Meeting Agenda

Date & Time: 7/6/2026 | 10:00 AM
Location: SLDMWA Boardroom

Notice of Water Resources Committee Regular Meeting / Joint Water Resources Committee Regular Meeting-Special Board Workshop

842 6th Street, Los Banos
(List of Member/Alternate Telephonic Locations Attached)

Public Participation Information

Join Zoom Webinar -
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81243575320?pwd=v6JqSA9pTISfYGgQBhhYvmJOZJNRFb.1

NOTE: Any member of the public may address the Water Resources Committee/Board concerning any item on the agenda before or during consideration of that item.

Because the notice provides for a regular meeting of the Water Resources Committee ("WRC") and a joint regular WRC Meeting/Special Board workshop, Board Directors/Alternates may discuss items listed on the agenda; however, only WRC Members/Alternates may correct or add to the agenda or vote on action items.

NOTE FURTHER: Meeting materials have been made available to the public on the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority's website, https://www.sldmwa.org, and at the Los Banos Administrative Office, 842 6th Street, Los Banos, CA 93635.

Agenda Item	Topic	Lead
1.	Call to Order/Roll Call	
2.	Water Resources Committee to Consider Additions or Corrections to the Agenda for the Water Resources Committee Meeting only, as Authorized by Government Code Section 54950 *et seq*.	
3.	Opportunity for Public Comment – Any member of the public may address the Water Resources Committee/Board concerning any matter not on the agenda, but within the Committee or Board's jurisdiction. Public comment is limited to no more than three minutes per person. For good cause, the Chair of the Water Resources Committee may waive this limitation.	
	ACTION ITEMS	
4.	**Approval of June 1, 2026 Meeting Minutes**	

5.	**Recommendation to Authorize Execution of Agreement with Invariant and Related Expenditure of Up to $175,000 from the FY 2027 Leg Ops Budget**	Petersen
6.	**Recommendation to Adopt Staff Recommendation for Positions on Legislation** A. A.B. 1436 (Avila Farias), State Air Resources Control Board: air pollution regulations: private fleets: exception B. A.B. 1881 (Ramos), California Indian Freedom Act of 2026	Petersen
7.	**Recommendation to Adopt Resolution Authorizing Execution of Letter Agreement for Los Banos Creek Detention Dam Reservoir Re-Operation Project and Los Banos Creek Detention Dam Reservoir Re-Operation Project Activity Agreement**	Barajas
	REPORT ITEMS	
8.	Report on Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley Unified Water Plan	Petersen, Ewell, Swanson
9.	Status Update Regarding the DMC Subsidence Correction Project	Arroyave
10.	Update on Status of Golden Mussels	Arroyave, Petersen, Meyer
11.	Executive Director's Report (May include reports on activities within the Water Resources Committee's jurisdiction re: 1) CVP/SWP water operations; 2) California infrastructure projects; 3) regulation of the CVP/SWP; 4) existing or possible new State and Federal policies; 5) Water Authority activities)	Barajas
12.	Update on Water Policy/Resources Activities (May include reports on federal, state, and local agency regulatory, legislative, and administrative water policy/resources activities)	Petersen
13.	Update on Water Operations and Forecasts	Arroyave
14.	Committee Member Reports	
15.	Closed Session CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION Initiation of Litigation Pursuant to paragraph (4) of Subdivision (d) of Gov. Code Section 54956.9 – 3 potential cases CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION Significant Exposure to Litigation Pursuant to Paragraph (2) or (3) of Subdivision (d) of Gov. Code Section 54956.9 – 2 potential cases CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – EXISTING LITIGATION Existing Litigation Pursuant to paragraph (1) of Subdivision (d) of Gov. Code Section 54956.9	Akroyd

A. California Sportfishing Protection Alliance (CSPA), et al. v. Nickels, et al., U.S. District Court, E.D. Cal., Case No. 2:11-cv-02980; 9th Cir. Case No. 23-15599; U.S. Supreme Court Case No. 25-989 (GBP Citizen Suit)
B. CSPA, et al. v. State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), et al., Sac. Co. Superior Court, Case No. 34-2021-80003761 (2021 TUCP Order)
C. CSPA, et al. v. SWRCB, et al., Sac. Co. Superior Court, Case No. 34-2021-80003763 (2021 Temp. Mgmt. Plan)
D. SWRCB, Administrative Hearings Office, Petitions for Change of California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Water Right Permits, Delta Conveyance Project (DWR Change Petition)
E. Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority, et al. v. DWR, et al., Sacramento Co. Superior Court, Case No. 24WM000183 (SWP 2024 EIR Challenge)
F. San Francisco Baykeeper, et al. v. U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, et al. U.S. District Court, E.D. Cal., Case No. 2:26-cv-00671 (2025 CVP Operations)
G. Bettencourt v. SLDMWA, et al., Merced Co. Superior Court, Case No. 26CV-01422 (employment complaint)
H. AquAlliance, et al. v. SLDMWA, et al. Sacramento Co. Superior Court, Case No. 26WM000149 (2026-2027 North-to-South Water Transfers CEQA Addendum)

16. Return to Open Session

17. Report from Closed Session, if any, Required by Government Code Section 54957.1

18. Reports Pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.2(a)(3)

19. ADJOURNMENT

Persons with a disability may request disability-related modification or accommodation by contacting Cheri Worthy or Sandi Ginda at the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority Office, 842 6th Street, P.O. Box 2157, Los Banos, California, via telephone at (209) 826-9696, or via email at cheri.worthy@sldmwa.org. Requests should be made as far in advance as possible before the meeting date, preferably 3 days in advance of regular meetings or 1 day in advance of special meetings/workshops.

This agenda has been prepared as required by the applicable laws of the State of California, including but not limited to, Government Code Section 54950 et seq. and has not been prepared with a view to informing an investment decision in any of the Authority's bonds, notes, or other obligations. Any projections, plans or other forward-looking statements included in the information in this agenda are subject to a variety of uncertainties that could cause any actual plans or results to differ materially from any such statement. The information herein is not intended to be used by investors or potential investors in considering the purchase or sale of the Authority's bonds, notes or other obligations and investors and potential investors should rely only on information filed by the Authority on the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board's Electronic Municipal Market Access System for municipal securities disclosures, maintained on the World Wide Web at https://emma.msrb.org/.

SLDMWA WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING TELEPHONIC LOCATIONS

July 6, 2026

15671 W. Oakland Ave
Five Points, CA 93624

5957 E. Greenhill Street
Nampa, Idaho 83687

Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: 6/1/2026 | 10:00 AM
Location: SLDMWA Boardroom
842 6th Street, Los

San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority Water Resources Committee Regular Meeting and Joint Water Resources Committee Regular Meeting – Special Board Workshop Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members Present

Ex-Officio: Cannon Michael
William Bourdeau
Division 1: Anthea Hansen, Member
Division 2: Bill Diedrich, Alternate
Division 3: Chris White, Member
Ric Ortega, Alternate
Division 4: Vince Gin, Member (ZOOM)
Division 5: Manny Amorelli, Alternate

Board of Directors Present

Division 1: Anthea Hansen, Director
Division 2: Justin Diener, Director
William Bourdeau, Director
Bill Diedrich, Director
Division 3: Chris White, Alternate
Jarrett Martin, Director
Cannon Michael, Chair/Director
Ric Ortega, Director
Division 4: Brett Miller, Alternate
Division 5: Manny Amorelli, Director

Authority Representatives Present

Federico Barajas, Executive Director
Pablo Arroyave, Chief Operating Officer
Scott Petersen, Chief Strategic & Admin. Officer
Rebecca Akroyd, General Counsel
Rebecca Harms, Deputy General Counsel
Ray Tarka, Director of Finance
Cindy Meyer, Special Programs Manager
Eddie Reyes, Information Systems Technician
Stewart Davis, IT Officer

Others Present

Chase Hurley, Pacheco Water District
Lea Emmons, City of Tracy (ZOOM)

Agenda Item	Topic	Lead
1.	**Call to Order/Roll Call** – The meeting was called to order by Chair William Bourdeau at approximately 10:00 a.m. and roll was called. During roll call, Committee Member Vince Gin was identified as participating remotely via teleconference pursuant to Government Code section 54953(b), consistent with traditional teleconference rules.	
2	**Additions or Corrections to the Agenda of Items, as authorized by Government Code Section 54950 et seq. -** No additions or corrections.	
3.	**Opportunity for Public Comment -** No public comment.	

4. **Water Resources Committee to Consider Approval of the May 11, 2026 Meeting Minutes –** Chair William Bourdeau deemed the May 11, 2026 Meeting Minutes approved with minor, non-substantive edits.

5. **Recommendation to Board of Directors to Authorize Amendments to Task Orders with Stantec, Inc. and Related Expenditure of $139,500 from the FY27 Leg Ops and OM&R Budgets -** Chief Strategic & Administrative Officer Scott Petersen reviewed the memo and attachments included in the packet. Petersen reported staff is seeking to add $124,000 to Task Order 1, and to extend it for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2027 to provide Real-Time Operations Monitoring and an annual report of Central Valley Project Operations. Petersen reported that the extension will place the total contract value over the $200,000 threshold for Board action. Executive Director Federico Barajas provided additional information. Petersen answered questions throughout the presentation. — Petersen

   M/S - Motion by Member Anthea Hansen, seconded by Member Chris White, the Committee recommended authorization to amendments to Task Orders with Stantec, Inc. and related expenditure of $139,500 from the FY27 Leg Ops and OM&R Budgets. Roll Call Vote: Ayes – Michael, Bourdeau, Hansen, Diedrich, White, Gin, Amorelli; Nays – 0; Abstentions – 0.

