

Sunnyslope  
Water District  
3570 Airline Hwy.  
Hollister, CA 95023

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## Informe de Calidad del Agua de Sunnyslope 2024

Este informe contiene información importante sobre el agua potable de nuestra comunidad. Traducirlo o hablar con alguien que lo entienda.

Como parte de nuestros requisitos reglamentarios, producimos este informe de confianza del consumidor para resumir los resultados de las más de 15,000 pruebas de calidad del agua que realizamos anualmente. Sunnyslope no tuvo violaciones de la calidad del agua en 2024, o en ningún momento en los últimos 28 años. Para ver este informe en español, por favor visite [sunnyslopewater.org](http://sunnyslopewater.org), o llame al (831) 637-4670 para obtener ayuda. ¡Muchas gracias!



Here is your Sunnyslope Water District

# 2024 Annual Water Quality Report

As part of our regulatory requirements, Sunnyslope Water District produces this consumer confidence report to summarize the results of the more than 15,000 water quality tests we conduct annually. We continually test your drinking water to not only meet, but exceed all state and federal standards for quality and safety.

***Sunnyslope had no water quality violations in 2024—or at any time in the last 27 years for either primary (health-related) or secondary (aesthetic taste/smell) contaminants.*** Any health-related contaminants detected were at trace levels, well below the concentrations allowed by the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) for health and safety.

At Sunnyslope, we are wholeheartedly committed to providing you with safe, reliable, high-quality drinking water. We value our customers and want you to be informed. If you have any questions about this report or your water service, please call us at (831) 637-4670. To view comprehensive water testing results, please visit [sunnyslopewater.org](http://sunnyslopewater.org). You may also contact the USEPA for information about contaminants, health effects, and the Safe Drinking Water Act at [water.epa.gov/drink](http://water.epa.gov/drink), or call their Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1 (800) 426-4791.

Drew Lander, P.E.  
General Manager, Sunnyslope Water District



**Drew Lander, P.E., General  
Manager, Sunnyslope Water**



**Sunnyslope  
Water District**

*Providing reliable, high-quality,  
cost-effective water and sanitary  
services to our community, to protect  
human health and the environment*

3570 Airline Hwy, Hollister, CA 95023  
(831) 637-4670 • [sunnyslopewater.org](http://sunnyslopewater.org)  
Open Monday-Friday, 8 am to 5 pm

### Free 24-hour emergency service

If you think your water meter is leaking, or you see water gushing in the street, it is an emergency. Do not hesitate to contact us at (831) 637-4670, day or night! Our on-call staff will return your call immediately.

The public is welcome to attend Sunnyslope Water District board meetings, held every fourth Tuesday of the month at 5:15 pm. To attend remotely via Zoom, please click the board meeting link at [sunnyslopewater.org](http://sunnyslopewater.org).

### Board of Directors

Mike Alcorn, President  
Jerry Buzzetta, Vice-president  
Dorothy (Dee) Brown  
Orlando Martinez  
Ed Mauro

### General Manager

Drew Lander, P.E.





## Sunnyslope water quality testing

### 2024 by the numbers

**15,170**

*total tests performed*



*throughout our water treatment, transmission, and distribution system*



**105**

*substances tested; all health-related contaminants detected were at trace levels, well below legal safety limits*



**114**

*locations tested (homes, schools, treatment plants, fire hydrants, water lines, wells, pump stations, tanks, etc.)*

**0**

*Water quality violations in 2024 –and for the last 28 years for both health-related and non-health-related contaminants*



## Where does my water come from?

### Sunnyslope water comes from two sources:

#### 1. Imported surface water

All our surface water originates as snow or rain in the Sierra Nevada range. Runoff enters rivers that flow into the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta (the largest estuary on the West Coast), and into 20 reservoirs that are part of the massive Central Valley Project (CVP). The CVP is a complex network of infrastructure that supplies water to Californians as far south as Bakersfield, as well as millions of acres of farmland. The Delta is a crucial ecological and water resource, but its health and sustainability has degraded steadily during 175 years of nonstop human usage. State agencies, environmental groups, and researchers are seeking strategies to restore the overtaxed Delta ecosystem.

