Water and Energy Efficiency Marketing and Outreach Practices Review

Water and Energy Efficiency Program for Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional Customer Classes in Southern California

Volume 4 of 5
Contents

1.0 Introduction ................................................................................................................... 1
  1.1 Context for Review ................................................................................................. 1
  1.2 Scope and Methodology ....................................................................................... 1
      1.2.1 Scope ........................................................................................................ 1
      1.2.2 Approach ................................................................................................. 2
  1.3 Organization of Volume ....................................................................................... 4

2.0 Marketing and Outreach Practices ............................................................................. 5
  2.1 Rebates and Other Financial Incentives ............................................................... 5
  2.2 Marketing and Outreach Messages ....................................................................... 5
  2.3 Energy Utility and Water District Partnerships .................................................. 6
      2.3.1 SDG&E and SDCWA ............................................................................. 6
      2.3.2 MWD and SCE ..................................................................................... 6
      2.3.3 SBESC Partnership ............................................................................. 7
      2.3.4 City, District, and Utility Partnerships ................................................. 7
  2.4 Training Sessions ................................................................................................. 7
  2.5 Segmentation Research ....................................................................................... 7
  2.6 Multiple Communication Channels ..................................................................... 8

3.0 Recommendations ...................................................................................................... 9
  3.1 Establish an Awards Program ............................................................................. 9
  3.2 Expand the Use of Partnerships .......................................................................... 9
  3.3 Maximize the Transaction Point during Audits ................................................... 10
  3.4 Develop a Straightforward Integrated Marketing Message ............................. 11
  3.5 Establish a Marketing and Outreach Committee ................................................. 11

4.0 Summary of Observations and Recommendations .................................................. 14
  4.1 Key Observations ............................................................................................... 14
  4.2 Recommendations .............................................................................................. 14
  4.3 Anchoring WEEP in Southern California ........................................................... 15

Appendices ......................................................................................................................... 16
  Appendix A Interview Questions .............................................................................. 17
  Appendix B Acronyms .............................................................................................. 18
  Appendix C Bibliography ........................................................................................... 20

Tables
  Table 1: Web Sites Reviewed ...................................................................................... 3
1.0 Introduction

For many years, programs in southern California have promoted water efficiency or energy efficiency within the broad categories of commercial, industrial, and institutional (CII) customers. Although these programs have been relatively successful, current regional water and energy projections indicate there is an urgent need to examine water and energy efficiency in an integrated manner. The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), in partnership with the California Energy Commission (CEC), and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), commissioned an innovative study in 2007 to develop an integrated water and energy efficiency program.

The results of the study are presented in a multi-volume report called the Water and Energy Efficiency Program (WEEP) for Commercial, Industrial and Institutional Customer Classes in Southern California. Volume 4 of this report summarizes a review of the integrated marketing and outreach practices implemented by energy utilities and water districts in southern California.

1.1 Context for Review

Marketing and outreach practices are considered key components of California’s strategy for motivating customers to take action and implement resource efficiency programs.¹ For the most part, water districts and energy utilities have undertaken marketing and outreach activities independent of one another. However, with increasing frequency water districts and energy utilities are concluding that there are tangible benefits associated with promoting an integrated program.² Moreover, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) said in its 2008 Energy Efficiency Policy Manual that “energy efficiency marketing efforts should strive to co-brand with water conservation messaging, among other programs.”³

1.2 Scope and Methodology

1.2.1 Scope

The review of energy utility and water district marketing and outreach practices in southern California focused on 1) activities targeted towards CII customers, 2) integrated water and energy promotional materials and strategies (e.g., brochures

¹ CPUC’s 2008 Long Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan.
² Based on information obtained from PAC members interviewed for this report.
and Web site materials), and 3) activities to promote long-term conservation practices to help achieve federal and state energy and water efficiency goals.

1.2.2 Approach
The approach used for evaluating integrated marketing and outreach practices involved:

- Reviewing energy utility and water district Web sites to understand the 1) types of integrated marketing messages being communicated, and 2) the techniques used to highlight the financial incentives available to CII customers to support water and energy efficiency upgrades.

