



Central Coast Blue Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Central Coast Blue project?

Central Coast Blue is a regional recycled water project that will provide a sustainable water supply and will protect the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin (the City of Grover Beach's largest water supply source) from seawater intrusion. The project will include construction of a new Advanced Water Purification Facility (AWPF) to treat wastewater from the Pismo Beach wastewater treatment plant with state-of-the-art technology to purify the water before injecting it into the groundwater basin. For more information on the water treatment process, please visit <https://www.centralcoastblue.com/about>.

2. Who is participating in the Central Coast Blue project?

Central Coast Blue is a collaboration between the cities of Grover Beach, Arroyo Grande and Pismo Beach. The City Councils for each city approved a Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement in 2022 to form the Central Coast Blue Regional Recycled Water Authority (CCBRRWA) to provide for the operation of the project. The CCBRRWA is governed by a three-member Board of Directors, consisting of one representative from each city (currently Mayors Karen Bright of Grover Beach, Caren Ray Russom of Arroyo Grande and Ed Waage of Pismo Beach). To find meeting agendas and other CCBRRWA information, please visit <https://www.centralcoastblue.com/governance>.

3. How will the project provide water sustainability?

The Central Coast Blue project will intake treated water from Pismo Beach's wastewater treatment plant and pipe that water to the new AWPF. That water will then be treated to drinking water standards with advanced treatment technologies to prepare it for groundwater recharge. An estimated 900-1,000 Acre Feet (AF) per year of purified water will be injected into the groundwater basin to replenish the supply of water and prevent seawater intrusion into the existing groundwater supply. This will not only protect the groundwater supply the City of Grover Beach currently relies upon, but will also provide an estimated additional 324-360 AF per year of reliable groundwater for the City of Grover Beach, based on the City's 36% allocation.

4. What is the current scope of the project?

Phase 1 of the project proposes to construct the AWPF facility in the City of Grover Beach, as well as eight (8) wells (3 injection wells and 5 monitoring wells). Phase 1 will also include approximately two (2) miles of pipeline, including 1.1 miles of pipeline in Grover Beach. Please see the attached map showing the location of proposed pipelines in Grover Beach. In coordination with Phase 1, the City of Pismo Beach will also construct one new production well in Pismo Beach to replace an existing failing well, which will be fully funded by Pismo Beach.

Phase 2 of the project would include an expansion to the AWPf to purify water from the South San Luis Obispo County Sanitation District (SSLOCSD) Wastewater Treatment Plant. Up to three (3) additional injection wells and up to six (6) additional monitoring wells would be constructed in Phase 2 along with interconnecting pipelines. The schedule for Phase 2 of the project has not been established. Phase 1 is a stand-alone, independent project and is not contingent upon Phase 2, which may be considered and constructed should additional water supply from SSLOCSD be needed in the future.

5. What is the project timeline?

Preliminary Engineering and piloting of this project began in 2016. The project is currently in the permitting process and final design stage. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2024 and be completed in 2026 with the additional water provided by the project available shortly after.

6. How much will the project cost? How will it be funded?

The currently estimated cost of the project, including program costs from March 2022 through completion of construction (design, construction, implementation, and project contingency) is \$93 million. It is anticipated that State and Federal grants will be used for 50% of that total cost. The remaining cost is anticipated to be funded with low-interest Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) loans totaling \$47 million. The City of Grover Beach is responsible for 36% of the costs under the Cost Sharing Agreement approved by each City Council. If half of the City's costs are covered by grant funding, as expected, the City's share of funding will be \$16.7 million, which will be funded with the WIFIA loan to be repaid by water rates. The projected cost does not include the cost of the land for the AWPf in Grover Beach which was purchased previously.

7. Why has the cost increased since the original project cost estimate?

The estimated cost of the project has increased from \$49 million to \$93 million. The cost increase is primarily due to additional project features that were identified as the design was progressed past the conceptual phase and as a result of recent volatility in the construction market related to inflation, supply chain interruptions, and labor shortages. Cost increases have affected all sectors of the economy and are not unique to the construction market or public infrastructure projects. Due to continuing inflationary factors, project delays may lead to further project cost increases.

8. How much additional water will Grover Beach receive?

As noted above, Phase 1 of the project is estimated to increase the total groundwater basin water supply by approximately 900-1,000 AF per year. Under the Cost Sharing Agreement, the City of Grover Beach will be allocated 36% of that additional water supply, or approximately 324-360 AF per year.

The project will also enhance access to existing groundwater supplies. Grover Beach, Arroyo Grande, Pismo Beach, and Oceano have reduced groundwater pumping to 25%

of their entitlements to mitigate the threat of seawater intrusion. The Central Coast Blue injection wells will create a seawater intrusion barrier that will allow current groundwater pumping rates to be increased. The total water supply benefit to Grover Beach from the project is approximately 500 AF per year including new Central Coast Blue water supply and increased access to existing groundwater.

9. Will the project require rehabilitation of newly improved residential streets in Grover Beach?

Although there will be some need to replace previously improved residential streets in order to install pipelines, the pipeline routes have been optimized to avoid existing utilities and minimize repairs in streets recently repaved. In total, only two blocks, including intersection crossings, of newly repaved streets will be affected. These streets will be fully restored by the project once pipelines are installed. The Phase 1 pipeline routes are shown on the attached map.

10. Why isn't the City considering using the SSLOCSD plant as an alternative to this project?

This option was considered in previous studies, however, it was determined that this is not a viable option, as the SSLOCSD facility is in a floodplain and subject to risks associated with climate change and sea level rise. The Coastal Development Permit issued by the Coastal Commission for the facility's redundancy project is only valid through 2047, and the entire facility will likely be required to relocate when the permit expires. Construction of a recycled water facility at the SSLOCSD would be difficult to permit and locate given site constraints, and subject to the same limited term. Consequently, it is not financially responsible to invest significant funds in a facility that will require relocation in a relatively short period of time.

11. Where can I learn more about the project?

For more information regarding the CCB project, please visit <https://www.centralcoastblue.com/>.