From the Delta, water runs through a canal to the CVP's San Luis Reservoir, located near Los Banos on Highway 152. Then the water travels via the Pacheco Tunnel and Hollister Conduit to our local Lessalt and West Hills Water Treatment Plants. During normal, non-drought years, approximately 80 percent of water supplied by Sunnyslope is from the San Luis Reservoir. We depend upon this imported water to meet water quality goals and protect the Hollister groundwater supply. Imported surface water reduces demand on our North San Benito Groundwater Basin, and blending it with our local well water greatly reduces water hardness and improves the water quality of our drinking water supply.

Each year, water agencies like the San Benito County Water District (SBCWD) are allocated a percentage of their federally contracted surface water allotment, dependent on rain and snowfall, reservoir levels, and other factors. During wet years, the SBCWD stores excess surface water in our groundwater basin and at the local San Justo Reservoir for future use. In addition, a new Accelerated Drought Response Project (ADRoP) is currently being constructed by SBCWD to store up to 2,700 more acre-feet of water during wet years. The project includes expansion of the West Hills Water Treatment Plant (currently underway), and construction of five aquifer storage and recovery wells with new pipelines to the plant. During wet years, when we have bigger surface water allocations, we will now be able to treat and store that water for immediate use during drought, greatly increasing local water reliability.

#### 2. Local groundwater

Sunnyslope Water District owns and operates five wells which supply approximately 20 percent of our potable water during normal, non-drought years when we receive an adequate allocation of surface water from the CVP. Groundwater is critical to get us through periods of drought, and for economic and environmental sustainability. Imported surface water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta has allowed our local groundwater basin to stabilize from historically low levels in the 1970s, putting us in a much better position than many municipalities that depend solely on surface water. However, it is important that we conserve as much water as possible to maintain our underground aquifer.



Surface water that originated as snow and rain in the Sierra Nevada range flows through our local West Hills Water Treatment Plant. The plant is now being expanded so we can treat and store more water during wet years to serve as a buffer against drought.

17%  
Local groundwater

83%  
Imported  
surface water



Sunnyslope  
water sources

2024 percentages



## Improved water quality in 2024

Thanks to three consecutive wet winters, the Hollister urban area received a 75 percent imported surface water allocation in 2024, on top of a 100 percent allocation in 2023. This has replenished our region's stored surface water after our zero allocation in 2022, and 25 percent allocation in 2021 due to the recent drought. With this ample imported water supply, Sunnyslope was able to deliver a very high quality blend of 83 percent surface water and 17 percent groundwater during 2024.

Hard water used to be an issue in the Hollister area when our water came solely from local wells, but that changed as our two local treatment plants began delivering mostly surface water imported from the San Luis Reservoir (the Lessalt plant began operating in 2003, and West Hills came online in 2017).

When our county receives normal surface water allocations, Sunnyslope's water hardness ranges between 150-180 ppm, or 8.7 to 10.4 grains per gallon—about the same hardness found in other water districts across California. Water hardness above 180 ppm can cause scale on faucets and appliances.

When drought decreases surface water allocations, Sunnyslope has to use more groundwater to make up the deficit, which increases water hardness temporarily. Thankfully, the local San Justo Reservoir provides stored surface water to mitigate water hardness. In addition, a new Accelerated Drought Response Project (ADRoP) is currently underway to increase water storage during wet years. The project includes five aquifer storage wells and expansion of the West Hills plant so we can store already treated surface water.

## How is my water treated?

Highly qualified Sunnyslope Water staff continually test water throughout our entire purification and distribution system to ensure water quality and safety. We also regularly send water samples to independent offsite labs to verify our treatment processes. Certified operators at our two water treatment plants closely monitor and record every stage of treatment, and document findings over time. Sensors and instruments constantly measure water properties such as pH, oxidation, temperature, total organic carbon, and many more parameters. Sensors connected to our SCADA electronic operating system allow operators to continuously control every aspect of the plant.

