

# SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT COMMITTEE APPLICATION



Please complete this application in its entirety and submit an original signed copy to the Office of the Clerk of the Board at 5750 Almaden Expressway, San Jose, California 95118. If more space is needed, please attach additional pages. Applications are valid for one year from the date of receipt and are public record. This application is available on-line at <https://www.valleywater.org/how-we-operate/committees/board-advisory-committees> under "Santa Clara Valley Water District Youth Commission." For assistance, please contact the Office of the Clerk of the Board at (408) 265-2607, extension 2277.

## A. CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of Committee: Santa Clara Valley Water District Youth Commission			
Name (First, Middle, Last): Justin Hong Cai			
Home Phone:	Work Phone:	Cell Phone:	Fax:
Mailing Address: (Street Address, City, State, ZIP)			
E-mail:			
If Applicable, Present Employer (Name and Address):		Job Title:	
Do you have a current contractual relationship with the Santa Clara Valley Water District? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If Yes, please describe (if more space is needed, please attach additional pages):			

## B. VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

List current and previous volunteer experience. Include experience with charitable organizations, committees and commissions, or public offices you may have held and relevant dates. If more space is needed, please attach additional pages.		
DATE(S):	NAME:	RESPONSIBILITIES/EXPERIENCE:
2017-present		

2017-present		
2013-present		
2017-present		
2017-present		

**C. INTEREST AND AVAILABILITY**

How did you hear about this committee opening?

☒ District Website☐ Director (please specify):☒ Committee Member (please specify): Glenna Brambill☐ Other (please specify):

Please describe your interest in serving on this committee:



## SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT COMMITTEE SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

As a passionate nature-lover and environmentalist, I have long been fascinated by the work Valley Water does, whether it takes the form of playing with Valley Water's watershed data on Google Earth or observing a Valley Water restoration project in a local nature preserve. I'm incredibly excited to be a part of the Commission because I can not only satiate these curiosities and learn about environmental policy, but also meet other enthusiastic peers and work together for the benefit of everyone inhabiting the planet – both people and wildlife.

Please describe your relevant qualifications, such as specific skills, training, or knowledge that should be considered in applying for this committee:

I've continuously done scientific research for four years, including field research at Olympic, Yellowstone, and Yosemite National Parks, as well as earth science research at UC Santa Cruz under Dr. Matthew Clapham, which recently qualified for the California State Science Fair. Research has given me an appreciation and deep insight for the intricacies of nature. I've taken classes in speech and debate, as well as rhetoric and policy, which gave me experience in analyzing diverse policies while proposing my own in a public setting. I've also taken classes such as AP Chemistry, AP Biology, AP Environmental Science, AP Physics, and AP Calculus, which have given me a deep understanding of scientific and environmental issues. Additionally, I have experience in the data language R as well as GIS for more technical endeavors, particularly in data analysis. I'm an avid volunteer, having won the Gold Presidential Service Award twice for my service and leadership in Boy Scouting, ShinShin Educational Foundation and Bellarmine's Student Environmental Action Society. As a result of leading these organizations, I'm comfortable with initiating community engagement and leading my peers and local community.

How would the community benefit by your participation on this committee?

As part of the Commission, I'll be able to connect stewardship opportunities in Valley Water to my school environmental club that I run, promoting stewardship awareness in my school community. I'll draw on my experience with policy, scientific research, and community service to recommend projects for increasing community and youth engagement in environmental issues. By learning from Valley Water executives and peers on the Commission, I'll gain a multifaceted view on water conservation and environmental stewardship, which I will use to educate others in my school and community.

Are you available to attend committee meetings when scheduled? (please go to <https://www.valleywater.org/how-we-operate/committees/board-advisory-committees> for committee meeting schedule details) ☒ Yes ☐ No If No, please describe:

If you have a disability, what accommodations would you need to serve on this committee?  
None

### D. EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

In case of emergency, contact:

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I, HEREBY, ATTEST THAT THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND MAY BE VERIFIED BY THE SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT. I UNDERSTAND THAT MISREPRESENTATION OR OMISSIONS MAY BE CAUSE FOR MY IMMEDIATE REJECTION AS AN APPLICANT OR TERMINATION FROM APPOINTMENT TO A COMMITTEE.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant Signature

4/26  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

Those applying for the **YOUTH COMMISSION** must complete the **APPLICATION** and **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE**. For more information or questions, please email: [youthcommission@valleywater.org](mailto:youthcommission@valleywater.org).