6. **Update on Status of Golden Mussels -** Chief Operating Officer Pablo Arroyave reviewed that handout that was distributed at the meeting. Arroyave reported that staff will support the organization and facilitation of monthly coordination meetings with the assistance of Kearns & West through July 2026. Arroyave reported on Pilot Studies and Field Testing, which included Bio-coating plates, CO2 treatment, Sand/gravel filter w/UV, HYDAC Filters, and treatment effectiveness test chemicals (CO2 & UV). Special Programs Manager Cindy Meyer provided additional information regarding evaluation of various treatments including work by Contra Costa Water District (lab & field studies). Chief Strategic & Administrative Officer Scott Petersen provided a brief update on legislation regarding golden mussel mitigation and response. Arroyave, Meyer, and Petersen answered questions throughout the presentation. — Arroyave, Petersen, Meyer

7. **Executive Director's Report**
   a. **Congressional Testimony –** Executive Director Federico Barajas thanked Chief Strategic & Administrative Officer Scott Petersen for his outstanding congressional testimony in DC.
   b. **Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Visit** – Executive Director Federico Barajas reported on a forthcoming visit from the Department of Interior's Assistant Secretary for Water and Science.
   c. **Tribal Beneficial Uses (TBU)** – Executive Director Federico Barajas reported that State Water Resources Control Board is going to release a public draft of their TBU guidance document for comment this week or next. Barajas reported that a public workshop will be planned sometime in July.

d. **Procurement Assistance** – Executive Director Federico Barajas reported that Reclamation is continuing to reach out to the Authority for procurement related assistance.

8. **Update on Water Policy/Resources Activities –** Chief Strategic & Administrative Officer Scott Petersen provided an update regarding additional information on the SWRCB TBU activity, SJRRP activity, and the Delta Conveyance Project. Petersen continued his update regarding the Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley and the San Joaquin Valley Collaborative Action Program (SJV CAP). Petersen reported that the SLDMWA will be going out for a new consultant at the federal level. Petersen answered questions throughout the presentation. — Petersen

9. **Update on Water Operations and Forecasts –** Arroyave provided a brief update on storage conditions and operations. Arroyave reported that there are systemwide concerns being expressed regarding carryover storage at various facilities. Arroyave reported that staff were able to test all 6-units at DCI both last week and this week. Arroyave answered questions throughout the presentation. — Arroyave

10. **Committee Member Reports** – Chase Hurley from Panoche Water District offered thanks for coordination regarding CASP.

11. **Agenda Items 11-14: Closed Session** – Chair William Bourdeau adjourned the open session to address the items listed on the Closed Session Agenda at approximately 10:41 a.m. Upon returning to open session at approximately 11:21 a.m., Chair William Bourdeau reported that no reportable actions were taken in closed session.

12. **Agenda Item 15: Reports Pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.2(a)(3)** – No reports. — Akroyd

13. **Agenda Item 16: Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:22 a.m.

Official Memorandum

PO Box 2157
Los Banos, CA 93635
sldmwa.org

To: SLDMWA Water Resources Committee Members and Alternates

From: Scott Petersen, Chief Strategic and Administrative Officer

Date: July 6, 2026

RE: Update on Water Policy/Resources Activities

Background

This memorandum is provided to briefly summarize the current status of various agency processes regarding water policy activities, including but not limited to the (1) Implementation of Long-Term Operations of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project, including environmental compliance; (2) State Water Resources Control Board action; (3) Central Valley Regional Water Board Action, (4) San Joaquin River Restoration Program; (5) Delta conveyance; (6) Reclamation action; (7) Delta Stewardship Council action; (8) San Joaquin Valley Water Blueprint, and (9) San Joaquin Valley Water Collaborative Action Plan.

Policy Items

Implementation of Executive Order 14181

On January 2024, President Trump issued Executive Order 14181[1], directing analysis of potential changes to the operations in the 2024 Record of Decision ("ROD") for consideration by the Administration. On December 4, 2025, Reclamation executed a Record of Decision on the Long-Term Operations of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project, as a first step towards implementing EO 14181.

Implementation of 2024 Record of Decision (ROD) on Long-Term Operations (LTO) of the Central Valley Project (CVP) and State Water Project (SWP)

Green Sturgeon Incidental Take and Reinitiation of Consultation

As of June 13, 2 Green Sturgeon were salvaged at the CVP and 4 were salvaged at the SWP facilities. This results in a WY2026 cumulative expanded salvage of 15 fish (annual expanded salvage threshold = 14 fish), which exceeds the incidental take statement in the 2024 NMFS Biological Opinion of 14 fish per water year. Juvenile Green Sturgeon are typically in the Delta year-round and salvaged at low levels. The cumulative salvage ITL threshold resets on September 30, 2026.

A green sturgeon assessment[2] was prepared by Reclamation and presented to the Fish and Water Operations Group.

[1] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-01-31/pdf/2025-02174.pdf

[2] See Attachments

Juvenile production appears to be higher than other recent years. The zone of influence from export pumping is currently small. Juvenile Green Sturgeon are likely to move volitionally; therefore, exports are unlikely to affect migratory behaviors. Salvage effects are non-lethal and fish are released. Detections of Green Sturgeon in salvage are potentially due to higher juvenile production and hypothesized environmental conditions affecting migration behavior. No information suggests salvage poses additional risks to the population than considered in the 2025 Record of Decision.

Reclamation has reinitiated consultation and is currently working with National Marine Fisheries Service on a path forward.

LTO Record of Decision

On December 4, 2025, Reclamation executed a Record of Decision[3] on the Long-Term Operations of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project, as a first step towards implementing EO 14181, updating operations associated with the Record of Decision executed by Reclamation and the Biological Opinions issued by the Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries in December 2024. This new operation is described as "Action 5".

Specifically, the Action 5 ROD updates the operations of the Projects by:

(1) **Removing the Delta Smelt Summer and Fall Habitat Action (Fall X2),** in response to findings by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the action is not anticipated to have observable effects on delta smelt survival,
(2) **Removing the early implementation measure of the Delta export reduction of the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes ("HRL") program,** in response to uncertainties associated with the timing of potential adoption and implementation of the HRL Program by California's State Water Resources Control Board,
(3) **Updating the Delta operating criteria** to expand the opportunities for Old and Middle River ("OMR") management at no more negative than -5,000 cubic feet per second (cfs), and a stormflex action of -6,500 cfs, including the use of predictive tools for real-time assessment of environmental conditions.

Modeling of these proposed operational changes has estimated between 250 – 400 TAF improvement in combined CVP and SWP export capacity under Action 5 operations, with the SWP benefits being uncertain based on how the SWP operates under the Incidental Take Permit required for compliance with the California Endangered Species Act.

There is additional analysis being performed to assess the efficacy of additional potential operational changes that could improve water supply and maintain species protections, as well as alternative methods to address environmental effects on species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act ("ESA) and advance species recovery efforts.

Trinity River Endangered Species Act Consultation

On June 5, Reclamation transmitted a Cooperating Agency draft Supplemental EIS for the 2021 Reinitiation of Consultation on the Long-Term Operation of the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project – Trinity River Division (TRD). Written comments are due July 8.

[3] https://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa_project_details.php?Project_ID=54661

Water Authority staff are coordinating with member agencies and are evaluating how the proposed changes to TRD operations may affect south-of-Delta water supply and CVP operations.

State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) Activity

Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan Update

Background

The State Water Board is currently considering updates to its 2006 Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary ("Bay Delta Plan") in two phases (Plan amendments). The first Plan amendment is focused on San Joaquin River flows and southern Delta salinity ("Phase I" or "San Joaquin River Flows and Southern Delta Salinity Plan Amendment"). The second Plan amendment is focused on the Sacramento River and its tributaries, Delta eastside tributaries (including the Calaveras, Cosumnes, and Mokelumne rivers), Delta outflows, and interior Delta flows ("Phase II" or "Sacramento/Delta Plan Amendment").

During the December 12, 2018 Water Board Meeting, the Department of Water Resources ("DWR") and Department of Fish and Wildlife presented proposed "Voluntary Settlement Agreements" ("VSAs") on behalf of Reclamation, DWR, and the public water agencies they serve to resolve conflicts over proposed amendments to the Bay-Delta Plan update.[4] The State Water Board did not adopt the proposed VSAs in lieu of the proposed Phase 1 amendments, but as explained below, directed staff to consider the proposals as part of a future Delta-wide proposal.

Phase 1 Status – San Joaquin River and its Tributaries

The State Water Board adopted a resolution[5] to adopt amendments to the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary and adopt the Final Substitute Environmental Document during its December 12, 2018 public meeting.

On July 18, 2022, the State Water Resources Control Board issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP)[6] and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Scoping Meeting for the Proposed Regulation to Implement Lower San Joaquin River Flows (LSJR) and Southern Delta Salinity Objectives in the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Bay-Delta Plan).

In response to the release of the NOP, the Water Authority and member agencies provided scoping comments[7] and the State Water Board is working through a long-term process to address Phase 1 elements of the Water Quality Control Plan Update.

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[4] Available at https://water.ca.gov/-/media/DWR-Website/Web-Pages/Blogs/Voluntary-Settlement-Agreement-Meeting-Materials-Dec-12-2018-DWR-CDFW-CNRA.pdf.

[5] Available at https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2018/rs2018_0059.pdf.

[6] Available at https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/public_notices/notices/20220715-implementation-nop-and-scoping-dwr-baydelta.pdf

[7] Request from Authority staff

A long delay in Phase 1 action occurred as legal activity was undertaken.

Recently, on September 19, 2025, the State Water Resources Control Board (Board) released a Notice of Opportunity for Public Comment and Workshop on the Draft Scientific Basis Report Supplement for the Tuolumne River Voluntary Agreement Proposal (Draft TVA Scientific Basis Report), to which the Water Authority provided comments[8].

Next Steps

- Final draft Staff Report for Tuolumne River VA
- Board workshop and consideration of Tuolumne River VA
- Final draft EIR and regulation implementing Lower SJR flows and South Delta Salinity
- Board consideration of regulation implementing Lower SJR flows and South Delta Salinity

Phase 2 Status – Sacramento River and its Tributaries and Bay-Delta

In the State Water Board's resolution adopting the Phase 1 amendments, the Water Board directed staff to assist the Natural Resources Agency in completing a Delta watershed-wide agreement, including potential flow and non-flow measures for the Tuolumne River, and associated analyses no later than March 1, 2019. Staff were directed to incorporate the Delta watershed-wide agreement as an alternative for a future, comprehensive Bay-Delta Plan update that addresses the reasonable protection of beneficial uses across the Delta watershed.

