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# California Water Service Launches, Expands Seventh Annual H<sub>2</sub>O Challenge Classroom Competition

## K-12 Students and Teachers Encouraged to Engage in Water Conservation Projects

SAN JOSE, Calif., Jan. 13, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- (NYSE: CWT)—California Water Service (Cal Water), in partnership with the California Association of Science Educators (CASE) and DoGoodery, today announced the launch and expansion of the seventh annual Cal Water H<sub>2</sub>O Challenge. The free, project-based competition invites fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade classrooms in Cal Water service areas to develop and implement solutions for local water issues. In light of the ongoing public health crisis, Cal Water has evolved its model this year to integrate distance learning for schools and students.

The revamped and expanded Cal Water H<sub>2</sub>O Challenge will build on best practices gleaned from the previous six years to engage more people in caring for water at a range of levels. In addition to the project-based challenge, the Cal Water H<sub>2</sub>O Challenge will now offer expert Teacher Ambassadors. With the new implementation of office hours, virtual meetings, an updated handbook, new video guides, and additional resources, Teacher Ambassadors and advisors have developed a clear pathway to engage students in real-world inquiry while helping reach curriculum goals. To date, more than 250 classrooms have participated in the program. For the second year in a row, the Classroom Challenge welcomes school-based clubs that are still being held to participate as well.

The classroom challenge will continue to ask students in grades 4-6 to identify a local water-based issue and work together to address their chosen issue through research and experiments over four to eight weeks. Understanding the hurdles of distance learning and the need for an equitable, fair competition, this year's Classroom Challenge will focus on designing solutions to care for water. Judges will not be seeking fully implemented projects, but rather looking for complete designs that have been tested and refined.

“The Cal Water H<sub>2</sub>O Challenge is an immersive experience for everyone involved; it gives students and educators the chance to view water conservation through a unique lens,” said Martin A. Kropelnicki, Cal Water President and CEO. “We’re pleased that, through this partnership with CASE and DoGoodery, we can continue to provide quality, service, and value to the communities we serve by engaging our future leaders—and often our best ambassadors—in the importance of water conservation and other water issues, even through a pandemic and with special school situations.”

Camron King, CASE Executive Director, adds that the project allows students to enrich their science education while connecting with their community. “The Cal Water H<sub>2</sub>O Challenge is

an incredible multi-disciplinary approach to providing students with hands-on, relevant science education. The Challenge provides the platform from which participating educators and students foster the connection of science and the world around them,” King said. “CASE is appreciative of the partnership with Cal Water, as the project and our work align with the same goals and principles.”

Due to the coronavirus, this year’s winning classroom will receive \$3,500 and an additional \$1,000 college scholarship for each participating student. Runners-up receive a classroom grant and prizes for students and teachers, including an American Express gift card for each classroom.

Shawn McCarty and his sixth-grade students from Hoover Elementary (Stockton, Calif.) won first place in the 2020 Cal Water H<sub>2</sub>O Challenge for their project titled “Water Collectors: Recycle, Reduce, Reuse.” McCarty’s students wanted to find a solution for current and future droughts. Students tackled this issue by substituting water in pipelines with recycled rainwater harvested from self-designed water collectors. McCarty described the Challenge as having life-long effects in his students’ daily lives. “With this project, we saw how easy it is to save, store, and recycle water. Several students said they would like to build rain collectors at their homes. I believe they are more likely now to recycle and reuse water in gardens than they were before.”

For more information about the programs and eligibility requirements, visit [challenge.calwater.com](http://challenge.calwater.com).

### **About Cal Water**

California Water Service serves about 2 million people through 489,600 service connections in California. The utility has provided water service in the state since 1926. Additional information may be obtained online at [www.calwater.com](http://www.calwater.com).

### **About CASE**

The California Association of Science Educators (CASE) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) member-based community that works to lead the promotion of high-quality, equitable science education through advocacy, collaboration, and communication. Recognizing that science has a profound influence on our lives, our local environments, and our world, CASE fosters a community focused on enhancing scientific and environmental literacy and agency for all. For more information, visit <https://cascience.org>.

### **About DoGoodery**

DoGoodery is a social impact agency with storytelling at the heart of its mission. DoGoodery collaborates with partners through all phases of social impact strategy building and storytelling, delivering goodness to audiences and clients alike and amplifying stories of change that empower, elevate, and excite. For more information, visit [www.dothegoodery.com](http://www.dothegoodery.com).