



**For Immediate Release**

March 3, 2017

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## **Gutzeit, Atkins to Lead NCWD During Historic Moment for Water Management**

*Directors selected by their peers to head District as it builds new water agency for Santa Clarita Valley*

**February 8, 2017 (Newhall, Calif.)** –Newhall County Water District’s Board of Directors recently selected two long-time leaders to spearhead its efforts in 2017. Maria Gutzeit, who served as vice president in 2016, was selected to serve as this year’s president. B.J. Atkins, last year’s board president, was selected to serve as vice president.

The duo will lead the five-member board as it is in the process of creating a new water district for the region. The new district would be formed of NCWD, Castaic Lake Water Agency and Santa Clarita Water Division. This historic move is expected to save upwards of \$14 million for the region and create stronger opportunities for water reliability.

“It is such an exciting time for Santa Clarita Valley water,” said Gutzeit. “My goal over the next year is to bring the immense cost savings and water reliability opportunities of a new district directly to NCWD’s customers. It’s an honor to be trusted by my colleagues and community to lead this effort.”

Atkins, who is also NCWD’s representative to CLWA, is also working towards realizing the promise of the new district. As part of this commitment, Atkins is focused on fiscal stewardship and responsibility.

“We have a unique opportunity to manage water differently across the Santa Clarita Valley,” said Atkins. “It’s my goal to bring NCWD’s long-standing Enterprise Model of business to all residents. This will mean stronger water management at a lesser cost to the customers.”

Managing current water conditions is also a key focus for both Gutzeit and Atkins. While the region has received considerable rain in the past several months, the State of California recently decided to keep emergency drought restrictions in place. This can present challenge and opportunities for the region.

“We’re in a much better place than we were a year ago,” said Gutzeit. “But our focus must be planning for and anticipating the next historic drought. It requires a laser focus on

creating new supply opportunities, like recycled water, as well as continuing to make voluntary conservation part of our lives.”

Gutzeit is an environmental engineer and most recently served as NCWD president in 2015. She was elected to the Board in 2003 and has also served as its president in 2005, 2006, 2009 and 2012. She’s served as its Vice President in 2007, 2008, 2011, 2013 and 2016.

Atkins, an environmental consultant, was elected to the NCWD Board in 2005 and was re-elected in 2009 and 2013. He served as president in 2011, 2014 and 2016.

Gutzeit and Atkins are joined on the Board by directors Dan Mortensen, Kathy Colley and Lynne Plambeck. The NCWD Board convenes on the second Thursday of each month at the District’s headquarters in Newhall. The five-member board is elected directly by local residents and all directors must live within the NCWD service area. For more information on the NCWD Board, including agendas and meeting minutes, please visit the [District’s website](#).

### **About Newhall County Water District**

Newhall County Water District traces its roots back to 1913 and is the Santa Clarita Valley’s first public water utility, currently providing service to more than 44,400 residents in portions of the City of Santa Clarita and unincorporated Los Angeles County communities, including Newhall, Canyon Country, Valencia and Castaic.

For more information about the District, visit [www.ncwd.org](http://www.ncwd.org)

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