- Interviewing Project Advisory Committee (PAC) members about integrated water and energy marketing and outreach practices.

- Examining selected marketing brochures and plans focused on both water and energy efficiency.

1.2.2.1 Web Sites Examined
Promotional materials available on energy utility and water district Web sites provided information about integrated marketing messages and outreach approaches. The Web sites listed in Table 1 were reviewed.
### Table 1: Web Sites Reviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity/Web Site Address</th>
<th>Entity/Web Site Address</th>
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<tr>
<td>Burbank Water and Power <a href="http://www.burbankwaterandpower.com">http://www.burbankwaterandpower.com</a></td>
<td>Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) <a href="http://www.mwdh2o.com">http://www.mwdh2o.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Compton <a href="http://www.comptoncity.org">http://www.comptoncity.org</a></td>
<td>Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (LACSD) <a href="http://www.lacsd.org">http://www.lacsd.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Fullerton <a href="http://www.cityoffullerton.com">http://www.cityoffullerton.com</a></td>
<td>South Bay Environmental Services Center (SBESC) <a href="http://www.sbsc.com">http://www.sbsc.com</a></td>
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<td>City of Long Beach <a href="http://www.ci.long-beach.ca.us">http://www.ci.long-beach.ca.us</a></td>
<td>Southern California Edison (SCE) <a href="http://www.sce.com">http://www.sce.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of San Fernando <a href="http://www.ci.san-fernando.ca.us">http://www.ci.san-fernando.ca.us</a></td>
<td>Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) <a href="http://www.socalgas.com/index">http://www.socalgas.com/index</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of San Marino <a href="http://www.ci.san-marino.ca.us">http://www.ci.san-marino.ca.us</a></td>
<td>Three Valleys Municipal Water District <a href="http://www.threevalleys.com">http://www.threevalleys.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Torrance <a href="http://www.ci.torrance.ca.us">http://www.ci.torrance.ca.us</a></td>
<td>Western Municipal Water District <a href="http://www.wmwd.com">http://www.wmwd.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glendale Water &amp; Power <a href="http://www.glendalewaterandpower.com">http://www.glendalewaterandpower.com</a></td>
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</table>
1.2.2.2 Interviews with PAC Members
Selected PAC members were asked to participate in interviews about the types of integrated water and energy efficiency marketing and outreach practices being implemented. The PAC members interviewed were from:

- Anaheim Public Utilities
- Apple Valley Ranchos Water Company
- Burbank Water and Power
- Castaic Lake Water Agency
- Inland Empire Utilities Agency
- SCE
- West Basin Municipal Water District

Additional marketing and outreach information was provided by PAC members from SDG&E, SDCWA, and MWD during water and energy audit interviews. The interview questions can be found in Appendix A.

1.2.2.3 Marketing and Outreach Documents Reviewed
To obtain background information about marketing and outreach practices used to promote the efficient use of resources in California, a number of reports and books were reviewed. A complete bibliography can be found in Appendix B.

1.3 Organization of Volume
The remainder of this Volume is organized as follows:

- Section 2.0 covers marketing and outreach practices being implemented to promote water and energy efficiency.

- Section 3.0 includes recommendations to support the further development of marketing activities associated with an integrated approach to water and energy efficiency.

- Section 4.0 summarizes key observations and recommendations associated with integrated water and energy marketing and outreach practices.

- The Appendices include a list of interview questions, acronyms, and a bibliography.
2.0 Marketing and Outreach Practices

This section discusses currently implemented practices to promote water and energy efficiency as well as practices viewed by PAC members as key activities for advancing WEEP in southern California.