Revised Draft Sacramento/Delta Updates to the Water Quality Control Plan

Background

In July, the Board released a draft Bay Delta Plan (July 2025 revised draft), which included proposed changes to the draft Bay Delta Plan released in October 2024 (2024 draft), based on public input and comments received throughout the planning process, including comments on several options for possible changes to the plan identified in the 2024 draft. Specifically, the 2024 draft identified the possible inclusion of flow, cold water habitat and related provisions that were based on the proposed Plan amendments and alternatives identified in the 2023 draft Staff Report in support of updates to the Bay Delta Plan, as well as options for these provisions. The 2024 draft also identified the possible inclusion of Voluntary Agreements (VAs) to provide flows and non-flow habitat proposed by state and federal agencies and water users referred to as the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes proposal, as well as options associated with inclusions of VAs. The regulatory provisions would apply to all water right holders if the Board did not move forward with VAs, or in the event the Board moved forward with VAs would apply to water rights not participating in approved VAs. The 2025 revised draft proposes to move forward with the inclusion of VAs in the Bay Delta Plan for water rights included in approved VAs (VA pathway) and the regulatory provisions for water rights not included as part of approved VAs (regulatory pathway). The 2025 revised draft also includes proposals for addressing other options identified in the 2024 draft. The 2025 revised draft also proposes the designation of Tribal Tradition and Culture (CUL) beneficial use as part of the current Bay Delta Plan update.

Current Activity

On September 16, 2025, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board or Board) rescinded the August 22, 2025 Second Revised Notice of Opportunity for Public Comment and Hearing on Revised Draft

[8] Request from Authority staff

Sacramento/Delta Updates to the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Watershed (Bay-Delta Plan or Plan). The Rescinded Notice is available on the Board's website. Accordingly, the hearing previously scheduled for September 24-25, 2025, and the associated public comment period are cancelled and will be rescheduled to a future date.

Instead, the Board has released a revised Bay-Delta Plan, with workshops that occurred on January 28-30, and written comments due on February 2. Water Authority staff coordinated written comments[9] with member agencies and other interested parties.

Additionally, the State Water Board has received term sheets for additional voluntary agreements from Nevada Irrigation District (NID) and South Sutter Water District (SSWD) specific to the Bear River, Yuba River, and Auburn Ravine that are available to the public.

San Joaquin River Restoration Program

Restoration Allocation

On May 15, Reclamation issued an update to the 2026 Restoration Allocation and Default Flow Schedule[10]. Consistent with the Restoration Flows Guidelines and based upon the best available forecast information, the Restoration Allocation covering the period March 1, 2026 through February 28, 2027 **is set at 281,739 acre-feet at Gravelly Ford and is a Normal-Dry year type**.

The Restoration Administrator recommended a flow schedule[11] on May 4, which Reclamation is reviewing at the time this memo was drafted. This Restoration Allocation will be posted on the Program website in the coming days: http://RestoreSJR.net.

For Information about Restoration Flows, please visit https://restoresjr.net/flows/.

For the Restoration Administrator recommendations, please visit https://restoresjr.net/flows/flow-scheduling/.

Delta Conveyance Project

Construction ESA Compliance

On June 5, DWR announced that it received Biological Opinions from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for Delta Conveyance Project construction and construction-related maintenance activities. This important milestone marks the completion of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) process for construction.

Compliance with ESA is required to ensure a project will not jeopardize the continued existence of any federally listed species or adversely modify or destroy listed critical habitat.

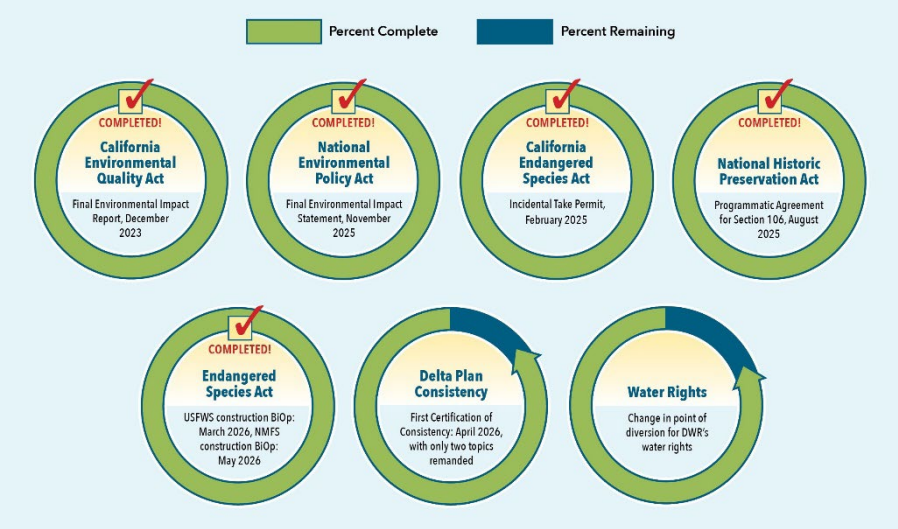
California is now one critical step closer to completing the complex state and federal planning and permitting processes needed to begin project implementation.

[9] Request from Water Authority staff.

[10] Request from Water Authority staff.

[11] Attached

Planning and Permitting Progress



U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Reclamation Manual

Documents out for Comment

- No Documents out for Comment

San Joaquin Valley Water Blueprint

The Water Blueprint represents water users, districts, farmers, and municipalities across the Central Valley. Their problem statement is crystal-clear; California faces a major water supply shortfall that could affect one million acres, costing $7.2 billion in farm revenue and 85,000 jobs statewide. Engaging various stakeholders inside and outside the Central Valley, the team advocates for a combination of infrastructure investments and policy changes to capture excess flows during wet years and replenish aquifers.

Blueprint's strategic priorities for 2022-2025: Advocacy, Groundwater Quality and Disadvantaged Communities, Land Use Changes & Environmental Planning, Outreach & Communications, SGMA Implementation, Water Supply Goals, Governance, Operations & Finance.

Mission Statement: "Unifying the San Joaquin Valley's voice to advance an accessible, reliable solution for a balanced water future for all."

Strategic Planning

September 16, 2026, is the date for board strategic planning following completion of the United Water Plan, noting that the current plan runs through 2026. The planning session will focus on the importance of defining the scope of future organizational activities—including legislative advocacy, policy, communications—and engaging the board early to help shape direction for 2026 and beyond.

SB72 Implementation

Senate Bill 72 (Caballero) directs DWR to consult with the Water Commission on the establishment of an advisory committee to inform the development of the 2028 update to the Water Plan. The 2028 update will usher in a new emphasis on setting and meeting quantifiable water supply goals. This builds on California's Water Supply Strategy (2022), which outlined necessary actions for the state to adapt to a hotter, drier future where the changing climate leaves less water to meet California's needs. Blueprint, as an interested party in the State's water supply strategy, has been provided with the opportunity to present and provide public comment.

Groundwater Banking Study with Metropolitan Water District – Status and Next Steps

The groundwater banking study with Metropolitan Water District (Met) is progressing toward implementation, with a targeted kickoff in mid-July that aligns well with the anticipated completion of the UWP work. Met has previously reviewed and approved the scope of work and budget submitted last summer. The goal is to finalize the updated task order and complete execution by the end of the month to maintain schedule alignment. Next steps include confirming the Blueprint participants who should attend the kickoff meeting, coordinating availability with Met, and completing the final contract/task order updates. Once executed, the team can proceed with the mid-July kickoff and initiate the groundwater banking study effort.

California Gubernatorial Priorities Letter

A draft letter[12] from the Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley presents a proposed two-term water agenda for a new California administration focused on improving water reliability, quality, ecosystem health, and flood resilience. It identifies a structural water supply shortfall in the San Joaquin Valley of approximately 2.5 million acre-feet annually, threatening rural communities, agriculture, jobs, and the environment. The letter advocates a coordinated Unified Water Plan that integrates local groundwater sustainability efforts with regional infrastructure, conveyance improvements, recharge, conservation, and environmental restoration.

The recommendations include improving drinking water reliability for disadvantaged communities, restoring capacity in major conveyance systems such as the California Aqueduct, Delta-Mendota Canal, and Friant-Kern Canal, supporting local groundwater recharge and demand reduction projects, and developing large-scale infrastructure to increase water supplies and storage. The plan also proposes flood reduction measures, habitat restoration, farmland repurposing strategies, and economic transition support for communities impacted by water shortages.

The letter concludes by urging stronger state leadership, coordinated agency action, sustainable water funding, streamlined permitting, science-based decision-making, and accountability measures. It argues that investments in Valley water infrastructure and management would not only benefit the San Joaquin Valley but also improve statewide water resilience, including drought protection and supply reliability for Southern California.

Unified Water Plan

The purpose of the Unified Valley Plan for the San Joaquin Valley is to identify and present possible solutions for long-term water needs in the San Joaquin Valley by bringing together existing water plans, strategies, and

[12] See Attachments

knowledge from across the San Joaquin Valley into one coordinated, valley-wide planning framework. The San Joaquin Valley has a massive water supply gap at 2.5-3 million acre-feet by 2040, incorporating SGMA compliance needs, climate change impacts, and environmental flow requirements. A full administrative draft is now available.

The Unified Valley Water Plan Shows a Massive Water Supply Gap —Even under the most optimistic scenario — combining restored canal capacity, local recharge projects, and increased Delta access — the gap cannot be fully closed. Best-case projections still leave ~0.5–0.9 million acre-feet unmet and 200,000– 400,000 acres needing to be repurposed, at a total infrastructure cost of $13–20 billion.

Water Blueprint SJV & CWI – Unified Water Plan

The purpose of the Unified Valley Plan for the San Joaquin Valley is to identify and present possible solutions for long-term water needs in the San Joaquin Valley by bringing together existing water plans, strategies, and knowledge from across the San Joaquin Valley into one coordinated, valley-wide planning framework.

Bureau of Reclamation Report to Congress:

- Chapter 1 Introduction
- Chapter 2 Overview of the water resource needs and opportunities in the San Joaquin Valley.
- Chapter 3 Overview of flood risks and management in the San Joaquin Valley and opportunities for improving flood management.
- Chapter 4 Illustration of an environmental vision for the San Joaquin Valley and estimates of the water supplies needed to implement that vision.
- Chapter 5 Evaluation of a range of potential solutions.
- Chapter 6 Recommendations for a path forward and a roadmap for implementation. Includes policy recommendations.

