

MAY 2026

San Diego Chapter News

California Special Districts Association



CSDA

Quarterly Dinner Meeting

Thursday, May 21
5:45 pm - 9:00 pm
Dinner served at 6:45 pm

The Butcher Shop
5255 Kearny Villa Rd.
San Diego, CA 92123

[Click here for the Registration Form](#)

2026 Executive Board Meeting Schedule

- July 20, 2026
- October 19, 2026

2026 Quarterly Dinner Meeting Schedule

- May 21, 2026
- August 20, 2026
- November 19, 2026

2026 Quarterly Water Utility Lunch Schedule

- July 21, 2026
- October 20, 2026



Special District Spotlight

HELIX WATER DISTRICT EARNS ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD

Helix Water District was recently recognized with the 2026 Environmental Stewardship Award by the San Diego Regional East County Chamber of Commerce.

The award honors Helix's leadership in advancing sustainable and innovative water solutions, including its role in the East County Advanced Water Purification Program—an effort that will strengthen local water reliability and reduce dependence on imported supplies.

The District has also made significant progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving operational efficiency, demonstrating a strong commitment to environmental responsibility and long-term resource management.

This recognition highlights the important work local special districts are doing to support resilient infrastructure and protect natural resources across the San Diego region.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Legislative Update – Key Highlights for Our Local Chapter

Here's a brief overview of recent legislative activity affecting agencies in San Diego area and across the region:

Federal Update: DHS Funding Restored

Congress passed and signed a funding bill to end the 76-day DHS shutdown, keeping the agency funded through September 2026. Impacts are primarily national.

State Legislation: SB 992 Advances

Sponsored by the California Special Districts Association, SB 992 would:

- Maintain audit flexibility for special districts
- Prevent expiration of streamlined audit options
- Raise the eligibility threshold to \$250,000

This bill directly supports smaller districts by reducing administrative burdens.

High-Speed Rail Proposal

The California High-Speed Rail Authority is considering financing tools that could redirect local tax revenues. A decision on the 2026 plan has been delayed following public feedback.

Clean Fleet Regulations

The California Air Resources Board continues updates to fleet rules. Concerns remain about limited exemptions for emergency and utility vehicles. Advocacy efforts are ongoing.

Bottom Line

SB 992 is the most immediately impactful for local agencies, while other efforts highlight the need for continued advocacy to protect local services.

STUDENT VIDEO CONTEST – SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The San Diego Chapter of the California Special Districts Association is hosting its annual “Special Districts Make the Difference” Video Contest for local high school students.

Students are invited to create a short (60-second) video highlighting how special districts serve their communities.

Scholarships will be awarded:

- 1st Place: \$1,500
- 2nd Place: \$1,000
- 3rd Place: \$500

Deadline: June 30, 2026

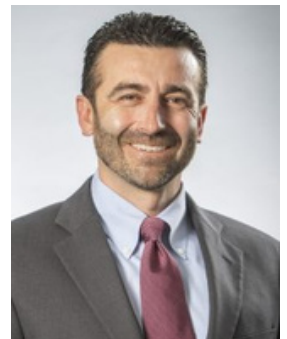
We encourage member agencies to help share this opportunity with local students and schools.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

San Diego Chapter Members,

We often associate spring with many things including the start of the baseball season, experiencing new growth, and celebrating educational milestones like graduations. I wanted to make sure you are all aware of some very special local opportunities to grow and celebrate our own educational achievements while saving your agencies on travel costs:



- Special District Leadership Academy is being held in Downtown San Diego May 11th – 14th. <https://leadershipacademy.csda.net/home>
- General Manager Leadership Summit June 28th – 30th just a short drive away in beautiful Newport Beach. <https://www.csda.net/events/event-description>
- 2026 CSDA Annual Conference in Palm Desert August 24th – 27th. <https://www.csda.net/events/event-description?CalendarEventKey>

Not only do our board members and staff gain valuable insights and training on being the best professional versions of themselves, but much of the above training opportunities count toward you or your agency's as being recognized publicly with certificates of excellence in District Transparency, Special District Governance, Certified Special District Manager, District of Distinction and Essential Leadership skills. <https://www.sdlf.org/programs/sdlf-programs>

Our next chapter meeting and dinner will be held on May 21st at The Butcher Shop where we will hear from Su Nguyen, from the County Register of Voters talking about the upcoming election season. I look forward to seeing you all there!

Thank you,

Jose Martinez
President
CSDA San Diego Chapter

TREASURER'S REPORT



January 1, 2026 through March 31, 2026

Income for the period was from the January 2026 lunch meeting \$3,193.00 and February 2026 dinner meeting \$3,640.00 for a total of \$6,833.00.

Expenditures for the period included The Butcher Shop Restaurant for the meeting room deposit \$500.00, January 2026 lunch meeting \$2,899.91 and February 2026 dinner meeting \$3,892.50 and credit card processing fees \$294.02 for a total of \$7,586.43.

The fund balances as of March 31, 2026 were as follows: the Grant Scholarship Fund balance remained unchanged with an ending balance of \$30,339.94; the Speaker Program fund remained unchanged with a balance of \$2,500.00; and the General Fund balance after adjustments for income and expenses decreased by \$753.43 for an ending balance of \$9,470.12 for a total Fund balance of \$42,310.06. The bank balance as of March 31, 2026 was \$42,310.06.

Rich Stevenson
Treasurer
CSDA San Diego Chapter

AFFILIATE MEMBERS



CSDA CHAPTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Jose Martinez, Otay Water District
jose.martinez@otaywater.gov

1st Vice President

Rachel Mason, Fallbrook Regional Health District
rmason@fallbrookhealth.org

2nd Vice President

Elaine Sullivan, Leucadia Wastewater
esullivan@lwwd.org

Treasurer

Rich Stevenson
rstevenson@sweetwater.org

Secretary/Newsletter Editor

Paulina Martinez-Perez, Sweetwater Authority
pmartinez-perez@sweetwater.org

Past President

Jack Bebee, Fallbrook Public Utility District
jackb@fpud.com

State CSDA Representative

Jo MacKenzie, Vista Irrigation District
mackgroup@cox.net

Chapter Administrator

Jenny Diaz, Otay Water District
Jenny.Diaz@otaywater.gov