

The top-left portion of the slide features a series of thin, light-brown lines that intersect to form various irregular polygons and shapes, creating a complex, abstract geometric pattern.

COUNTY OF FRESNO – PUBLIC WORKS AND PLANNING, SPECIAL DISTRICTS

June 16, 2026

WHAT ARE SPECIAL DISTRICTS?

Special Districts have four distinguishing characteristics.

- They are a form of local government.
- Have a governing board (varies by district type – dependent or independent).
- Provide focused services and facilities, and
- Have defined boundaries.




DEPENDENT VS INDEPENDENT SPECIAL DISTRICTS

Dependent

- Governed by another local government (city council, county board, etc.)
- The governing body of the city/county often acts as the district's board
- Less administrative and financial independence
- Budgets, decisions, and policies are typically controlled or heavily influenced by the parent government
- Examples would be our County-operated special districts.

Independent

- Have their own separate governing board (elected or appointed)
 - Operate with greater autonomy
 - Can make decisions, set budgets, and sometimes levy taxes independently
 - Examples would be community service districts and irrigation districts
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FRESNO COUNTY SPECIAL DISTRICTS

BACKGROUND

The first WWD was formed in 1961, and the first CSA was formed in 1962. CSA 35 was added for road maintenance in 1987 and expanded in 1989. Ordinance changes in 2013 expanded acceptable methods for maintaining roads to include HOAs. Sections PF-C.9 and PF-D.2 of the County's General Plan address the creation of new water and wastewater systems.

FRESNO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The governing body for Fresno County Special Districts, but all districts are established to be financially independent and are not to be subsidized by County General Funds. Special districts can be financed by special taxes, benefit assessments, service charges (fees, such as water and sewer fees), and Capital grants for Projects.

130 SPECIAL DISTRICTS BUDGETS

41 County Service Areas (CSA), 1 Highway Lighting District, 5 Maintenance Districts, 6 Waterworks Districts (WWD), and 77 road zones in CSA 35

SERVICES PROVIDED

One or more of the following: community water, community sewer, street lighting, snow removal, storm drainage, structural fire protection, first responder medical services, landscaping, refuse collection, park maintenance, wetlands monitoring, open space maintenance, and road maintenance.

COMMUNITY WATER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

- Twenty-two community water systems
 - Seventeen (17) groundwater systems. Seven (7) with treatment (Chlorination)
 - Four (4) surface water systems
 - City of Fresno for CSA 39AB
- Eleven community wastewater systems
 - Seven (7) secondary treatment systems
 - Four (4) tertiary treatment systems
- All systems are permitted and regulated by the State
- Maintained 24/7 by a team of 13 water/wastewater operators



MAJOR CHALLENGES

Small Systems and Aging Infrastructure

Age and Variety of Systems

Asset Management System – Cartegraph

Lack of Economy of Scale

Costly Process to Increase Rates

Prop 218 Process

Rate Study/Engineer's Report

Cost relative to annual revenues

Water Quality and the Cost of Treatment

Groundwater Quality and Compliance Orders

Capital Cost of Projects

Higher Longterm Operational Costs

RATE SETTING PROCESS

PROPOSITION 218

Constitutional amendment passed by voters in 1996. Sets the process for how local governments can impose taxes, assessments, and property-related fees. Different process for assessments vs fees.

COMPONENTS

Operation and Maintenance Cost, 50% Reserve, Inflation Factor, Capital Replacement

FACTORS

Size/Number of Connections, Type of Facilities, Level of Capital Replacement, Age of System, Direct and Indirect Charges

TRIGGERS

Financial need, funding opportunities, pending or completed projects, community input

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

Liaison between County and community.

Ideally, every district would have one. Not always the case.

Not a decision-making authority. Role is advisory.

Community/CAC Meetings

Goal is routine meetings (quarterly, bi-annual, annual)

Community engagement high during rate process or projects

Digital Presence

Each system has a website that has budget information and key notices or information

RECENT AND UPCOMING PROP 218S

COMPLETED:

CSA 32 (February 2023) – Water

CSA 30 (June 2023) – Water

WWD 37 (December 2024) -
Water

CSA 47 (June 2025) –
Water/Wastewater

CSA 44D (June 2025) –
Water/Wastewater

WWD 40 (June 2025) –
Water/Wastewater

CSA 44A (June 2026) –
Wastewater

SCHEDULED:

CSA 49 (June 2026) - Water

CSA 50 (June 2026) – Fire
Protection/Emergency Services

UPCOMING:

CSA 10 – Water ([February 2014](#))

CSA 10A – Water ([November 2001](#))

CSA 14 – Water ([November 2013](#))

CSA 34 – Water/Wastewater ([4 Zones](#))

CSA 39AB – Water ([May 2021](#))

CSA 43W- Water ([January 2014](#))

CSA 44C – Water ([April 2002](#))

WWD 38 – Water/Wastewater ([June 2013](#))

WWD 41 – Water/Wastewater ([May 1997](#))

WWD 42 – Water ([February 2008](#))

ONGOING GRANT FUNDING

FUNDING SOURCES

Special Districts continually look for funding opportunities to assist with infrastructure projects (both planning and construction), rate studies, feasibility studies, and O&M subsidies.

Most recently we have successfully acquired funding for projects through the following:

- California State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Financial Assistance (DFA)
 - O&M Subsidy
 - Technical Assistance
 - Planning and Construction
- California State Department of Water Resources (DWR)
 - Construction
- County of Fresno
 - American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
 - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

FUNDING APPROVED

ARPA:

CSA 2 – Park Improvements

CSA 43 – Park Improvement

CSA 43W – 2nd Well

CSA 44C – Water Infrastructure Improvements

All Water Districts – Meter Improvements

CDBG:

CSA 44A – Wastewater Improvements

DWR:

CSA 1 - Water Infrastructure Improvements

WWD 40 – Well Project

DFA:

CSA 30/32 – Water Distribution Replacement

CSA 30 – O&M Subsidy

CSA 10A, 14, 39AB, 49 and WWD 37, 40 - Technical Assistance

FUNDING PENDING

O&M Subsidy:

CSA 49 – Water Subsidy

WWD 40 – Water Subsidy

Planning/Construction:

CSA 14 – TCP 1,2,3 Violation

CSA 49 – Groundwater Wells



THANK YOU