San Joaquin Valley Water Collaborative Action Program (SJV CAP)

Background

The CAP Plenary Group adopted work groups to implement the CAP Term Sheet[13], adopted on November 22, 2022. During Phase II, Work Groups are continuing to meet and discuss priorities and drafting various documents for their respective areas: Safe Drinking Water; Sustainable Water Supplies; Ecosystem Health; Land Use, Demand Reduction and Land Repurposing; Implementation.

The Bureau of Reclamation is currently funding the CAP. This funding supports its management and facilitation of the overall CAP process and the development of a prioritization tool. The tool is envisioned to be used by CAP participants, federal and state agencies, other stakeholders, and the public to evaluate policy recommendations, programmatic changes, and projects to achieve sustainable water management in the San Joaquin Valley.

The Steering Committee created a subgroup and will review several prioritization tools developed by other organizations and use those examples to craft a work plan and initial set of criteria for consideration.

[13] Request from Authority staff

Updates

On Friday, May 29, the CAP released its "Vision for the San Joaquin Valley"[14], detailing desired outcomes, investment strategies, and policy reforms needed to transition the region toward sustainable water management for people, agriculture, and the environment.

[14] Request from Authority staff

ATTACHMENTS

Assessment of CVP and SWP Delta Operations on Green Sturgeon

June 22, 2026

Executive Summary

On June 13, the cumulative salvage of 15 Green Sturgeon exceeded the incidental take statement in the 2024 NMFS Biological Opinion of 14 fish per water year. Juvenile Green Sturgeon are typically in the Delta year-round and salvaged at low levels.

Juvenile production appears to be higher than other recent years. The zone of influence from export pumping is currently small. Juvenile Green Sturgeon are likely to move volitionally; therefore, exports are unlikely to affect migratory behaviors. Salvage effects are non-lethal and fish are released.

Detections of Green Sturgeon in salvage are potentially due to higher juvenile production and hypothesized environmental conditions affecting migration behavior. No information suggests salvage poses additional risks to the population than considered in the 2025 Record of Decision.

Operational and Regulatory Conditions

Green Sturgeon annual cumulative salvage exceeded both the annual (14 individuals) and 3-year rolling average (5 individuals) Incidental Take Limit set by the 2024 NMFS Biological Opinion (BiOp) on June 13 with the salvage of 15 individuals. The cumulative salvage ITL threshold resets on September 30, 2026.

Biology Distribution and Evaluation of Green Sturgeon

Delta Life Stages

Juvenile/Adult/Subadult

Historic Information

Subadult/Adult: Most abundant during spring spawning migration period of March through May, and post spawning out-migration periods May through June (early outmigrants) or September through January (late outmigrants) depending on interannual flow conditions in the spring and winter. Adults are present year-round to a lesser extent in the Delta, but mainly in San Pablo Bay. In 2021, the adult abundance estimate was 13,161 (Dudley et al 2021 in NMFS 2021).

Juvenile: Age-1 through Age-3 juveniles are present year-round and widely distributed, with more frequent detections in the Delta. This life stage is migrating, sheltering, foraging, and rearing in the Delta with greater detection in the winter and spring than in the summer and fall (Miller et al. 2020). Juveniles tagged with acoustic tags in the Sacramento River near

Sherman Island were detected as far upstream as the Cache Slough complex, in the San Joaquin River at the Antioch Bridge, and in Threemile, Horseshoe Bend, and Montezuma Sloughs (CDFW 2021). Seasonal abundance at the study's primary sampling site (near Sherman Island) appears to be highest during summer based on capture and telemetry data. Residence time at the primary sampling site for individual fish ranges from one day to over one year but telemetry data show outmigration from the primary sampling site to the Pacific Ocean ranges from 27 to 552 days. In 2021, the juvenile abundance estimate was 4,387 (Dudley et al 2021 in NMFS 2021). Juvenile Green Sturgeon develop osmoregulatory capacity by 1.5 years (~750mm, Allen and Cech 2007) and are hypothesized to migrate into estuarine conditions to maintain optimal growth.

Salvage: Salvage events have historically been infrequent (**Figure 1**). Since 2008, juvenile salvage has occurred only in 2016, 2017, 2020, 2024, and 2025 with recent salvage events occurring in the summer.

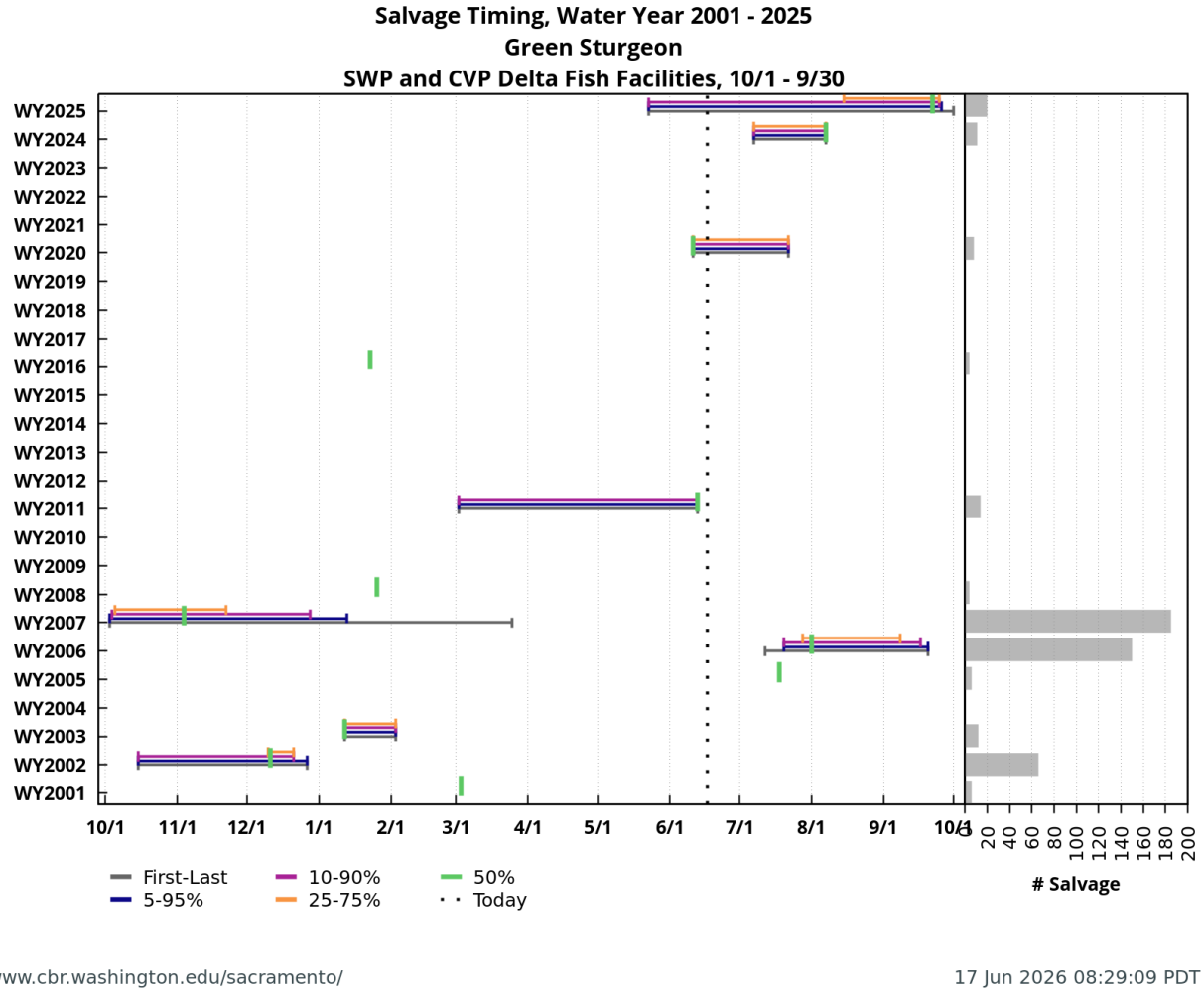


Figure 1. Historical salvage timing, Water Years 2001-2025. Source: SacPAS Salvage Timing Query (https://www.cbr.washington.edu/sacramento/data/query_salvage_hrt.html).

Current Information

As of June 13, 2025, 2 Green Sturgeon were salvaged at the CVP and 4 were salvaged at the SWP facilities. This results in a WY2026 cumulative expanded salvage of 15 fish (annual expanded salvage threshold = 14 fish). Fish were salvaged between 11/12/2025 and 06/13/2026. Size of the fish range from 347-600 mm with back-calculated ages based on Von Bertalanffy growth curves developed in Farr et al. (2002) for Oregon Green Sturgeon ranging from Age 1 to Age 2.

Other recent Green Sturgeon catch includes:

CDFW Juvenile Sturgeon monitoring and tagging (Marc Beccio, pers. comm.):

- 2 tagged juvenile Green Surgeon in Grizzly Bay for 2026. CPUE is expected to be at its highest mid-July through mid-October

CDFW Bay Study (Kenji Soto, pers. Comm.):

- 7/1/2025 Green Sturgeon at Station 736 (Sacramento River near Sherman Island) – 423mm TL
- 7/15/2025 Green Sturgeon at Station 106 (San Francisco Bay) – 767mm TL
- 8/11/2025 Green Sturgeon at Station 431 (Suisun Bay) – 417mm TL
- 9/3/2025 Green Sturgeon at Station 431 (Suisun Bay) – 591mm TL (Wanded, no PIT Tag)
- 3/3/2026 Green Sturgeon at Station 752 (Lower Sacramento River – North End of Decker Island) – 193mm TL. Likely to be a young-of-the-year.
- All released alive

USFWS Rotary Screw Trap Monitoring (Bill Poytress, pers. comm.):

- Larval Green Sturgeon were being caught daily in increasing numbers along juvenile size class sturgeon during periods of 06/01/2026-06/09/2026.