2.1 Rebates and Other Financial Incentives

PAC members said that water and energy efficiency rebates help promote the implementation of enhanced efficiency measures among CII customers. Moreover, the use of rebates and other financial incentives to encourage customers to implement water and energy improvements is viewed as an important component of WEEP implementation. Thus, rebates are considered a key tactic for WEEP.4

2.2 Marketing and Outreach Messages

The following observations were made about the content of integrated water and energy efficiency marketing messages based on a review of Web sites and promotional brochures, and conversations with PAC members:5

- Promotional brochures focusing on specific pieces of equipment (e.g., pH/conductivity controllers) contain straightforward messages that direct customers to take action to reduce water and energy consumption. Typical messages found in these brochures are:

  “One way you can reduce water and energy is to install XX.”
  “By installing XX you save water as well as energy.”


- PAC members noted that promotional materials have not been designed to highlight 1) the benefits associated with integrated audits, 2) wastewater reductions associated with water and energy efficiency practices, and 3) CII customer classes.

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4 See footnote #2 on page 1.

5 MWD’s Save Water, Save a Buck Program was featured in the August 12, 2008 GreenBiz.com, on an on-line journal that covers stories about being environmental conscious. The coverage was arranged by MWD’s contractor for its commercial and industrial water efficiency program.
Since all of these themes are considered important by PAC members, updated marketing messages should refer to financial and technical incentives, large water and energy users, and the value of integrated audits in identifying potential reductions in resource use and wastewater discharges through equipment upgrades, operational improvements, or renewables and distributed energy systems.  

2.3 Energy Utility and Water District Partnerships

Several water districts and energy utilities have formed partnerships to promote an integrated approach to efficiency. Examples of these partnerships and their benefits are summarized below.

2.3.1 SDG&E and SDCWA
SDG&E and SDCWA have worked on a number of integrated water and energy efficiency projects, including the promotion of pre-rinse spray valves, low-flow showerheads, and high-efficiency clothes washers through marketing flyers, Web site announcements, community events, and newsletters. These two organizations also have partnered to conduct CPUC sponsored embedded energy audits. In addition SDG&E and SDCWA sponsored promotional activities at a San Diego Padres baseball game. These activities were viewed as successful based on the number of post-game telephone inquires about water and energy efficiency rebates. These projects showed SDG&E and SDCWA that their customers are receptive to joint marketing and are willing to act in response to increased rebates.  

2.3.2 MWD and SCE
MWD and SCE are promoting pH/conductivity controllers, weather-based irrigation controllers, pre-rinse spray heads, connectionless food steamers, high-efficiency toilets and urinals, pressurized waterrooms, and rotating spray nozzles. Their marketing campaign consists of distributing brochures and posting information on their Web sites. The key messages are “Saving water helps save energy and water” and “Energy efficiency rebates are available.” MWD indicated that this type of joint marketing is useful for increasing awareness among diverse CII customer classes. 

6 See footnote #2 on page 1.
7 California energy incentives cover renewables and local energy systems.
8 See footnote #2 on page 1.
9 See footnote #2 on page 1.
2.3.3 **SBESC Partnership**

SBESC is the South Bay’s local clearinghouse for energy efficiency, water conservation, and environmental information addressing training, materials, and outreach. SBESC is administered by SoCalGas and SCE, in collaboration with South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG), under the auspices of the CPUC through a contract awarded to SBCCOG. Additional funding comes from the West Basin Municipal Water District, the City of Torrance, and LACSD.

Although the partnership is in the early stages of development and implementation, it is viewed by the sponsoring agencies as an important tool to leverage limited staff and marketing resources, serve as a focal point for conducting training sessions, and provide information about water and energy efficiency incentives and rebates.\(^{10}\)

2.3.4 **City, District, and Utility Partnerships**

Representatives from the City of Anaheim, Irvine Ranch Water District, and the East Municipal Water District said that working closely with local energy utilities, wastewater districts, and CII customers is the best way to communicate information about a comprehensive package of water and energy incentives. Informing CII customers about such packages also provides opportunities to encourage them to install water and energy efficiency equipment or processes.\(^{11}\)

