



## For Immediate Release

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# BCVWD Director Andy Ramirez among 16 statewide Latino elected officials amazed after touring Salton Sea

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INDIO, CA. Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District Director Andy Ramirez said he was amazed to see the impacts of Salton Sea contamination on the nearby community after his group of 16 local Latino elected officials from across California toured the Salton Sea on January 20. They observed the polluted and shrinking body of water, experienced the Sea's rotten egg stench (hydrogen sulfide), and inhaled the same arsenic and selenium laced dust that is plaguing the area's farmworkers and other low-wage families.

Water Education for Latino Leaders (WELL) typically conducts interviews with water experts, allowing its members to obtain information pertinent to them and their communities. After walking along the shoreline, the public officials participating in WELL interviewed Salton Sea Authority Executive Director G. Patrick O'Dowd regarding severe challenges to the local ecosystem and residents.

"The Salton Sea was once a beacon of prosperity and balance, but the reducing shoreline has created environmental and economic dilemmas for the Coachella Valley region," Ramirez observed.

Later that day, the WELL participants including mayors, city council members, school board members, and water board directors, visited a nearby Coachella Valley mobile home park suffering from unsafe groundwater wells beset by naturally occurring arsenic and other contaminants such as bacteria from leaking septic systems. The group interviewed a US Department of Agriculture (USDA) State Community Planner. Altogether, the group spent three days in the region.

WELL is a nonprofit statewide organization with a 12-year track record of educating 1,300 locally elected leaders from Latino communities that

are underrepresented in California water policymaking circles. The WELL delegation is the first of two cohorts of WELL members who are undertaking concentrated, on-site, in-person educational and training courses during 2024. WELL seeks to involve and empower the Latino community, which represents 40 percent of California's population by less than 2 percent of elected water officials.

“All stakeholders must come together to invest in a sustainable Sea,” Ramirez said. “With speed and willpower, a plan of action is within reach by all government entities to restore hope of the Salton Sea and be a beacon to the region.”

For more information, contact the WELL program at (909) 670-2928.  
<https://latinosforwater.org/>

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Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District was formed in 1919 and is governed by a publicly elected five-member Board of Directors. BCVWD is an independent special district that provides water service to 55,000 customers in a 28-square-mile service area.

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