Table 1. Historical Green Sturgeon Catch and CPUV

Water Year	Salvage Facility Catch	Expanded Salvage	CDFW Bay Study Captures	USFWS Red Bluff Green Sturgeon RST CPUV (fish/ac-ft)
2010	0	0	2	n/a
2011	0	0	0	n/a
2012	0	0	0	n/a
2013	0	0	3	2.86
2014	0	0	4	2.98
2015	0	0	1	3.25

2016	1	4	0	30.35
2017	1	4	1	29.79
2018	0	0	2	0.41
2019	0	0	1	22.19
2020	2	8	0	1.58
2021	0	0	0	12.32
2022	0	0	1	0.02
2023	0	0	0	37.05
2024	3	11	3	9.10
2025	7	20	4	2.88
2026	5	15	n/a	8.71 (through 6/10/2026)

Evaluation

At current operations is salvage of Green Sturgeon likely to continue?

Possibly, based on historical salvage data (Figure 1), salvage has occurred through summer and fall months. Juvenile and subadult Green Sturgeon are observed in the Delta and Bay in the Fall, though usually in low abundance (Miller et al. 2020, Figure A1). Limited detections occurred this this winter and spring.

Will continued salvage of Green Sturgeon have population level effects?

With limited recent juvenile or adult abundance data, there is high uncertainty regarding the magnitude of Green Sturgeon salvage and if there is significant associated mortality. However, based on historical salvage levels, periodicity patterns, and lack of mortality observed in 2026 so far, continued salvage on Green Sturgeon is unlikely to have a population level effect. Similar levels of salvage observed between 2016-2020 (annual salvage= 0 to 8 fish) were considered a low threat in the most recent 5-year status review (NMFS 2021) compared to the period prior to 2009, when annual salvage ranged from 0 to less than 200 fishes.

All sturgeon salvaged in 2026 were successfully released alive in the Delta. Laboratory studies by Steel et al. (2022) demonstrated that fish guidance through louvers similar to those utilized in salvage facilities was varied for sturgeon less than 120 mm (43%-99%), much higher (99%) for sturgeon exceeding 120 mm in length, and 100% for sturgeon greater than 280 mm. Furthermore, research by Baird et al. (2019) indicates that Green Sturgeon larger than 200 mm face minimal predation risk from common predators such as Striped Bass and Largemouth Bass present adjacent to salvage facilities. Given that sturgeon salvaged were greater than 280 mm,

these findings collectively suggest that unobserved take of Sturgeon over the same salvage period did not occur.

Is increased facility entrainment in WY 2026 a result of delta hydrodynamics due to delta operations or increased population size of Green Sturgeon due to ongoing recovery?

Favorable spring hydrologic conditions during Above Normal (AN) and Wet (W) water years in 2023, 2024, and 2025 may have promoted increased survival rates for early life stages in these years, contributing to increased juvenile Green Sturgeon presence in the Delta. Dudley et al (2026) noted that there is an increasing number of spawners with a larger line occurring every 4-year cycle (e.g. BY2026, BY2022, etc.), which could suggest greater spawner abundance around the dominant year (e.g. on the shoulders of these brood years). Annual Red Bluff Green Sturgeon CPUV since 2023 has included the highest recorded estimate in 26 years of monitoring (Poythress & McCraney 2025; Table 1), with 4,290 larvae and 26 juveniles caught and continued larval recruitment in the past few years. The fish salvaged this year were likely 1+ and 2-year-old fish hatched during these favorable spring hydrological conditions.

The presence of Green Sturgeon salvage over the past week may have been influenced by different environmental attributes affecting movement behavior. For instance, hydrodynamic conditions during the last two weeks have had smaller zones of influence than typically observed during the summer when green sturgeon salvage occurs. Over the 7-day period from June 08 through June 15, 2026, which encompasses the majority of WY 2026 salvage, mean flows at Sacramento River at Freeport and San Joaquin River at Vernalis were 12,342 cfs, 1,555 cfs, respectively. On 6/16, daily exports were 923 cfs for Jones Pumping Plant and 271 cfs for Harvey O. Banks Pumping Plant. Ranges for the daily, 5-day, and 14-day average OMRI from June 08 to June 15, were –3,305 to –1661, -3,684 to –2,839, and –3,044 to –3,400 cfs, respectively. Based on the real-time hydrodynamic modeling from June 1 and June 8 (Figure A3), the zone of influence extends through the Old and Middle River corridor only as far north as Victoria Cut. An environmental attribute which could affect behavior is temperature. Temperatures have increased over the last two weeks in the South Delta (Figure A4), and this is hypothesized to potentially affect juvenile green sturgeon distribution and residence time in freshwater (Heublein et al 2017).

Appendix.

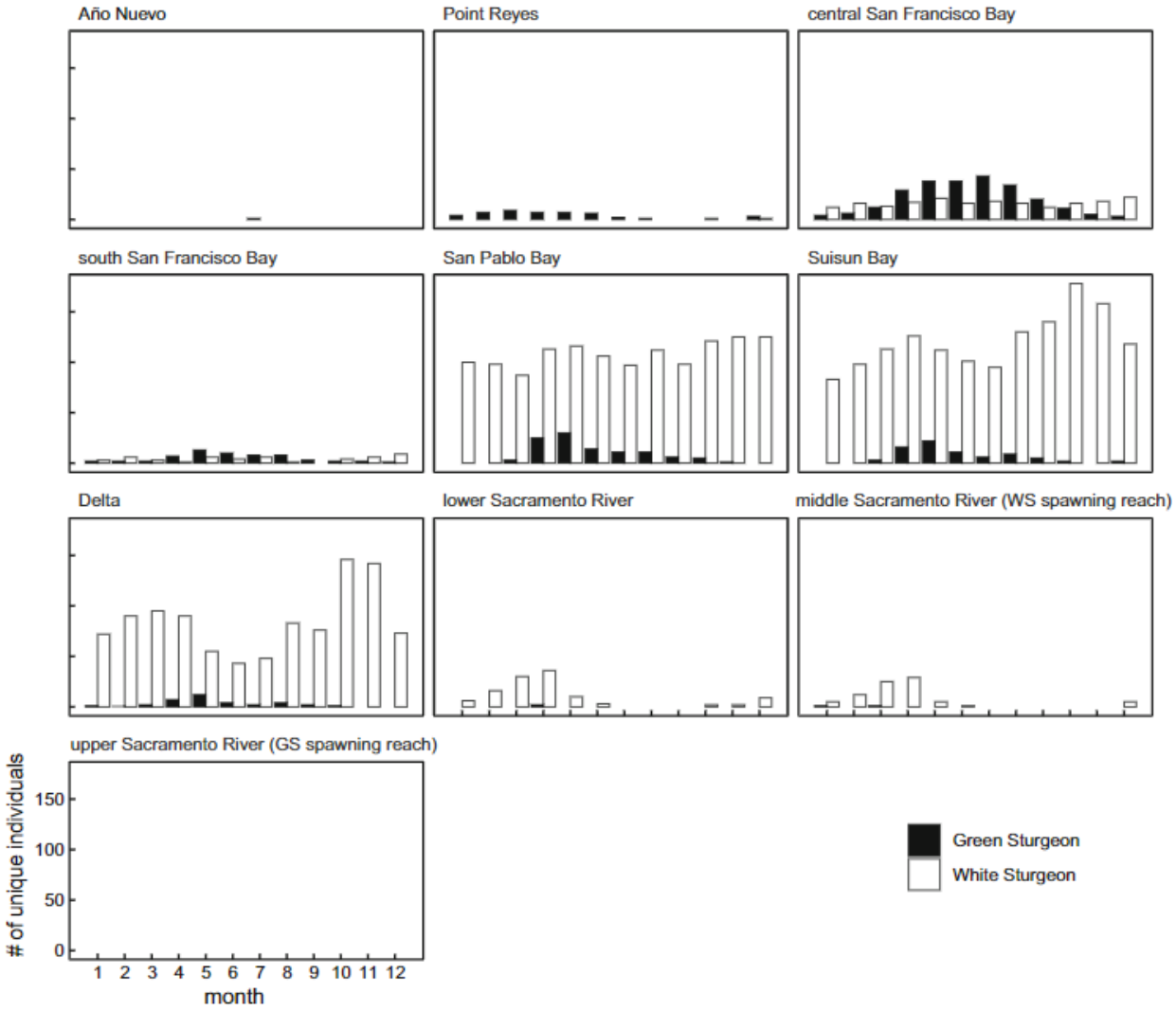


Figure A1. Subadult Green Sturgeon Presence Across all Months by River Reach (Source: Miller et al. 2020)

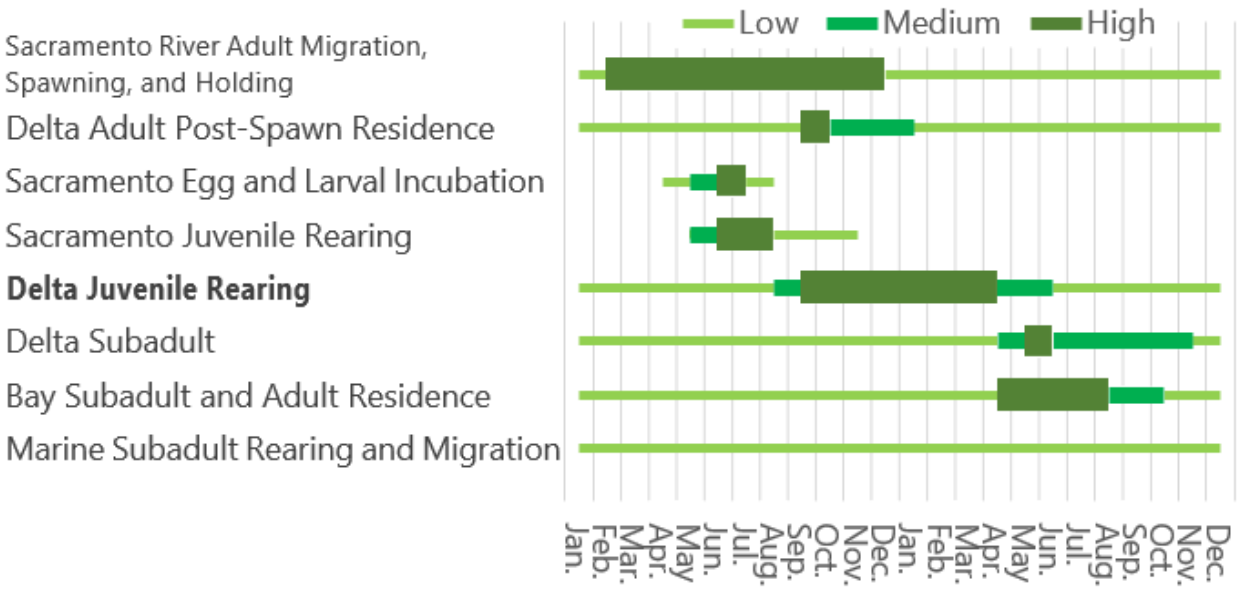


Figure A2. Temporal Life Stage Domains for Green Sturgeon (Figure D-8 from LTO EIS Appendix AB-D)