2.4 **Training Sessions**

Training sessions for vendors, construction contractors, and public school officials have been used by energy utilities to increase awareness of the best practices for reducing energy costs. Personnel from several water districts indicated that with the assistance of energy utilities, training sessions for local vendors and customers are an effective way to promote an integrated approach to resource efficiency and to spur interested customers to take action. At these training sessions, the potential for water and energy savings through upgrades is also discussed.\(^{12}\)

2.5 **Segmentation Research**

Energy utilities have engaged in market segmentation research to understand what motivates their customers to participate in efficiency programs. Energy utilities have used this information to develop segmented marketing strategies, including the use of selected media (e.g., Web sites, newspaper advertisements, radio, and TV), that target and deliver specific messages to subsets of their customers in order to help increase customer participation in energy efficiency programs. PAC

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\(^{10}\) See footnote #2 on page 1.

\(^{11}\) See footnote #2 on page 1.

\(^{12}\) See footnote #2 on page 1.
members concluded that segmentation data might be useful for implementing WEEP.\textsuperscript{13}

2.6 Multiple Communication Channels

Multiple communication channels have been used by energy utilities and water districts to maximize the potential for customers to hear or read about the benefits of undertaking water and energy efficiency in an integrated manner. For example:

- MWD and SCE have designed promotional brochures for several pieces of water and energy efficient equipment, posted the brochures on Web sites, and made the brochures available for distribution to customers.

- Inland Empire Utilities Agency promoted a turf buyback rebate in flyers, newspapers, and on Web sites. The response was so overwhelming that the water district ran out of rebates.

- SDCWA’s 20-Gallon Challenge was advertised on Web sites, radio, and news releases.

- Some water districts have asked elected officials to contact customers to convey the importance of water efficiency.

As noted by speakers at the November 2008 Behavior, Energy, and Climate Change Conference in Sacramento, California, segmentation research points to the use of multimedia channels to reach diverse sets of customers. PAC members also stated that multimedia channels for communicating is a good strategy that could be applied to WEEP.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13} See footnote #2 on page 1.
\textsuperscript{14} See footnote #2 on page 1.
3.0 Recommendations

Several recommendations evolved to support the further expansion and implementation of an integrated approach to water and energy efficiency in southern California. The recommendations reflect the voluntary nature of WEEP and are presented below.

3.1 Establish an Awards Program

PAC members indicated that customers want some level of recognition for participating in voluntary programs such as WEEP. Recognition helps them communicate their support for environmental protection and stewardship to internal and external stakeholders. It also helps them obtain internal support for engaging in more significant efficiency measures. To help support the implementation of WEEP, a recognition program should be considered. The program could consist of one or more of these activities:

- Congratulatory ads
- Awards ceremonies
- Awards booklets
- Web, e-newswire, press releases, and blog promotions of winners throughout the year

The awards program should focus on CII customers that have demonstrated gains in water and energy efficiency, as well as reductions in wastewater discharges.

3.2 Expand the Use of Partnerships

Water districts, energy utilities, and wastewater sanitation agencies should continue to explore, engage in, and expand the use of partnerships to leverage resources to promote water and energy efficiency. Based on PAC comments, partnerships are best formed for specific activities such as:

- Offering training sessions for customers and vendors to review water and energy efficiency measures and the availability of rebates.
- Developing and distributing promotional brochures.
- Hosting special events to leverage limited resources and significantly increase the profile of an integrated approach to water and energy efficiency.
• Conducting audits to help CII customers understand the full range of opportunities and incentives available to support the implementation of improved water, wastewater, and energy efficiency practices.

Partnerships provide a means to communicate information about the comprehensive package of water and energy incentives available to CII customers. Representatives of energy utilities and water districts should explore options to establish partnerships within service areas and engage in cross-training to share technical knowledge useful for promoting integrated programs. Longer-term partnerships, such as the SBESC partnership, are also beneficial because they allow for the sharing of marketing costs and the establishment of a single source for all efficiency-related information.