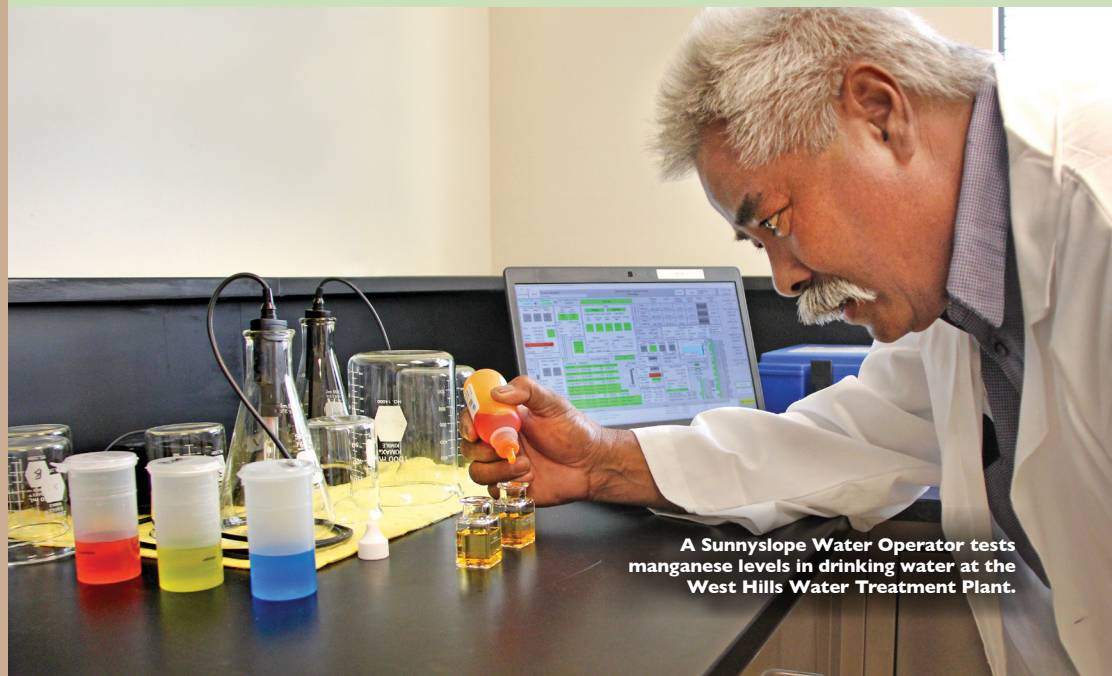
At the **Lessalt Water Treatment Plant**, untreated surface water first passes through special sand filters that remove iron and manganese. Water then flows through activated carbon filters to remove microscopic organic contaminants. After that, microfilters remove remaining microscopic particles, and pH is adjusted to improve taste and prevent pipeline corrosion. As a final safety measure, we slightly chlorinate the water to eliminate any remaining bacteria and viruses.

At the **West Hills Water Treatment Plant**, carbon removes microscopic organic materials in our imported surface water, which is then chemically treated to separate out particles in a settling tank. Water subsequently enters a sand filter which captures bacteria and microscopic particles. Technicians then adjust pH levels and chlorinate the water as a final safeguard.

Unlike surface water from rivers, lakes, and reservoirs, **groundwater** from Sunnyslope's five wells is naturally clean, and requires no treatment except for slight chlorination. Soil filters out pollutants as water percolates down to the aquifer. To ensure water quality, every day we perform chlorine residual tests at every well, and at 15 different sampling stations throughout the distribution system. Naturally hard groundwater is blended with softer surface water to improve taste and aesthetics.

## New regulations for Chromium-6

Hexavalent chromium, also known as Chromium 6 (Cr-6), is a toxic form of chromium, a metal which is naturally found in rocks, plants, and soil. CR-6 is mainly a problem when by-products from industries such as steel mills and tanneries, and other manufacturing processes pollute water supplies. Cr-6 is also commonly found in groundwater at trace levels due to environmental leaching from rocks and minerals. Trace amounts of hexavalent chromium are natural in the geology of the



A Sunnyslope Water Operator tests manganese levels in drinking water at the West Hills Water Treatment Plant.



### Sunnyslope Water service area

Sunnyslope provides potable water to the eastern half of Hollister, including Ridgemark and some urban parts of San Benito County—about half the local population, or 7,800 water connections. We are also working to consolidate three local water providers (Tres Pinos Water District, Best Road Mutual Water Company, and the Stonegate water system) into our system by 2026. The annexations will ensure safe, reliable drinking water in these areas and provide more customers to share costs. Sunnyslope also supplies treated surface water to the City of Hollister Water Utility, which maintains its own distribution system and customer base.

