



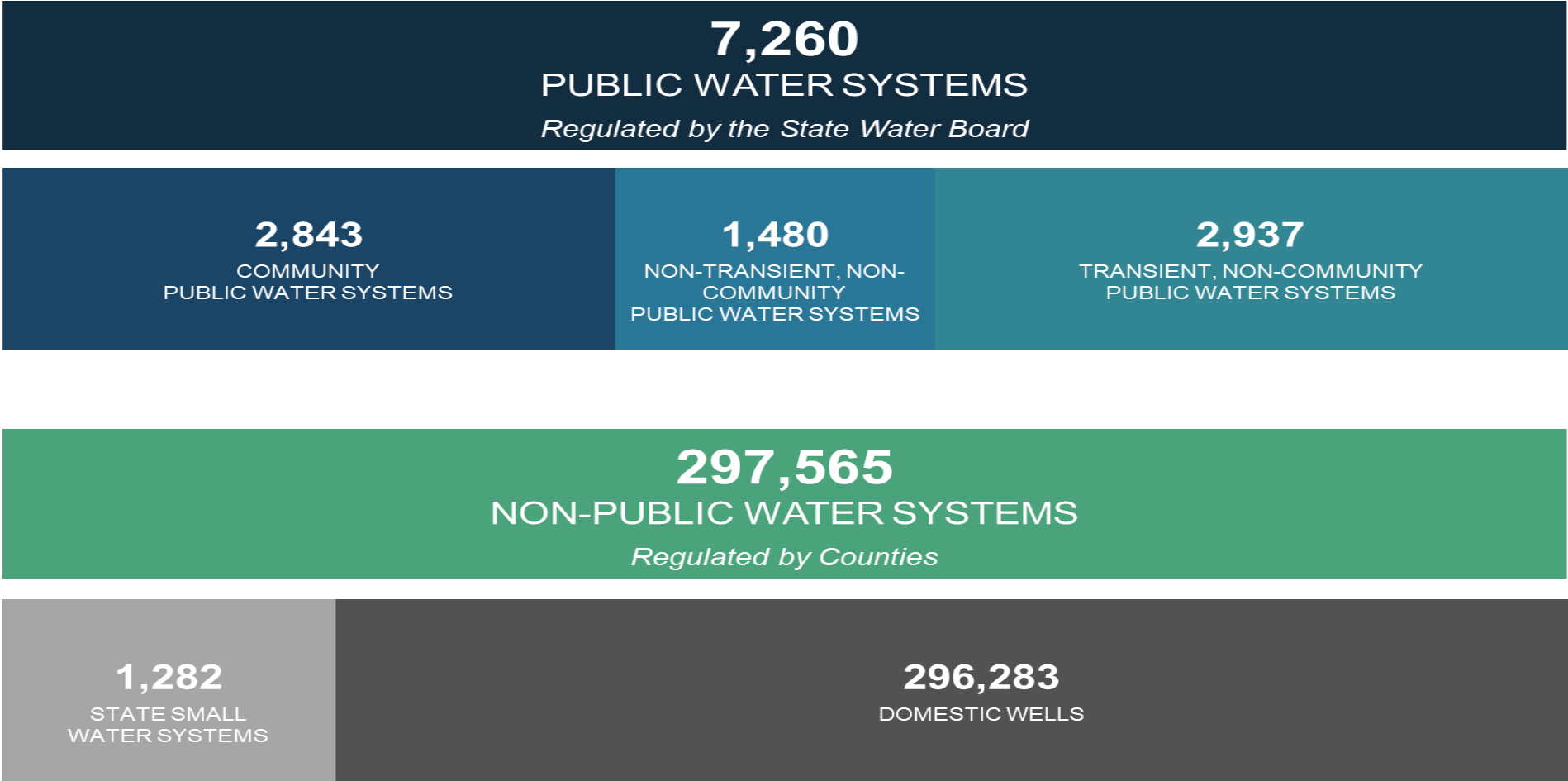
Supporting Small Water Systems in California