3.3 Maximize the Transaction Point during Audits

Auditing provides opportunities for face-to-face meetings with CII customers to explain incentives and opportunities to improve water and energy efficiency. These meetings should maximize the transaction point. That is, communications at these meetings should stress information to help support a customer’s ability to take action. For example, during these discussions:

• Offer a suite of incentives to help ensure that efficiency improvements have shorter payback periods in order to justify upfront investment costs. For example, one to three year paybacks for investments in efficiency made from operating budgets instead of capital budgets.

• Link the benefits of efficiency improvements to site/organization goals in order to obtain buy-in from key management staff members.

• Acknowledge that water and energy efficiency activities compete with other site activities and that the business case for implementing improvements needs to address equipment performance, rate of return, operating budget constraints, ease of implementation, the site’s sustainability program, and financial payback periods.

• Present several options or pathways for implementing water and energy efficiency improvements in order to help find the “hook” that gets the customer to participate (e.g., implement Actions A and B in year 1, Action C in year 2).

• Discuss tradeoffs between water and energy efficiency that are in the audit recommendations so that the underlying issues driving operational performance are reflected in the cost-benefit analysis.
3.4 Develop a Straightforward Integrated Marketing Message

To help CII customer classes understand WEEP and motivate them to take action, water districts and energy utilities should develop an integrated, robust, and straightforward marketing message. The message should reflect these themes:

- Engaging in integrated water and energy efficiency activities helps your business increase profits by keeping costs down and by doing more with less.
- WEEP program implementers provide incentives for your business to engage in water, wastewater, and energy efficiency measures through rebates and other financing tools.
- By engaging in audits and training sessions, WEEP program implementers help your business understand the range of efficiency measures that could be employed.

The updated messages should be utilized in updated Web site materials and promotional brochures.

3.5 Establish a Marketing and Outreach Committee

To advance WEEP and help achieve federal and state resource management goals, a formal marketing and outreach committee should be established. The committee should be composed of PAC members and Reclamation. The committee should:

1. Select a leader/facilitator for future meetings.
2. Designate a note-taker.
3. Develop an integrated marketing and outreach plan.
4. Implement the marketing and outreach action plan.

The guiding principles for committee members should be:

1. Establishing a plan to address the following issues:

   - How to maintain and extend the use of multiple communication channels—training, public events, e-mails, telephone calls, and other marketing and outreach activities—to encourage customers to engage in WEEP activities.
• The extent to which WEEP marketing and outreach efforts should be coordinated across service areas to maximize customer participation.

• Any special circumstances that may affect a customer’s response to adopting water and energy efficiency options. For example, plant-level conditions, operating constraints, or specific industry or organization needs.

• Lessons learned in conducting audits and how to better position these technical support activities among the CII customer classes selected for WEEP.

• Whether there is value in creating a centralized Web site for CII customers to obtain information about best water and energy efficiency practices, rebates, incentives, and the range of technical assistance available to aid in identifying opportunities for improving performance.

2. Leveraging existing segmentation research to identify appropriate outreach and communication techniques to help motivate CII customer classes to engage in WEEP activities. Segmentation information should provide insights about:

• How best to reach the CII customer classes selected for WEEP. For example, should outreach activities consist of e-mail blasts, telephone calls, audits, training, or brochures?

• The benefits CII customers associate with short-term or long-term water and energy savings.

• The type of language that is best suited to motivate the CII customer classes selected for WEEP.

(Note: Leveraging existing segmentation data is recommended instead of gathering new information, because funding for this type of customer research may not be readily available.)

3. Developing a set of straightforward marketing messages that motivate customers to take action.

4. Developing a marketing and outreach plan to guide committee activities. It should include:
• The communication channels that will be used to promote an integrated approach to distributing water and energy efficiency messages.

• A schedule of marketing and outreach activities (e.g., training sessions, special events, newspaper advertisement placements) to maximize customer attention and reinforce the water and energy efficiency messages.

• Plans to form partnerships and the nature of the promotional activities associated with these partnerships.

• Additional activities to promote an integrated approach to water and energy efficiency.