### Gilroy-Hollister Valley Groundwater Basin.

In October 2024, the regulatory limit (MCL or maximum contaminant level) for Cr-6 was changed from 50 ug/L to 10ug/L. (ug/L stand for micrograms per liter, and is equivalent to parts per billion.) Some local wells tested slightly over this new regulation level. While a water system of our size is not considered in violation of the chromium (hexavalent) MCL until after October 1, 2027, we are now working on projects that will blend impacted sources with lower Cr-6 sources to reduce the overall concentration in delivered water: A lifetime of exposure (70 years) to Cr-6 levels at 10ug/L may increase likelihood of cancer by 0.05 percent, according to the State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water. Projects to bring the wells into compliance are estimated to cost \$3 to 5 million.



Sometimes dissolved manganese can cause water to have a slight tint. This water is perfectly safe to drink, but you can call the Sunnyslope Water office to report it and find out when the issue will be resolved. Do not waste water by trying to flush your lines, which will only bring more tinted water into your home. Check again in an hour or so and the problem should be corrected.

### What causes chlorine taste or tinted appearance in water?

For health and safety, water treatment includes chlorination as a final step to kill any remaining bacteria and viruses. If you detect a chlorine smell and want to remove it, you can let the water stand in an open container for five minutes, install an undersink filter, or use a water filter pitcher.

On rare occasions, tap water can temporarily have a slight yellow or brown tint, noticeable in a white tub or sink. The color is usually from small amounts of dissolved iron and manganese, which is harmless. Water can also look tinted when pipe sediment becomes suspended during high-velocity flow. This can happen during water main flushing or firefighting activities. Tinted water is perfectly safe to drink. If you find it bothersome, please do not flush your lines as that will only waste water and bring more tinted water into your home. Wait an hour or so, and then check the tap closest to the main line in the street—the problem will most likely be corrected.

Water can also look cloudy or milky due to dissolved air bubbles in the pressurized system—this clears quickly as bubbles dissipate. If you have any concerns about your water, please don't hesitate to call us at (831) 637-4670.



Sunnyslope Water  
**2024**

### By the numbers



**22** employees...

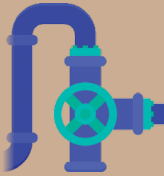
...provided water service to **26,800** customers



...maintained and operated **2** treatment plants,

**5** wells, and

**100** miles of buried water mains



...exercised **334** of total **2,750** water valves

...replaced **244** of total **7,500** water meters



...flushed **315** of total **1,000** fire hydrants

...responded to **127** water emergency calls



## 2024 Sunnyslope Water testing results

Sunnyslope Water tests regularly for 105 contaminants and substances. For brevity, this table does not include undetected substances, or those that were found in negligible trace amounts. We continually test for primary regulated contaminants which affect health, as well as secondary substances that affect aesthetics but do not impact safety. Unless otherwise noted, results shown are averages of tests completed from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024. To read the table, start with "Substance tested" on the left and read across. "MCL" is the highest level allowed for the substance, and "PHG/MCLG" is the goal level. The range for groundwater and surface water shows the lowest and highest amounts measured. "Typical sources" tells where substances originate. The "Violations" column shows that Sunnyslope has no water quality violations; in fact, we greatly exceed government requirements for all substances.

