

AMEND THE WESTERN JOSHUA TREE CONSERVATION ACT

Who we are

We are public water systems and residents of the High Desert region where we have coexisted with the Joshua trees for decades.

The Problem

- **Legislative oversight is needed to correct unintended consequences.** The WJTCA never received a full hearing in legislative committees, as it was put into a 2023 budget trailer bill.
- The Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act unfairly shifts the cost of addressing climate change impacts caused by carbon polluters worldwide onto disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities (DAC/SDAC), i.e., poor and moderate-income people.
- Incidental take fees on residential projects or necessary water infrastructure projects create an affordability problem, concentrating the financial burden of a global problem on low- and middle-income residents.
- Regular people want to coexist with the Western Joshua Tree in the urban environment by eliminating onerous fees on housing and infrastructure needed for water, health and safety.

Our ask

Amend the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act to exempt necessary public improvements and residential home construction and maintenance from incidental take permits and associated fees.

Exemption should include projects for water and sewer pipelines and residential connections, construction of single- and multi-family residential housing, and maintenance needed for safety.

I understand that within the statute's fee schedule, there really is not a distinction. There is no preferential fee schedule for any one sector. It doesn't say solar gets this and housing gets that. But it turns out we're grappling with potentially a disproportionate fee impact for that individual homeowner.

**FORMER CDFW DIRECTOR
CHARLTON BONHAM, APRIL
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For more information:

Tim Worley, PhD
Community Water Systems Alliance
tim@ostrategiesgroup.com
(909) 762-7401

Dennis LaMoreaux or Scott Rogers
Palmdale Water District
dlamoreaux@palmdalewater.org
srogers@palmdalewater.org

Jennifer Cusack
Hi-Desert Water District
jenniferc@hdwd.com
(760) 228-6281

Alec Mackie
Morongo Basin Residents for
Reasonable Joshua Tree Regulation
alectrojan@gmail.com