Evolving solutions to achieve the Human Right to Water

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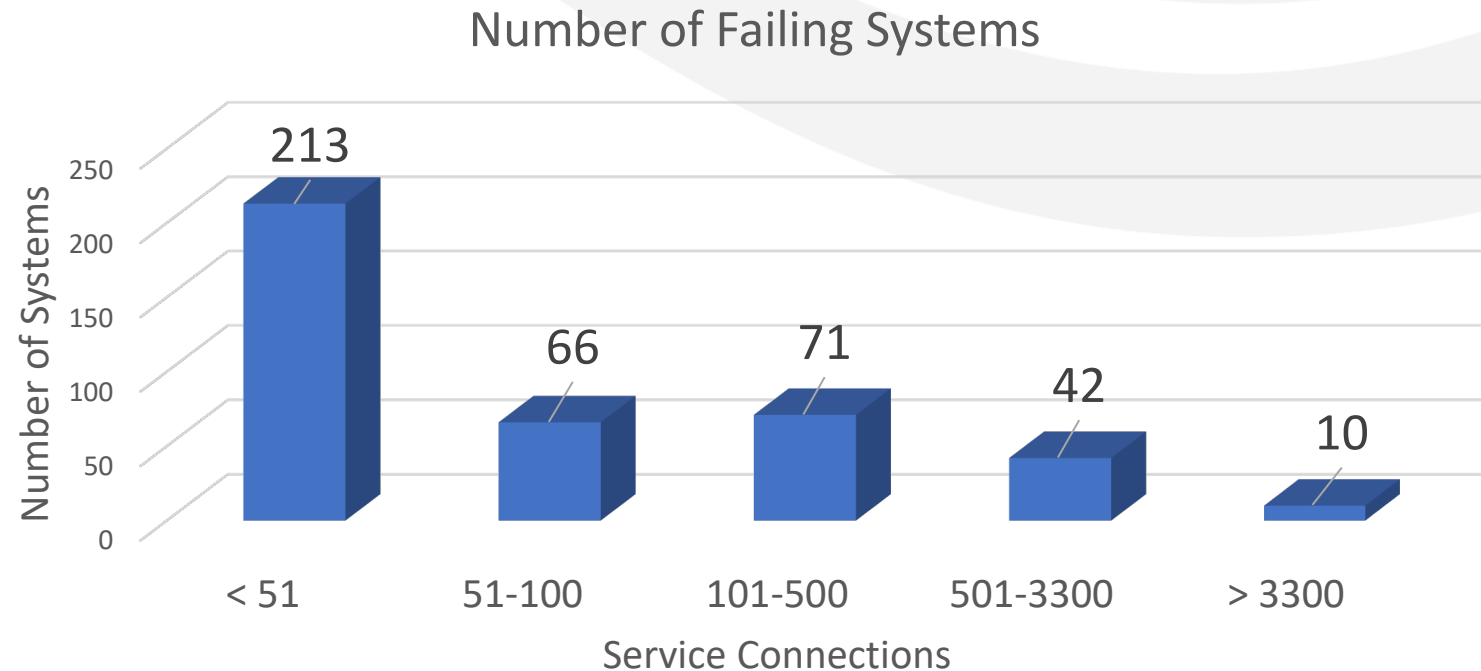


Water systems in California



Failing systems are mostly small

Distribution of failing systems by size: August 2025



Challenges On the Ground

- Challenge: Cities, counties, LAFCos, communities struggle and/or resist
- Challenge: Large scale needs across public water systems, state small systems, domestic wells
- Challenge: Rural systems



Achieving the Human Right to Water

CALIFORNIA WATER BOARDS

SAFER PROGRAM

SAFER 2019 – 2023 Accomplishments



251

water systems off the Failing list, serving over 2 million customers.



\$370 M

construction and planning assistance to Failing & At-Risk systems.



98%

Californians served by systems meeting drinking water standards.



755

water systems benefiting from SAFER staff support.



\$80.4 M

provided in technical and Administrator assistance.



142

consolidations completed, serving 100,000 customers.

