



**California Special  
Districts Association**  
*Districts Stronger Together*



# CA SPECIAL DISTRICTS FACT SHEET

*Delivering Communities' Core Services*

## **IT'S ABOUT QUALITY, NOT QUANTITY**

It is not the *number* of special districts that is paramount, but the ability to deliver core local services effectively and responsibly. Large or small, special districts are sensitive and responsive to the neighborhoods and regions they serve.

Quality services are best measured by the satisfaction of local residents, but what the numbers do speak to is the ability of special districts to meet evolving local needs:

### ***By the Numbers***

- **Special districts impact the daily lives of millions of Californians:**
  - Deliver water and treat wastewater for more than 30 million.
  - Protect 11 million from fire and other emergencies.
  - Operate more than half of California's critical access hospitals.
  - Supply water to 90 percent of California's farmland.
  - Provide other core services throughout the state: flood defense, mosquito and vector control, trash collection, ports and harbors, resource conservation, public cemeteries and airports.
- **Voters have created 2,160 independent special districts to serve their needs:**
  - While the State Controller's 2009-10 report lists 4,792 "special districts," over half are actually non-profit corporations or components of other governments, such as cities and counties.
- **Special districts are one of the few types of government agencies that have reduced in number:**
  - The number of independent special districts has consolidated by more than 7 percent over the past 20 years according to the California State Senate Local Government Committee.

### ***A Thoughtful, Local Process***

- District reorganizations are researched and approved by the Local Agency Formation Commission, whose mandated goal is to assure that changes in governmental organization occur in a manner which encourages orderly growth, discourages sprawl, preserves agricultural and open space lands and safeguards the delivery of efficient and quality municipal services.
- An emphasis on service delivery is why special districts have taken the lead in self-initiating most of the 150 consolidations and mergers over the last two decades.
- A one-size-fits-all, top-down approach does not work with core local services. Deliberate study and planning at the local level is necessary to ensure viability and identify efficiencies. Ultimately, the power to reorganize local services should always rest with the local citizens who established them and depend on them.

For more information please visit [www.csda.net](http://www.csda.net).