Substance tested	Unit of measurement	MCL (max. allowed)	PHG or MCLG	Groundwater Average	Groundwater Range	Surface water Average	Surface water Range	Violations	Typical sources*
<b>Disinfection by-products and residuals in distribution system (health-related)</b>									
Arsenic <sup>1</sup>	ug/L	10	0.004	1.5	ND-2.6	ND	ND	none	2
Fluoride <sup>1</sup>	mg/L	2	1	0.28	0.18-0.35	ND	ND	none	2
Nitrate	mg/L	10	10	2.6	0.22-0.37	0.87	0.85-0.87	none	2,3
Chromium VI	ug/L	10	0.02	9.43	1.4-2.3	NA	NA	none	2
Gross alpha	pCi/L	15	0	2.58	2.58	1.85	1.67-2.03	none	1
Uranium	pCi/L	20	0.43	3.1	3.1	NA	NA	none	1
<b>Secondary regulated substances (not health-related)</b>									
Color	CU	15	NA	2.6	ND-2.6	10.35	10-10.71	none	4
Manganese	mg/L	50	NA	ND	ND	24.5	ND-110	none	2
Turbidity	NTU	5	NA	0.13	0.10-0.15	2.15	1.9-2.4	none	5
Total dissolved solids	mg/L	1,000	NA	827	814-844	270	250-290	none	2
Specific conductance	micromho	1,600	NA	1,367	1,300-1,440	503	430-570	none	6
Chloride	mg/L	500	NA	135	114-177	75	67-83	none	2
Sulfate	mg/L	500	NA	234	216-258	42	41-42	none	2
Boron	ug/L	1,000	NA	.48	ND-1.00	ND	ND	none	2
<b>Additional water quality information (not health-related)</b>									
Hardness	mg/L	NA	NA	420	402-432	120	110-130	none	2
Calcium	mg/L	NA	NA	63	56-70	24	22-26	none	2
Magnesium	mg/L	NA	NA	66	60-70	13.25	11-15	none	2
Sodium	mg/L	NA	NA	130	115-143	53	49-57	none	2
Silica <sup>2</sup>	mg/L	NA	NA	29	25-32	NA	NA	none	2
Potassium	mg/L	NA	NA	3.16	3-3.4	3.6	3.5-3.7	none	2
Alkalinity	mg/L	NA	NA	266	245-283	95	79-110	none	2
pH		NA	NA	8.06	ND-8.1	7.95	7.9-8.0	none	2

Substance tested	Unit of measurement	MCL (maximum allowed)	PHG or MCLG	Number of detections	Violations	Typical sources*
<b>Microbiological contaminants in distribution system (health-related)</b>						
Total coliform	samples	2 positives per month	0	0	none	7
E. coli	samples	1	0	0	none	8

Substance tested	Unit of measurement	MCL (max. allowed)	PHG or MCLG	Average for site with highest readings	Range across all sites	Violations	Typical sources*
<b>Disinfection by-products and residuals in distribution system (health-related)</b>							
Trihalomethanes	ug/L	80	NA	31	7.4-40	none	9
Haloacetic acids	ug/L	60	NA	7	2.1-15	none	9
Chlorine	mg/L	4	4	1.75 across all sites	0.73-2.16	none	11

Substance tested	Unit of measurement	MCL (max. allowed)	No. of sites sample	No. of sites over notification level	90th percentile	Violations	Typical sources*
<b>Customer tap sampling (health-related)</b>							
Lead	ug/L	15	40	2	0	none	10
Copper	mg/L	1.3	40	0	0.082	none	10

1. Fluoride and arsenic were tested in 2020. 2. Silica was tested in 2011. The State Division of Drinking Water does not require annual testing of these substances because concentrations do not change frequently.

### \*Typical sources key

1. Decay of natural and man-made deposits
2. Erosion of natural deposits
3. Runoff and leaching from fertilizers and septic tanks
4. Naturally occurring organic materials
5. Soil runoff
6. Substances that form ions when in water
7. Naturally present in the environment
8. Human and animal fecal waste
9. Byproduct of drinking water disinfection
10. Internal corrosion of household plumbing
11. Drinking water disinfectant added for treatment

### Definitions

**CU – Colorimetric units** are used to measure the concentration of colored compounds in solutions

**Haloacetic Acids/ Trihalomethanes** Chemical byproducts of chlorination as chlorine breaks down organic substances.

**MCL – Maximum Contaminant Level** The highest amount of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. Primary MCLs are set as close to the MCL Goal or Public Health Goal as is economically and technologically feasible. Secondary MCLs are set to protect water appearance, taste, and odor.

#### MCLG – Maximum Contaminant Level Goal

The amount of a contaminant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety and are set by the US Environmental Protection Agency.

**mg/L – milligrams per liter** Equivalent to parts per million, a measurement of concentration on a weight or volume basis. One part per million concentration is equivalent to four drops of ink in a 55-gallon drum.