• Actions resulting from committee deliberations (e.g., use of a centralized Web site).
4.0 **Summary of Observations and Recommendations**

This review examined integrated marketing and outreach practices being implemented by energy utilities and water districts in southern California. Key observations and recommendations are summarized below.

### 4.1 Key Observations

1. Rebates, audits, and training sessions are used by water districts and energy utilities to promote an integrated approach to water and energy efficiency.

2. The use of multiple communication channels (i.e., Web sites, brochures, telephone calls, meetings) maximizes the potential for CII customer classes to hear or read about the benefits of undertaking water and energy efficiency improvements in an integrated manner.

3. Partnerships between energy utilities and water districts maximize the use of available resources and yield greater marketing and outreach impacts.

### 4.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations were identified to advance WEEP:

1. Expand the use of partnerships to promote water and energy efficiency in southern California.

2. Establish an awards program to encourage CII customers to implement water and energy efficiency activities.

3. Leverage existing segmentation research to determine the best communication channels for reaching CII customers and the types of messages that motivate customers to take action.

4. Develop clear, simple messages that appeal to the broad range of CII customer classes and use them when updating Web sites, brochures, and other promotional materials.

5. Maximize the “transaction point” during audits. That is, use the face-to-face meetings as opportunities to explain the incentives available
to CII customers and the options for helping customers obtain approval for implementing water and energy efficiency improvements.

6. Establish a water and energy efficiency marketing and outreach committee to advance WEEP and enlist the PAC to facilitate the committee.

4.3 Anchoring WEEP in Southern California

WEEP is a voluntary effort to encourage the more efficient use of water and energy resources in southern California. Project sponsors and PAC members should continue to promote WEEP by implementing the recommendations outlined in this Volume of the WEEP Study. Doing so will firmly anchor WEEP as the leading initiative for CII in southern California to manage water and energy resources efficiently and in an integrated manner.
Appendices
Appendix A
Interview Questions

1. Are your existing water or energy efficiency rebate/incentive programs marketed to customers? If yes, please provide a description of your marketing program (i.e., the specific tactics used to communicate and outreach with your customer base).

2. Are there any marketing techniques that have been particularly effective or ineffective?

3. Is the existing water or energy efficiency marketing program restricted as a consequence of budget, lack of a well developed program or resources to implement it, or other issues?

4. Do you engage in joint marketing with other utilities? If yes, why and how is it done? Do vendors or account representatives in your service area have any role in marketing water or energy efficiency programs? If yes, what are their roles?

5. Are there any specific marketing strategies you would recommend for a WEEP like program initiative?
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<th>Reference</th>
<th>Bibliographic Citation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Water Conservation Market Potential</td>
<td>East Bay Municipal Utility District. Water Conservation Market Penetration Study. March 2002. Available at: <a href="http://www.ebmud.com/about_ebmud/publications/technical_reports/market_penetration_study.pdf">http://www.ebmud.com/about_ebmud/publications/technical_reports/market_penetration_study.pdf</a>. The objectives of the study were to collect current data on water conservation attitudes and behavior, determine the types and saturation of water-conserving hardware, assess the water conservation potential for identified market sectors, and relate the study’s findings to those of the previous studies.</td>
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<td>Efficiency Partnership</td>
<td>Efficiency Partnership. Integrated Statewide Marketing and Outreach (M&amp;O) Plan Presentation. March 2006. This presentation outlines California’s statewide approach for marketing energy efficiency and the reasons behind the selection of targeted tactics and strategies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MWD Board Notes</td>
<td>Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Board Notes from the Meeting. October 14, 2008. This meeting addressed MWD’s long-term conservation incentive program and new retrofit devices as well as administrative refinements proposed for board consideration.</td>
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# Appendix C
## Acronyms

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<td>California Energy Commission</td>
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<td>Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional</td>
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<td>California Public Utilities Commission</td>
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<td>LACSD</td>
<td>Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County</td>
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<td>Los Angeles Department of Water &amp; Power</td>
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<td>Marketing and Outreach</td>
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