



June 20, 2023

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*For Immediate Release*

### **Los Angeles County Fire Department, California Water Service, and City of Rancho Palos Verdes Commission High-Capacity Helicopter Cistern to Help Fight L.A.-Area Wildfires**

RANCHO PALOS VERDES, Calif.—To commemorate their partnership and shared commitment to protect life and property in one of southern California’s most fire-prone areas, Los Angeles County Fire Department (L.A. County Fire), California Water Service (Cal Water), and the City of Rancho Palos Verdes (City) today commissioned a new HeloPod™ firefighting dip source and cistern.

As part of its annual Firefighter Grant Program, Cal Water provided a \$38,000 grant to L.A. County Fire for the HeloPod, an automatic-filling, high-capacity, helicopter dip tank, so helicopters fighting wildfires can fill their water tanks faster and conduct more water drops per hour. At today’s commissioning at the Ken Dyda Civic Center in Rancho Palos Verdes, L.A. County Fire provided a demonstration with a helicopter using the HeloPod, which holds up to 7,000 gallons of water and provides a 16' x 8' open water target for aerial firefighting helicopters. With the installation of the HeloPod, which will be housed



at the Civic Center, helicopters do not have to land to fill their tanks with water; filling up a helicopter with a HeloPod is four times faster than filling up by landing.

“The County of Los Angeles Fire Department is excited for the opportunity to partner with the City of Rancho Palos Verdes and Cal Water in the placement of the new Helopod at the Ken Dyda Civic Center,” said LA County Fire Assistant Chief Brian Bennett. “This firefighting tool will help to service the entire peninsula, providing a quick turnaround for our arial suppression helicopters during a wildfire.”

“The City of Rancho Palos Verdes is happy to accommodate the new HeloPod at the Ken Dyda Civic Center, where a helipad has been used for years to support firefighting operations,” said Rancho Palos Verdes City Manager Ara Mihranian. “We are grateful to Cal Water and the Los Angeles County Fire Department for their partnership and for making it possible to bring this new tool for fire suppression to the Palos Verdes Peninsula, especially Rancho Palos Verdes, with its vast open spaces areas, canyons, and the 1,500-acre Palos Verdes Nature Preserve.”

Cal Water’s Firefighter Grant Program started in 2019 and has since given more than \$500,000 to fire departments throughout its service areas in California. The grants are designed to offset costs associated with fire protection efforts, life-saving equipment, and training, and are greatly needed in a state that has had more than nine million acres burned over the past five years due to wildfires.

“Cal Water’s partnership with the firefighters in our service areas extends beyond providing the water they need to protect our communities,” said Ralph Felix, Cal Water’s Rancho Dominguez District Manager. “With many fire departments stretched for resources, our Firefighter Grant Program helps them obtain the equipment they need to be safe and protect others, especially as climate change causes the frequency and severity of fires to grow over the years. We are very pleased to partner with L.A. County Fire and the City of Rancho Palos Verdes to bring the HeloPod to the Palos Verdes Peninsula.”

For more information about Cal Water’s Firefighter Grant Program, please visit [www.calwater.com/firefightergrant](http://www.calwater.com/firefightergrant). The grants are part of the company’s philanthropic giving program and are not paid through customers’ rates.

### **About Los Angeles County Fire Department**



The County of Los Angeles Fire Department is proud to protect Life and Property on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, serving the cities of Rancho Palos Verdes, Rolling Hills, Rolling Hills Estates, and Palos Verdes Estates.

### **About California Water Service**

California Water Service provides high-quality, reliable water utility services to about 355,650 people through 134,600 service connections in its Rancho Dominguez District, and about 2 million people through 496,400 service connections statewide. What sets Cal Water apart is its commitment to enhancing the quality of life for its customers and communities. Guided daily by their promise to provide quality, service, and value, the utility's employees lead the way in working to protect the planet, care for people, and operate with the utmost integrity. Integral to Cal Water's strategy is investing responsibly in infrastructure, sustainability initiatives, and community well-being. The utility has been named one of "America's Most Responsible Companies" and "America's Most Trustworthy Companies" by Newsweek and a Great Place to Work®. More information is available at [www.calwater.com](http://www.calwater.com).

### **About the City of Rancho Palos Verdes**

The City of Rancho Palos Verdes is located on a coastal peninsula overlooking the Pacific Ocean in the South Bay of Los Angeles County. Incorporated in 1973, the City is home to 42,000 residents, 7 1/2 miles of coastline, a 1,500-acre nature preserve and hundreds more acres of open space. Residents and visitors enjoy expansive ocean views and ample opportunities for recreation, including golfing, hiking, beach access, and whale watching. Notable landmarks and points of interest include the Wayfarers Chapel designed by Lloyd Wright, the Point Vicente Lighthouse, the Point Vicente Interpretive Center, Terranea Resort, the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve, and Trump National Golf Club.

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