



Media Release

Board issues new order directing Orosi and East Orosi to consolidate water systems

Order sets enforceable consolidation schedule to secure safe drinking water

Feb 27, 2026

Contact: [Dimitri Stanich](#), Information Officer

SACRAMENTO – Working to expedite long overdue access to safe and affordable drinking water for the residents of East Orosi in Tulare County, the State Water Resources Control Board today ordered the consolidation of the community’s water system with that of neighboring Orosi.

After years of stalled progress toward a consolidation it first ordered in 2020, the State Water Board’s new mandatory consolidation order replaces all prior orders with a clear enforceable construction timeline and directives for specific actions.

“In California, we recognize that safe drinking water is a human right,” said Andrew Altevogt, Assistant Deputy Director for the Division of Drinking Water. “We will enforce these new terms to make sure that East Orosi residents finally have reliable access to this basic necessity, just like 99% of all Californians.”

The East Orosi Community Services District serves a severely disadvantaged community of about 420 residents in an unincorporated part of Tulare County. The district has been failing to provide safe drinking water for over 20 years due to nitrate contamination in a groundwater well and aging infrastructure. Over the past 14 years, the board has provided about \$1.2 million for emergency hauled and bottled water delivery to East Orosi residents.

Orosi Public Utilities District, a larger water system with the ability to more reliably provide safe drinking water, is located a mile away from East Orosi and currently serves about 8,300 customers.

The board recommends [consolidation](#), which commonly involves a smaller, struggling water system being absorbed into a larger one, as a sustainable way to secure safe drinking water for communities like East Orosi. Since 2019 when the board’s [Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience](#) (SAFER) drinking water program began,

there have been 180 consolidations in California, benefitting 362,000 people, mostly in disadvantaged communities.

The board fully covers the cost of consolidations it orders, and the larger consolidated water system typically benefits from the expanded customer base.

“Imagine growing up believing that water only comes from a plastic bottle, and that the tap in your own home is not something you can trust. For too many youth and families in East Oroquieta, that has been their reality. That is not right, and it is not acceptable in 2026,” said Tulare County Supervisor Eddie Valero. “It’s time for all the parties involved to take full advantage of the support and funding the State Water Board is offering so we can finally get this consolidation done for the people of East Oroquieta. They have waited far too long for safe, reliable drinking water in their homes, something most of us turn on every single day without a second thought.”

In addition to emergency hauled and bottled water, the board has also provided about \$1.1 million in technical assistance through its SAFER program to help East Oroquieta, Oroquieta and Tulare County define and pursue a long-term solution for East Oroquieta. In 2022, the board also [appointed Tulare County to serve as administrator](#) for East Oroquieta’s drinking water system and has fully funded the county’s costs of about \$1 million. The board also approved the funding of construction costs for the consolidation, estimated to be about \$15 million.

More information about the SAFER program can be found on the board’s [website](#).

The State Water Board’s mission is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California’s water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper resource allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations.



The Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide program that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment — particularly in disadvantaged communities.