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East Porterville Homes Connected to Water System; Pipes Help Residents at Drought's 'Ground Zero'

EAST PORTERVILLE, CA – Dozens of East Porterville residents in Tulare County, often called “ground zero” of California’s drought, are now being connected to a new, permanent, sustainable source of water that will eliminate the need for State emergency water deliveries to homeowners with dry or contaminated wells.

As many as 1,800 homes in East Porterville with either no water or undrinkable water in their wells are expected to be connected to the City of Porterville’s water system by the end of 2017. Now under way is the project’s Phase 1A, during which up to 70 homes will receive water from City of Porterville distribution lines that were previously installed in East Porterville streets but had not been connected to homes. The first connection was made today.

The East Porterville Water Supply project will have several phases. Approximately 500 homes will be connected to the new distribution system in the first phase. Up to 1,300 additional homes are planned to be connected to new distribution lines during a second phase in 2017.

The East Porterville Water Supply Project is a joint effort by three State agencies – the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) – and the County of Tulare and the City of Porterville. Non-profit organizations participating on the project are Community Services Employment Training, the Community Water Center, Self-Help Enterprises and Porterville Area Coordinating Council.

Between the drought years of 2013 and 2016, groundwater levels in the unincorporated area of East Porterville in Tulare County declined significantly, and many household wells went dry. Residents have been relying on deliveries of bottled water and non-potable water held in large tanks temporarily installed on their property. This unsustainable enterprise has been funded by the State at a monthly cost of more than \$650,000.



DWR and SWRCB are jointly leading the effort to implement the recommended preferred option for the long-term solution to the current drought emergency in East Porterville (see Feasibility Study linked below). SWRCB worked with local organizations and a community group, East Porterville for Water Justice, on a series of meetings to inform the community and get feedback about the project.

Eligible East Porterville residents who participate in the project by agreeing to have their property eventually annexed by the City of Porterville will bear none of the connection costs, which are estimated to be at least \$5,000. Once connected, the residents' State-funded water deliveries will end, the temporary water tanks will be removed from their property and their water wells will be capped. Property owners will receive City of Porterville water service and be billed monthly.

Owners are strongly advised to complete the required documentation to participate in the program and establish a water account with the City of Porterville. The non-profit partners can help owners with the process.

Video and still photography of today's "first flow" activities in East Porterville can be found here (check back later if the content is not immediately available):

<https://fts.water.ca.gov/owncloud/public.php?service=files&t=b33c80ca892f89bae0e70172d2c7fc88>

Additional information can be found at [DWR's web page devoted to the project](#):

- [East Porterville Feasibility Study Public Draft](#)
- [East Porterville Water Supply Project FAQs](#)
- [PowerPoint Presentation at June 23 Community Meeting in Porterville](#)
- [Project Summary](#)

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To learn about all the actions the State has taken to manage our water system and cope with the impacts of the drought, visit [Drought.CA.Gov](#). Every Californian should take steps to conserve water. Find out how at [SaveOurWater.com](#).

