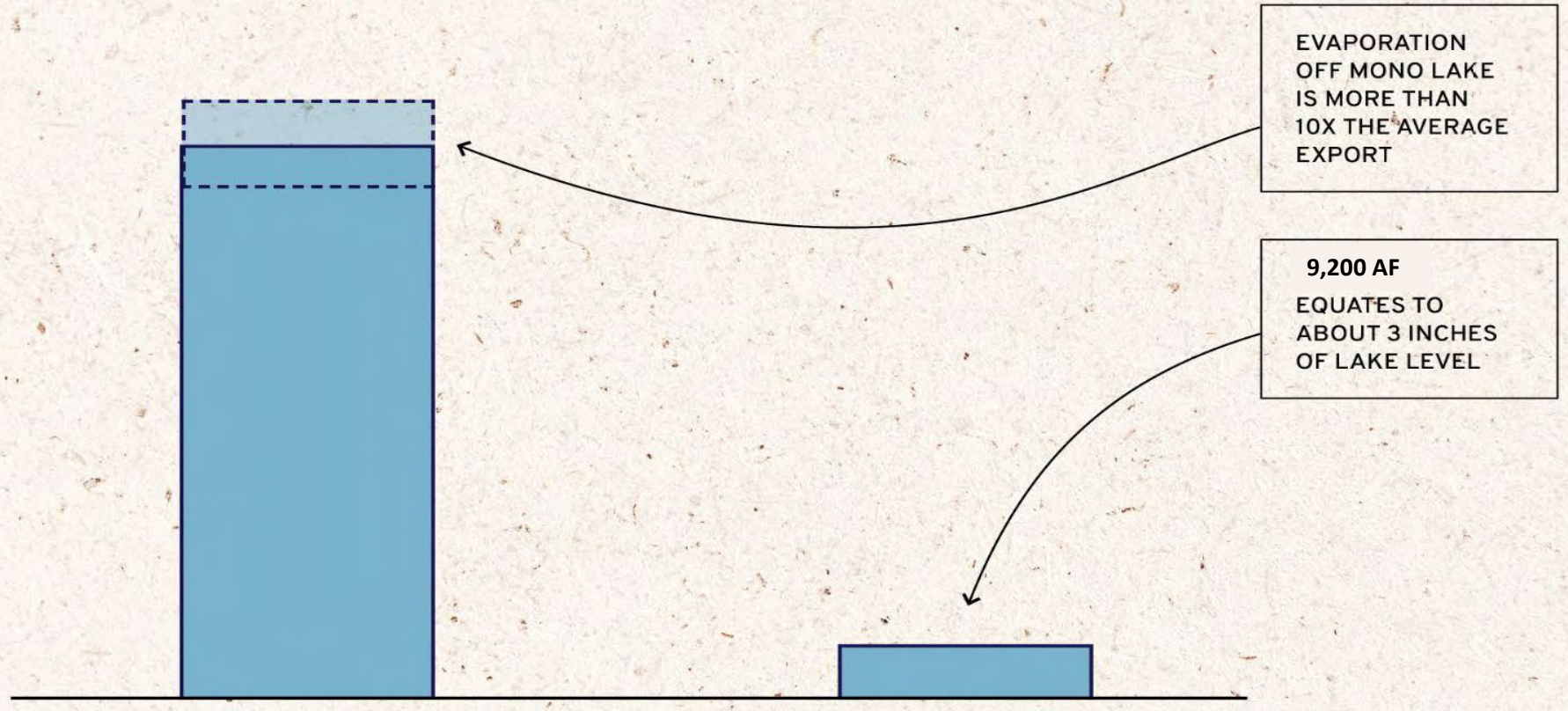
Checking the Facts

SWRCB Decision 1631 is working



MONO LAKE ELEVATION, MONO LAKE EXPORTS, AND RUNOFF YEAR TYPE (1940 - 2024)