**Micromho** Unit of electrical conductance.

**NA – Non-Applicable** Category is not applicable in this situation.

**ND – Non-Detects** Laboratory analysis did not detect a contaminant at the reporting limit.

**90th percentile** In 90 percent of sites tested, results were less than or equal to the level listed.

**NL – Notification Level** The amount of a contaminant which triggers treatment or other requirements.

**NTU – Nephelometric Turbidity Unit** A measure of the cloudiness of water. Water in excess of 5 NTU has cloudiness just noticeable to the average person.

**pCi/L – Picocuries per liter** A measure of the radioactivity in water.

**PHG – Public Health Goal** The amount of a contaminant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. The California Environmental Protection Agency sets PHGs rather than the USEPA.

**Trihalomethanes/ Haloacetic Acids** Chemical by-products of chlorination as chlorine breaks down organic substances.

**ug/L – Micrograms per liter** Equivalent to parts per billion, a measurement of concentration on a weight or volume basis. One part per billion concentration is equivalent to one drop of ink in a 14,000-gallon swimming pool.

## Drinking source water assessment

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) requires Drinking Water Source Assessment Programs to evaluate the vulnerability of water sources to potential contamination. All water sources on the planet are vulnerable to contamination, largely due to human development. Assessments are required any time a new water source or treatment process is brought online.

**Groundwater** Assessments for Sunnyslope Wells 2, 5, 7, 8, and 11 were updated in March 2009. These sources are considered most vulnerable to contamination from agricultural drainage, septic systems, sewer collection systems, and agricultural wells.

**Surface Water** An assessment for Lessalt and West Hills Water Treatment Plants was updated in 2017. This source is considered most vulnerable to contamination from recreational activities, government agency equipment storage, roads/streets, septic systems, sewer collection systems, grazing animals, farm machinery, orchards, row crops, grass lands, hay, pasture, wells, irrigation, housing greater than one house per half-acre, streams, rivers, and fault lines.

*A copy of the summaries of these completed assessments may be viewed at the Sunnyslope Water district office.*

## Some people may be more sensitive to contaminants

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immunocompromised persons, such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These individuals should seek advice from their health care providers.

USEPA/Centers for Disease Control guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection from cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the USEPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

## Lead and copper testing

To further safeguard our community, Sunnyslope Water also performs lead and copper testing outside the treatment and distribution system at high-risk schools and homes in our district. These heavy metals can leach into water when service lines or home plumbing contain lead pipes, or copper pipes with lead solder. As defined by federal and state laws, high-risk is defined as schools constructed before January 1, 2010, and homes with plumbing installed between January 1983 and June 1986.

Results of lead and copper testing in the Hollister area have always been below the notification level set by the State Water Resources Control Board. If lead concentrations exceed an action level of 15 parts per billion, or copper concentrations exceed an action level of 1.3 parts per million in more than 10 percent of customer taps sampled, actions must be taken to control corrosion or replace the system.

*If your home falls into the high-risk category and you'd like your water tested free of charge, please call us at (831) 637-4670.*

## Drinking water regulations

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the USEPA and the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) prescribe limits for the amount of certain contaminants in drinking water. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) establishes limits for contaminants in bottled water:

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. For more information about contaminants and potential health effects, please see the contacts below.

The sources of tap water and bottled water include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally-occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity. Contaminants that may be present in source water are:

**Microbial contaminants** such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.

**Inorganic contaminants** such as salts and metals, that can be naturally-occurring or result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming.

**Pesticides and herbicides** that may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and residential uses.

**Organic chemical contaminants** including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, that are byproducts of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, agricultural application, and septic systems.

**Radioactive contaminants** that can be naturally-occurring or be the result of oil and gas production, and mining activities.

## For more information. . .

... on water contaminants and regulations, please visit the **US Environmental Protection Agency** at [water.epa.gov/drink](http://water.epa.gov/drink), or call their Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1 (800) 426-4791.

... on California's water infrastructure, competing water demands, and resultant environmental issues, please visit the **Water Education Foundation** at [watereducation.org](http://watereducation.org).



The microfiltration process (shown here) at the Lessalt Water Treatment Plant removes microscopic particles in surface water after organic contaminants are removed.