Table A1. Downriver Adult Migration Timing Based on Early and Late Groups Identified in Telemetry Analysis (Table C-125 of LTO EIS Appendix AB-C)

	Early Downriver				Late Downriver			
Year	Count	First Date	Mean Date	Last Date	Count	First Date	Mean Date	Last Date
2007	1	Aug 17	–	–	3	Dec 7	Dec 18	Jan 6
2008	0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2009	0	–	–	–	3	Oct 14	Nov 16	Jan 14
2010	0	–	–	–	3	Dec 7	Dec 9	Dec 11
2011	1	Jun 28	–	–	1	Jan 23	–	–
2012	10	May 24	Jun 14	Jul 24	7	Nov 21	Nov 25	Dec 2
2013	3	Jul 1	Jul 7	Jul 12	10	Dec 15	Feb 5	Feb 14
2014	3	May 22	Jun 11	Jul 26	10	Dec 1	Dec 4	Dec 6
2015	4	May 20	Jun 23	Jul 26	16	Oct 15	Dec 14	Jan 9
2016	9	Apr 15	May 21	Jul 7	17	Sep 22	Nov 13	Dec 12
2017	6	May 18	Jun 9	Jul 7	10	Nov 22	Jan 14	Mar 24

Source: Colborne pers. comm.

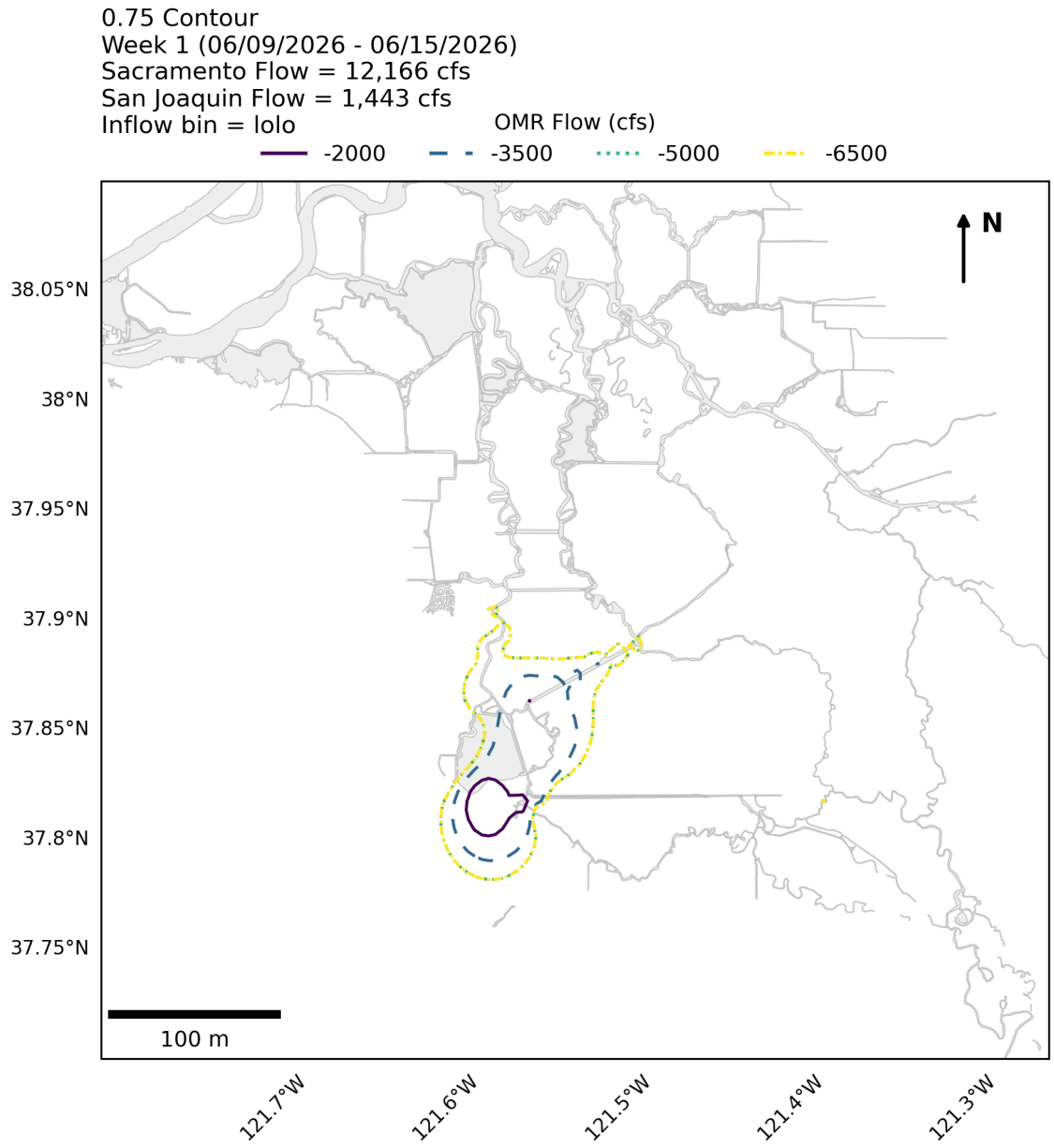


Figure A3. Contour maps delineating Delta Export Zone of Influence under varying inflows and OMR (Source Stantec 2026).

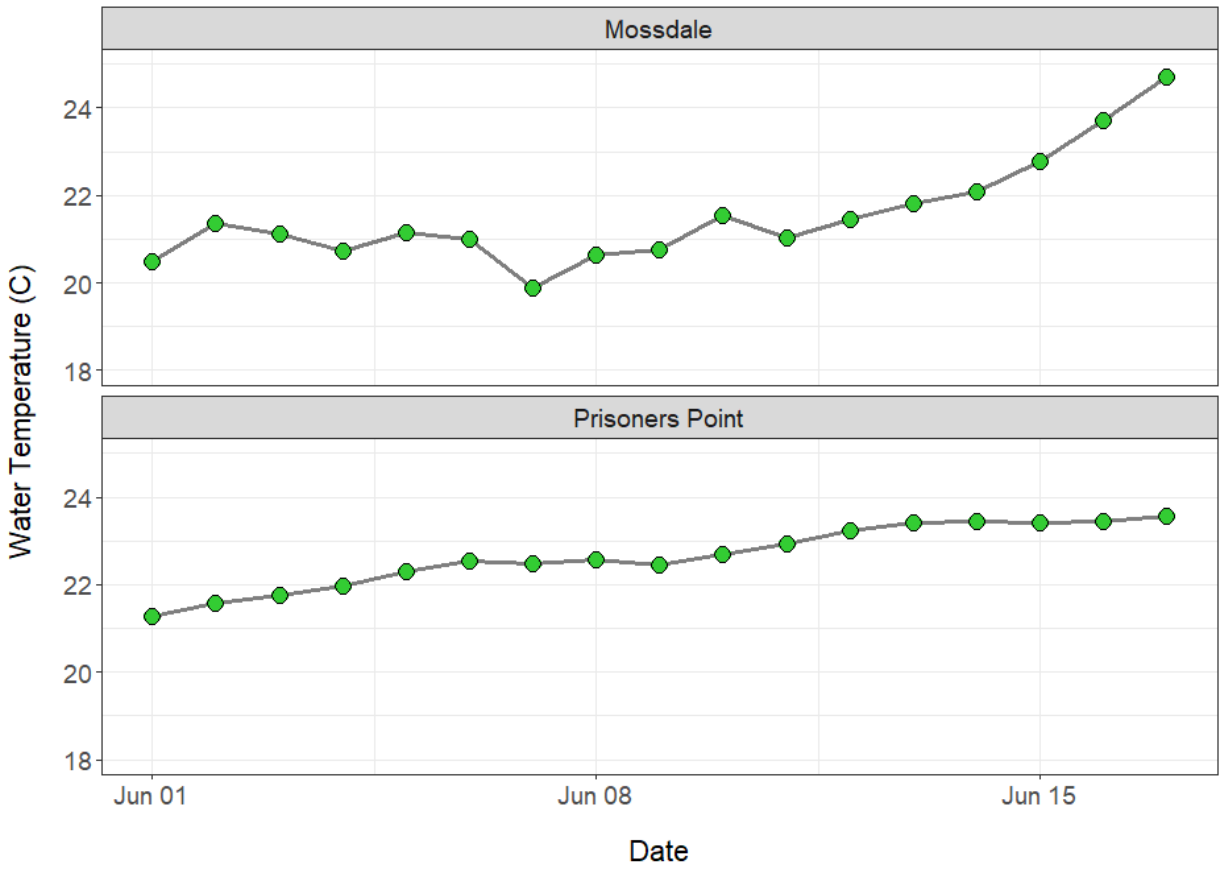


Figure A4. Daily water temperatures (°C) at Mossdale and Prisoners Point in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, June 1-16, 2026.

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Water Blueprint
for the San Joaquin Valley

To: Incoming Gubernatorial Administration (Governor-elect Transition Team; CNRA Secretary; CalEPA Secretary; SWRCB Chair/Executive Director; DWR Director; Cal OES Director; DHCS/Health & Human Services leadership; Governor's Office of Planning & Research)

A Two-Term Water Agenda that Protects and Improves Water Supply and Quality, Restores Ecosystems and Reduces Flooding to enable a Stronger San Joaquin Valley and a More Water Resilient Southern California

Summary

California's San Joaquin Valley is navigating a structural water shortfall that affects families, farmworkers, small rural communities, the environment and the Valley's economic backbone. The Valley is expected to experience an average annual shortfall of around 2.5 million acre-feet, with projected impacts that include large-scale land fallowing and job losses unless there are thoughtful, strategic solutions.