Comparison of evaporation and exports



Evaporation off Mono Lake

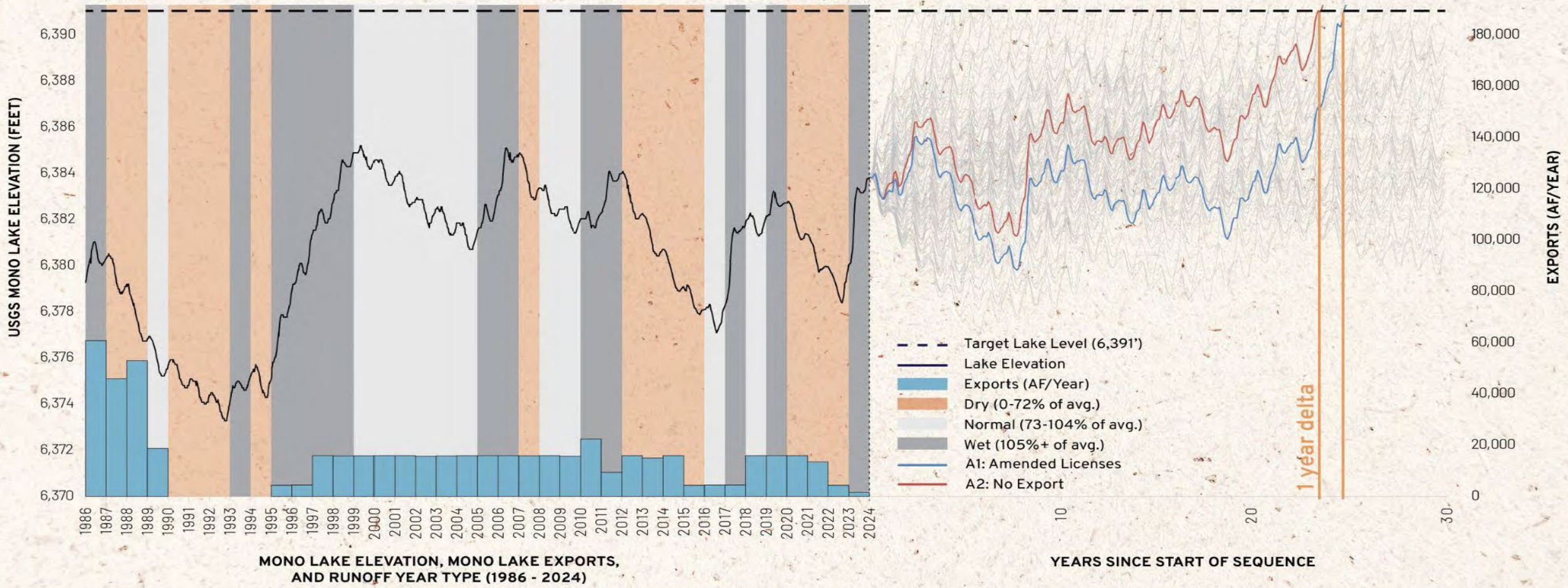
~160,000 AF

LADWP Average Export

9,200 AF

Looking Forward: Lake Level Monitoring

The delta in time to reach the target level in studied sequences with or without exports is very short.



UCLA Climate Model Status

- UCLA meeting with SWRCB on March 17, 2026, to discuss adopting the "Ferrari" of Climate Projection Models…
- Currently only the modeling results have been shared publicly
- Modeling assumptions, limitations, processing, including input and output data, have not been shared with the academic community or properly vetted
- Model needs to be reviewed and accepted by the academic community before using to guide future California state-wide water policy decisions

The agenda for the State Water Resources Control Board's March 17, 2026 Board Meeting has been posted. Please refer to the full agenda for details.

The date, time, and location of the public meeting is:

Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 9:00 a.m.
Coastal Hearing Room
Joe Serna Jr. – CalEPA Headquarters Building
1001 I Street, Second Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814
and via Video and Teleconference

Item 3: Mono Lake Modeling will not begin before 1:00 p.m.

Closed Session may be held on Tuesday, March 17, Wednesday, March 18, or both days.
No open meeting agenda items will be heard on Wednesday, March 18.

March 17-18, 2026 Agenda | Agenda en Español

What do LA's water licenses say about lake level?

"In the event that the water level of Mono Lake has not reached an elevation of 6,391 feet amsl by September 28, 2020, the State Water Board will hold a hearing to consider the condition of the lake and the surrounding area, and will determine if any further revisions to this amended license are appropriate."