Name (First, Last): Justin Cai	
What School Do You Attend:	Grade Level:
	Favorite Subjects: Environmental Science, Earth Science, Calculus, Biology
Please go to <a href="http://www.valleywater.org">www.valleywater.org</a> and scroll down to <b>The Water District in Your Area</b> to identify your Board Member and District #	
Board Member's Name: Barbara Keegan	Board Member District #: 2

In 300 words or less: (If more space is needed, please attach additional pages.)

1. What do you feel are the top three issues young people in Santa Clara County are facing, particularly around water or environmental stewardship? If appointed, how will you connect these issues to your role on the Youth Commission?

I'm frustrated by the tendency of most environmental service opportunities to focus on the immediately observable. For instance, while projects such as river cleanups are beneficial, they underscore society's proclivity to tackle symptoms of environmental issues, rather than root causes. Not only must we ask "How many pounds of river trash can we pick up?", we must also consider, "Why is there so much trash in the first place?" The narrow scope of such projects provides volunteers with little background on environmental issues.

Personally, I have witnessed considerable water pollution that compromises our water supplies and endangers fragile ecosystems. The factors surrounding pollution are incredibly complex and even fascinating, representing an agglomeration of human land use, weather, and geography. With thousands of miles of leak-prone sewage pipes, tonnes of accumulating trash, and the threat of eutrophication from runoff, tackling this issue necessitates community engagement on an unprecedented scale.

Finally, the conflict between sustainable ideals and corporate interests represents a significant roadblock to environmentalist pursuits. Anti-environmentalists have bitterly held on to the status quo for decades, ranging from chemical companies that sued Rachel Carson in the 1960s, to coal lobbyists today who threaten to block a future of green energy. By dismissing environmental conservation in favor of monetary gain, this thinking will inevitably jeopardize the future of our planet. And with the huge political influence of these corporations, young, dissenting environmentalist voices are often suppressed.

I'll leverage my position on the Youth Commission to educate my community on environmental issues including these three. To accomplish this, I'll champion citizen science as a force to stimulate curiosity, generate new knowledge, and foster appreciation for science and nature. I'll serve as a voice for conservationists on these issues, all while developing a multifaceted perspective founded upon nearly a century of water conservation work.



## SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT COMMITTEE SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

2. What do you hope to gain from being on the Youth Commission? What do you think you can contribute by being on the Youth Commission?

As a volunteer, scientist, and student, I've long hoped to use Valley Water's diverse, abundant resources to expand not only my own passion and knowledge, but also those of others. I can apply my experience with GIS and statistical analysis in R with Valley Water's ALERT System data to gain a visual understanding of the condition of the valley's creeks. I'll bring back lessons on watershed management, sustainability, and groundwater to my school as president of Bellarmine's environmental club. I can dive deep into the association between civic policy and environmental science while growing my capability to create educated solutions to environmental issues. Most importantly, I'm excited about not only the incredible breadth of resources and knowledge Valley Water offers, but also the degree to which I can take this knowledge back to my community and leverage it to benefit others. I'll gain insight on water policy from Valley Water executives and communicate them to my school and service communities. I'll use my position on the Commission to connect stewardship opportunities with my school environmental club, my Boy Scout troop, ShinShin Educational Foundation, and more. Diverse perspectives of numerous other peers on environmental stewardship will inspire me and encourage me to work together to create a sustainable future. I'll consider a future as a leader in environmental policy, all while honing my leadership and public speaking skills.

Along the way, I'll be contributing the collaborative ability, independence, and resilience of an avid backpacker; the extensive knowledge and scientific inquiry experience of an award-winning earth scientist; the leadership and inspiring enthusiasm of an enterprising educator; 14 environmental science books; 10 sustainability PowerPoints; 21 jars of local water quality samples; 16 topographic maps; and the incessant drive to push for change inherent in a young environmentalist.

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Applicant: I, Justin Cai (print applicant name) verify that the information I have provided on this application is accurate. All information provided is subject to verification. False, inaccurate, or ineligible applications will be disqualified.

Parent/Guardian: I, Jian Li (parent/guardian signature) understand that my child has applied for the Santa Clara Valley Water District Youth Commission and has my express permission.

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