The Valley needs real solutions to overcome its water shortfalls, not aspirational plans or projects that are unaffordable. The Water Blueprint has spent years developing a realistic, affordable water plan that not only benefits the San Joaquin Valley but provides substantially improved water supplies and drought protection for southern California. The plan is diverse, addressing not only water supplies and water quality, but proposes flood management and environmental enhancement for the Valley that goes well beyond previous planning efforts.

There are no quick and easy solutions for California's water problems. The problems facing us today have taken decades to evolve and are likely to be exacerbated by climate change. They will take sustained, coordinated efforts to resolve, but resolution is achievable. The Valley faces water management challenges that threaten communities and the economy with risks of significant land fallowing, job losses and related social issues.

Local agencies are implementing the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) through Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs). The Unified Water Plan effort—led by the California Water Institute at Fresno State University and Water Blueprint partners—aims to integrate and coordinate subregional efforts into a single, coherent Valley-wide plan to solve an array of water related problems.

The Water Blueprint and the Unified Water Plan

The Unified Water Plan is intended to coordinate and integrate numerous Valley subregional water efforts into a comprehensive regional approach—not to replace local plans, but to add synergy – to align local efforts with new infrastructure to increase benefits and effectiveness.

The Blueprint's Unified Water plan is based on:

- the need to improve drinking water supplies for rural communities,
- the need to restore fundamental, essential conveyance capacity in major canals,
- an understanding of the magnitude of the water management problems in each subbasin and the specific projects needed to address those problems,
- the type and magnitude of environmental enhancement that is both needed and possible in each subbasin,
- the reduction in flood risks that can and should be achieved,
- an understanding that California's climate is highly variable and uncertain and that resilience is achieved through sound planning, and
- a recognition of the need to work with multiple agencies and organizations in a coordinated and strategic manner to advance necessary short-term and long-term projects.

The Water supply components of this plan amount to more than $10 billion for a water supply increase of up to 2.1-million-acre feet. Preliminary estimates of the average water cost are around $220/af. The revenues from these investments have been estimated to be around $7 billion per year.

Objective #1: **Water Reliability for Rural Communities** - Improvement in drinking water supplies to improve the quality, reliability and affordability of domestic water supplies in rural areas.

Recommendation #1: Create a Community Water Reliability Task Force, co-led by agencies and implementation partners with field capacity (including organizations like Self Help Enterprises).

Core actions include:

a) rapid assessment and prioritization of small systems and vulnerable areas using consistent GIS layers (floodplain, water quality, subbasin/GSA boundaries) as described in Unified Water Plan work,
b) bundling planning, design and construction so small communities can compete for funding and move faster (a frequent barrier in rural infrastructure delivery) to address water and sewer challenges, and
c) alignment of drinking water security with housing stability. Where domestic wells or small systems are at risk, coordinate with housing rehabilitation and resilience programs to reduce displacement pressure.

This approach earns consensus by beginning with a universal value—safe water for families—and builds trust for the harder allocation and infrastructure conversations.

Objective #2**: Restoration of conveyance capacity in the major canals in the Valley**

Prevention of ongoing subsidence and restoration of the main water conveyance facilities in the San Joaquin Valley is fundamental for providing a reliable supply of water to the Valley and to southern California. Essential facilities include the California Aqueduct/San Luis Canal, the Delta Mendota Canal and the Friant-Kern Canal. Also included in this group is channel restoration and maintenance in the South Delta to restore fish habitat, facilitate escapement of flood water from the San Joaquin River and restore water delivery capability to farmers in the area. An investment in the order of at least $7.2

billion dollars is required to restore these facilities. An investment of that magnitude is beyond the capabilities of water users. Significant state and federal investments in these facilities will be needed to maintain the economies of central and southern California.

Recommendation #2: Take a leadership role in restoring CVP and SWP conveyance facilities to their design capacity including subsidence-impacted canals and sediment-constrained Delta channels and be proactive in advancing programs and projects that slow or prevent ongoing subsidence. This should include financial and policy support – including streamlined permitting processes.

Objective #3: **Implementation of local water projects** (scenario 2 projects in the UWP)

Recommendation #3: Direct state partners to provide financial aid, technical support (such as I-FIRM and aerial snow surveys) and streamlined permitting to subbasins to help implement local water projects identified in GSPs that:

a) enhance water supplies and groundwater recharge utilizing local surplus water,
b) facilitate demand reduction,
c) provide operational coordination to transfer water consistent with enhanced local management and control including recirculation of SJRRP water,
d) proactively pursues the co-equal goals of the Delta Reform Act based on the best available science, and
e) protects water quality as a co-equal priority

With investments in the order of $3 billion, the current water supply-demand gap could be reduced from around 2.5 maf to around 1.1 maf (range of 0.9 to 1.3). Without overriding local control a new administration can assist by:

f) providing technical templates and shared analytics distilled from the implementation of successful projects,
g) incentivizing multi-benefit projects through strategically designed funding vehicles, and
h) drawing on proven practices for recharging high flow water without restructuring water rights

Objective #4: Development of water infrastructure

With a sizable water supply-demand gap still remaining after implementing local projects and local supplies fully utilized, the remaining sources of water are flows from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta that are not needed for any other purpose, and new reservoirs. Without these projects it is likely that many subbasins will be chronically short of water including Delta-Mendota, Westside, Kern, Kaweah, Tule, and possibly Merced, Chowchilla and Madera.

Recommendation #4: Support efforts to develop affordable large-scale infrastructure that can make a meaningful difference in enhancing the water supply for California. These large projects have long lead times but beginning now, with research and analysis, is critical to avoiding catastrophic conditions in the future.

Core actions:

a) Infrastructure improvements in the Delta to allow increased water diversions in times of surplus without harming native fish,

b) new bidirectional conveyance facilities in the Valley to move the increased supplies to areas where they are needed and facilitate groundwater banking, including:
    i) a Trans Valley Canal linking the California Aqueduct to critically water-short Tulare County while also providing supplemental water to wildlife refuges, and
    ii) new facilities to convey water from Mendota Pool to white land areas east of it,
c) development of drought year contingency projects including reservoirs north of the Delta to provide drought year supplies, and reverse flow on the California Aqueduct and Delta Mendota canal to facilitate recovery of banked water during severe droughts, and
d) wet year contingency projects - transitional storage south of the Delta to hold flood waters until they can be delivered for groundwater recharge or irrigation.

The Valley's share of the cost of these projects is estimated to be around $4 billion.

Objective #5: **Reduction in flood flows**

The ground water storage projects and surface water storage projects south of the Delta are expected to reduce flood flows at Vernalis by around 10,000 cfs (range 7,000 to 12,500 cfs) and flood flows to Tulare Lake by 5,000 cfs (range 2,200 to 6,600). While this will not eliminate flooding in the Valley, it is a significant improvement. The costs for these projects are included in the projects listed above.

To further reduce flooding risks, several types of projects could be investigated further: increased in-Valley recharge capacity, increased capacity for flood water to escape the Valley, such as an expanded Paradise Cut and reconnection of expanded floodplain to reduce peak to reduce flood impacts and create healthier rivers.

Objective #6: **Environmental Restoration and Protection**

A conceptual environmental plan area was identified in the Blueprint plan encompassing 1.1 million acres. Of this total 350,000 acres are needed to meet stated environmental goals for seven different land cover types: aquatic, floodplain, grassland, riparian, scrub & saltbush, wetland and woodland. Of the 350,000 acres, at least 130,000 acres would come from the repurposing of irrigated land. It is estimated that restoring 350,000 acres while repurposing 130,000 acres would result in a net water savings of 50,000 acre-feet per year. Repurposing 50,000 acres of irrigated land to multi-benefit recharge basins might reduce water demands by another 30,000 acre-feet per year.

Recommendation #6.

a) Develop a program to fund and distribute $1 billion over the next 4 years to repurpose farmland consistent with an environmental enhancement plan for the Valley
b) If there is significant achievement in progress towards environmental goals, relax take provisions when sufficient habitat has been secured to ensure protection of the species, particularly for channel and recharge basin maintenance activities that would otherwise increase flood risks.
c) Make safe harbor agreements easier to obtain so landowners do not oppose environmental restoration on lands adjoining their property

Objective #7: Implement "managed transition" strategies to reduce impacts on communities and workers in areas where land must be repurposed.

The Water Blueprint projects potentially severe social and economic impacts in areas where the water supply-demand gap cannot be closed through water supply enhancement.

Recommendation #7: To help communities adapt, build a cooperative strategy that includes:

- workforce partnerships and local economic diversification planning in highly impacted areas, and
- housing stability and anti-displacement coordination,.

Objective #8: Responsible Governance & Performance Accountability

Recommendation #8: Create incentives for agencies and stakeholders to work together in a coordinated manner to effectively and efficiently address California water challenges.

Core Actions:

a) Secure Sustainable Water Funding. Create a reliable, sustainable, state funding source for water infrastructure that provides predictable, long-term investment. This funding should support critical water infrastructure projects, environmental needs, and California's Human Right to Water while leveraging federal, regional, and local investment
b) Unify State Agencies: Direct state agencies to align under unified statewide water priorities and jointly advance implementation in partnership with local, regional, and federal water managers. Designate a cabinet-level water policy executive, reporting directly to the Governor, to align agencies and organize state resources to implement California's water priorities. Incentivize agency heads to look beyond agency boundaries to meet the broader state goals. CDFW, CDWR, SWRCB, DSC, CNRA should understand state objectives and work cooperatively to achieve them.
c) Streamline permitting and hold regulators accountable for their decisions.
d) Require regulatory decisions to be based on the best available science and appoint an ombudsman to mediate disagreements as a first line of recourse.
e) Focus capital and permitting attention on investments most likely to generate shared benefits. Consensus can be built by implementing a coordinated system of incentives and projects in which parties with diverse interests get better together.
f) Implement reforms that encourage large scale ecosystem enhancements.
g) Implement reforms that facilitate flexibility in management of water supplies.
h) Shift operational control of diversions from rivers to local entities, such as river water masters, who are then coordinated Valley-wide.
i) Require regular, transparent reporting of progress towards water management and environmental objectives with pathways for impediments to be identified and resolved. Reporting metrics might include:
    i) households/communities gaining improved drinking water reliability (connections, consolidations, treatment),
    ii) recharge capacity added, quantity of water recharged (by project or subbasin),
    iii) ecosystem restoration achieved (by land cover type, by subbasin),
    iv) conveyance enhancements (interties, turnout upgrades, operational agreements),
    v) water quality risk reduction actions (priority plumes addressed, systems upgraded),
    vi) cross-basin agreements executed (MOUs, joint powers arrangements, water accounting frameworks).