CUTTING MONO EXPORTS SHIFT ENVIRONMENTAL BURDEN TO OTHER SOURCES

- **Colorado River Basin (CRB):**
  - Over allocated and climate change has strained the CRB
  - CRB communities are developing, increasing water demand
  - Southern California is facing calls to reduce its usage
  - Tribal communities impacted

- **State Water Project (SWP):**
  - Bay Delta Issues
  - In 2022, SWP supplies were limited to Health and Human Safety uses. To meet demands
  - Water is pumped
  - Future supplies are expected to be strained by climate change

Water, Economy, and Equity

Every AF of Eastern Sierra water forgone will cost ratepayers $1,000-$5,000 to replace.

Replacing half of LA's Eastern Sierra supply with an alternative source would **more than double costs** for LADWP ratepayers.

Meanwhile, LA Aqueduct Water costs $200-400 Per AF

DRAFT

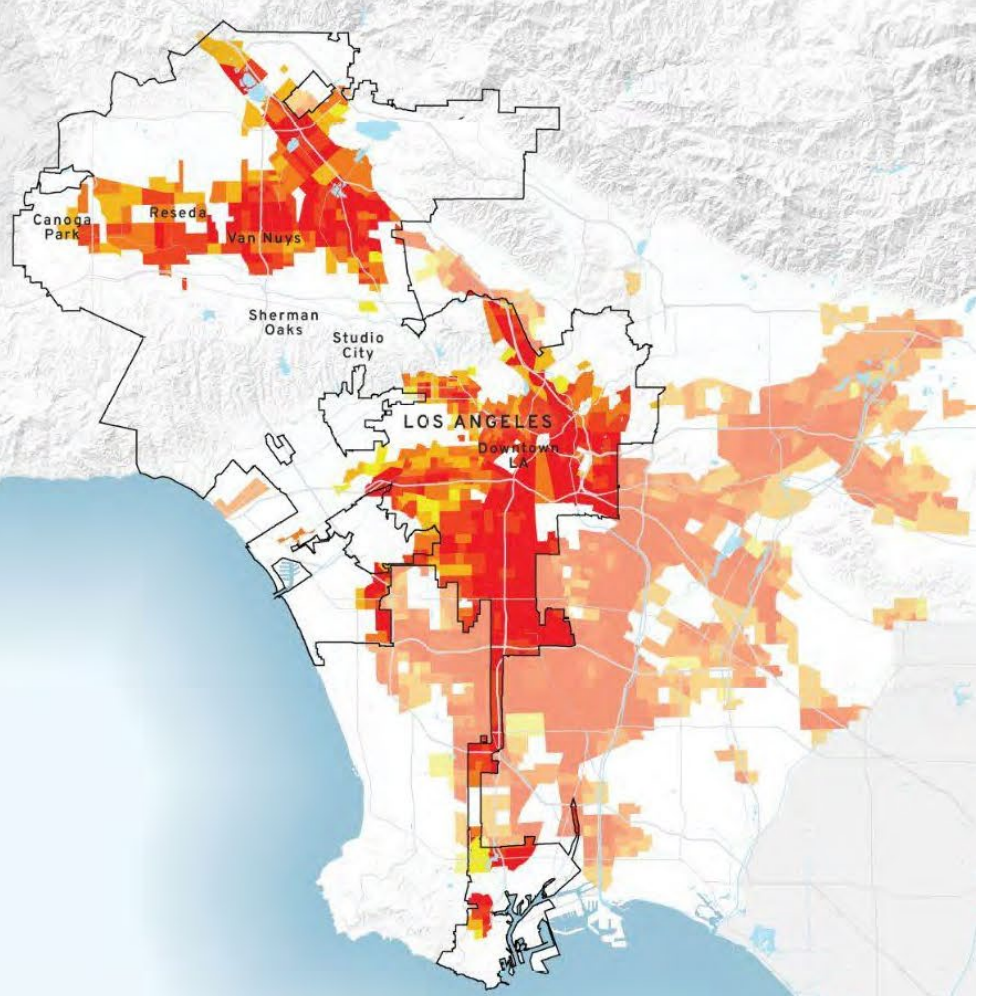
$87 per household
If supplied by MET at average cost

$217 per household
If supplied with recycled water at average cost

Water, Economy, and Equity

50% of the census tracts in Los Angeles
are Classified as Disadvantaged Communities (DACs)

DRAFT



SB353 Disadvantaged Communities Vulnerability Percentile

100

70

Water from the Eastern Sierra is the most affordable, energy efficient, and environmentally sustainable water source for the City of Los Angeles.

QUESTIONS?