

# VISALIA TIMES DELTA

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## Guest column: Cal Water investing in infrastructure, water quality projects

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By: Tammy Kelly

If you're one of the roughly 143,000 people we serve in and around Visalia, or the almost 2 million residents in other communities we at California Water Service (Cal Water) are proud to serve, you enjoy reliable access to clean, safe water.

But, if you live in other Tulare County communities such as Seville, Monson and so many others, the tragic, current reality is that the water coming out of your taps or showerheads may not be safe.

At Cal Water, protecting our customers' health and safety is our highest priority. We start by investing in the infrastructure that is essential to providing safe, reliable water service. In the last three years alone, Cal Water invested more than \$628 million in infrastructure statewide.

In the past three years, we've invested almost \$19.5 million in Visalia's water infrastructure. We have proposed another \$41.6 million in investments for the next three years, and, just last week, we began a water main replacement project in northern Visalia that will strengthen water system reliability and infrastructure resiliency for local customers, and enhance fire protection in the area for first responders.

The project, which is expected to be completed in August of this year, includes the installation of 1,400 feet of new 12-inch ductile iron and 8-inch PVC water main, and 14 new individual service connections. Construction is taking place on Riggin Avenue, from Conyer Street to Giddings Street.

Investing in infrastructure is costly, but it's necessary to protect against leaks, ensure safe and reliable water service every day to Visalia residents and businesses, and deliver the water firefighters need during an emergency.

Investing in infrastructure alone, however, is not enough. We adhere to a rigorous water quality treatment and testing process that protects the water we provide to our customers from contaminants.

That's why we conduct more than 400,000 tests on 62,000 water samples up and down the state for around 300 constituents per year, to ensure our water meets or surpasses all federal and state water quality standards.

We're proud of our track record of providing more than 44,200 service in connections in our Visalia district with clean, safe water, and of our 93-year history of serving communities throughout California.

And, we would like to see all California residents enjoy a fundamental component of quality of life — clean, safe water when they need it.

That's why Cal Water supported the legislation passed to create the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund, and it's why we have partnered with organizations such as Community Water Center, Self-Help Enterprises and other agencies on solutions to address this pressing public health issue.

Tammy Kelly is district manager of California Water Service – Visalia