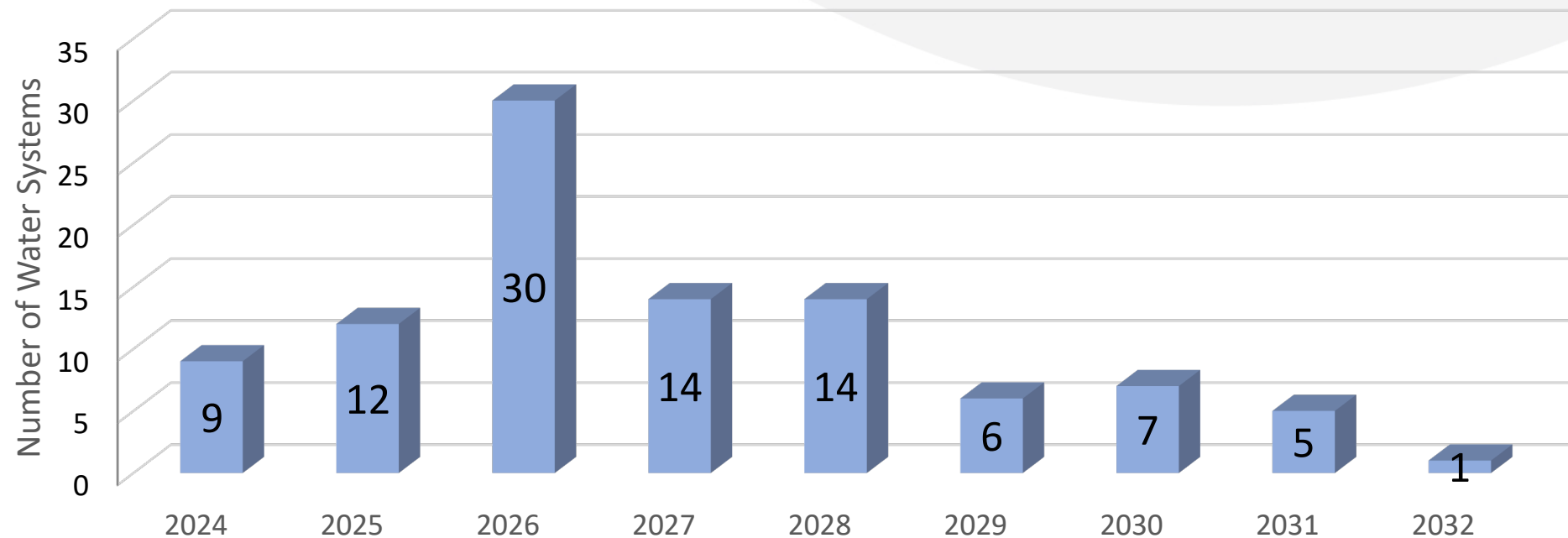
Challenges On the Ground...and Solutions!

- Challenge: Cities, counties, LAFCos, communities struggle and/or resist
 - **Solution: Encourage voluntary consolidation and SWB has Mandatory Consolidation Authority**
- Challenge: Large scale needs across public water systems, state small systems, domestic wells
 - **Solution: Regional Solutions to take advantage of economies of scale**
- Challenge: Rural systems
 - **Solution: Managerial Consolidation where possible, Administrator Appointments, short-term Operations & Maintenance funding**

Consolidations in Progress : Focused on failing systems

Consolidations of systems failing for the longest time

2019 Failing Water Systems Consolidating by Year - Projected



Consolidation Authority

- Effective June 24, 2015, [Senate Bill 88](#) (Statutes 2015, Chapter 27) added sections 116680-116684 to the California Health and Safety Code
- When public water systems are failing to meet water quality standards and/or have inadequate water supply, the State Water Board may order mandatory consolidations for systems that meet the following criteria:
 - System is classified as a Public Water System or State Small Water System; and
 - the system serves a disadvantaged community; and
 - the system consistently fails to provide an adequate supply of safe drinking water

Senate Bill 1263: Promote sustainability for new PWSs

- 2016 SB1263; effective January 1, 2017
- SB 1263 amended section 116540 and added section 116527 to the California Health and Safety Code (CHSC) and added section 106.4 to the Water Code.
- Section 116527 requires a person submitting an application for a proposed new public water system to first submit a preliminary technical report to the State Board.
- In addition to the consolidation aspect of the preliminary technical report, Section 116527 of the CHSC contains other required information as specified in Subsections (4), (5), (7), and (8).
 - (4) All sources of domestic water supply for the proposed new public water system.
 - (5) The estimated cost to construct, operate, and maintain the proposed new public water system, including long-term operation and maintenance costs and a potential rate structure.
 - (7) A discussion of all actions taken by the applicant to pursue a contract for managerial or operational oversight from an existing public water system.
 - (8) An analysis of whether a proposed new public water system's total projected water supplies available during normal, single dry, or multiple dry water years during a 20-year projection will meet the projected water demand for the service area

Human Right to Water

(2012) Water Code Section 106.3, the State statutorily recognizes that:

“every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes.”

(2016) State Water Board adopts the human right to water as a core value:

Directs implementation in Water Board programs and activities.

(2019) Passed Senate Bill 200 enabling the State Water Board:

Providing funding and establishing the Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) Program.





THANK YOU

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