The next administration can accelerate progress by focusing on:

1. Safe & reliable water for communities (domestic drinking water and small systems) as a non-negotiable baseline.
2. A unified water plan that integrates surface water, groundwater, recharge, conveyance, conservation, and markets—aligning local GSPs with improvements in Valley-wide infrastructure.
3. Multi-benefit infrastructure investments (recharge, flood-managed aquifer recharge, conveyance modernization, water quality) that protect communities and sustain the Valley's economy.
4. Environmental enhancement based on defensible science and sound ecological

Developing more sustainable supplies from the Delta, restoring conveyance capacity in the California Aqueduct and developing new infrastructure that expands water banking opportunities not only helps the San Joaquin Valley – it greatly enhances the water supply resilience for Southern California. This approach helps California meet its broader water supply objectives. The Water Blueprint is committed to supporting an administration with the vision and capacity to lead this effort.

Sincerely,

Eddie Ocampo, Board of Directors Chair
Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley

Appendix A
Unified Water Plan Alignment with Other Planning Efforts

Several thoughtful water planning efforts have been undertaken. This section highlights the alignment between the Blueprint Plan and the other efforts. Codes include:

- Alignment – Blueprint alignment with the plan element but wording may be different. Examples provided but typically not a comprehensive list of Blueprint Plan projects..
- Consistent – not considered in the Blueprint plan, but consistent with Blueprint objectives.
- Inconsistent - not considered in the Blueprint plan, but likely inconsistent with Blueprint objectives.
- Not aligned – Blueprint plan offers a different approach. Explanation provided.

The Governor's Water Resiliency Portfolio[1]

The Governor's water resilience portfolio embraces a broad, diversified approach. Goals and actions are organized into four categories:

1) **Maintain and diversify water supplies**: State government will continue to help regions reduce reliance on any one water source and diversify supplies to enable flexibility as conditions change. Diversification will look different in each region based on available water resources, but it will strengthen water security and reduce pressure on river systems across the state. Alignment – Recommendation #3 focuses on a range of local types of projects, while Recommendation #4 3 focuses on large scale inter-regional infrastructure projects.

2) **Protect and enhance natural ecosystems**: State leadership is essential to restore the environmental health of many of our river systems in order to sustain fish and wildlife. This entails effective standard setting, continued investments, and more adaptive, holistic environmental management. Alignment with Objective 5.

3) **Build connections**: The state aims to improve physical infrastructure to store, move, and share water more flexibly and integrate water management through shared use of science, data, and technology. Alignment – Blueprint plan proposes major investments in infrastructure maintenance and new conveyance. See Objective #2, Recommendations 4b, 4c.

4) **Be prepared**: Each region must prepare for new threats, including flashier floods, deeper droughts, and hotter temperatures. State guidance will enable preparation, protective actions, and adaptation. Alignment – Blueprint plan proposes increased groundwater and surface storage to store water during wet periods to provide resilience during droughts and

[1] Water Resilience Portfolio

conveyance facilities to enhance groundwater banking opportunities. See Recommendations 3a, 4b, 4c.

ACWAs Vision for our Water Future[2]

1) **Lead on Water**
   a) Set a Bold Water Agenda: Establish a focused statewide water agenda aligned with this Vision for Our Water Future. Alignment. Objectives 2 and 4 offer substantial improvements for water supplies for southern California.
   b) Appoint Leaders to Deliver Results: Appoint and empower leaders to deliver measurable outcomes. Consistent with Recommendation 8h.
   c) Unify State Agencies: Direct state agencies to align under unified statewide water priorities and jointly advance implementation in partnership with local, regional, and federal water managers. Designate a cabinet-level water policy executive, reporting directly to the Governor, to align agencies and organize state resources to implement California's water priorities. Alignment - implemented into Recommendation 8b.

2) **Protect Affordability**
   a) Secure Sustainable Water Funding. Create a reliable sustainable state funding source for water infrastructure that provides predictable, long-term investment. This funding should support critical water infrastructure projects, environmental needs, and California's Human Right to Water while leveraging federal, regional, and local investment. Alignment – implemented into Recommendation 8a and see Recommendation #4.
   b) Accelerate Funding. Improve funding programs and coordination so investments reach projects faster — reducing administrative delays, lowering project costs, and accelerating infrastructure delivery. Alignment – see Recommendation #3.
   c) Integrate Investments Across Sectors. Align state investments and integrate water infrastructure funding across energy, housing, and climate and hazard mitigation to advance multi-benefit projects and maximize federal, state, and regional investment. Consistent – Blueprint recommendations provide benefits for rural communities, agriculture, and the environment.

3) **Deliver Critical Infrastructure**
   a) Strengthen the State's Water Backbone: Upgrade, repair, and optimize California's essential backbone infrastructure — the California State Water Project and Central Valley Project.
      i) Modernize and Protect Infrastructure: Advance a durable Delta conveyance solution, strengthen Delta levees, safeguard critical infrastructure from subsidence and seismic risk, and upgrade system technologies — including Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations, snowpack measurement, and remote monitoring control. Alignment – see Recommendations 2 and 3.

[2] ACWA-Vision-Document_FINAL.pdf

ii) Improve Coordinated Operations: Integrate operations of the California State Water Project and Central Valley Project to increase system flexibility, expand the storage and movement of water, and enhance water supply reliability. Alignment with Recommendation 3c.

b) Safeguard Colorado River Water Supplies: Protect California's Colorado River allocation, consistent with the State's legal entitlements and the efforts of the Colorado River Board of California. Consistent, but beyond the Blueprint's scope.

c) Empower Regional Water Solutions: Champion regional and watershed-based solutions. State policy should empower regions with the tools, flexibility, and investment needed to advance regional planning, partnerships, and projects that diversify water supplies, strengthen system connectivity and operational efficiency, and restore ecosystem functions to ensure reliable water supplies. Alignment – See Recommendation #3.

4) Modernize Water Management

Improve California's regulatory and operational systems so water projects can move forward reliably and efficiently, infrastructure can be operated more flexibly, and agencies can respond more rapidly to changing conditions. California's regulatory framework should deliver clear, coordinated decisions grounded in the best available science, while maintaining environmental protections, public transparency, and California's existing water rights priority system. Alignment – see Recommendation 6 and 8.

a) Improve Permitting Performance: Enhance the clarity, coordination, and efficiency of state permitting processes to accelerate infrastructure and operational improvements; eliminate avoidable costs; and ensure state and local agencies deliver timely, accountable results. Alignment with Recommendation 8c.

i) Integrate Permit Requirements: Integrate requirements and processes across regulatory agencies to eliminate redundancy and inconsistency.

ii) Enhance Regulatory Certainty: Establish transparent procedures, clear criteria for permit approval, and accountable timelines for agency decisions — developed in direct partnership with water suppliers.

iii) Streamline Pathways: Create efficient pathways to advance multi-benefit, climate resilient water supply projects.

b) Modernize Water Operations: Advance operational approaches that reflect changing climate realities to improve water supply reliability across environmental, agricultural, and urban sectors. This may include coordinated reservoir management, flexible diversion rules tied to real time hydrology, accelerated groundwater recharge and conjunctive use, expanded water transfers, and other adaptive strategies. Alignment with Recommendations: 3 and 8g, 8h

c) Strengthen Water Data and Science: Invest in integrated, science-based statewide data systems and technology that improve transparency, inform real-time decisions, and strengthen regulatory and operational performance to increase efficiency and better manage water resources. Alignment with Recommendation #8.

DWR's Vision for the San Joaquin Valley

Three California Department of Water Resources (DWR) planning studies—the San Joaquin Basin Flood-MAR Watershed Studies (Watershed Studies), State Water Project Adaptation Strategy, and the San Joaquin Valley Conveyance Study—
inform near- and long-term strategies for addressing water sustainability and
resilience in the San Joaquin Valley.

1) **SWP Adaptation Strategy**
   a) Delta Conveyance Project - provides significant water supply benefits (341,000–411,000 acre-feet increase in total SWP exports per year). While the DCP would improve water reliability, supply and water quality, it is too expensive for agriculture and most of the Valley is not in the SWP place of use.
   b) California Aqueduct Subsidence Program - Without investments, Table A deliveries diminish from over 2,100,000 acre-feet to 300,000 acre-feet per year by 2043. Alignment with Recommendation #2.
   c) FIRO at Oroville - Forecast-informed reservoir operations at Oroville is a safe, cost-effective adaptation investment that has few, if any, drawbacks. Alignment with Recommendation #3
   d) South of Delta Storage - Additional SOD storage can provide an effective strategic water reserve for dry years Alignment with Recommendation #3
   e) Portfolio Approach - When implementing all strategies in combination, reductions to Delta outflow are relatively small (3%) while Table A and Total SWP export improvements are substantial (25–32% and 25–29% respectively). Fundamental alignment with the Blueprint Approach – See p.1

2) **San Joaquin Basin Watershed Studies**
   a) I-FIRM: Reduces peak flows by 30–55%, as well as frequency and
   b) duration of flood flows in the downstream channel; Recharges 410,000 acre-feet per year on average; Reduces groundwater overdraft by 12%–38% across watersheds (103,000 acre-feet per year basin wide); Basin wide implementation of FIRO-integrated recharge can potentially reduce peak flows at Vernalis. Alignment with Recommendation #3 – improved forecasting combined with modified reservoir operations and new recharge facilities increase groundwater recharge and reduce flooding.

3) **San Joaquin Valley Conveyance Study:** The purpose of the San Joaquin Valley Conveyance Study was to: describe the impacts of subsidence on San Joaquin Valley conveyance facilities and evaluate the need for improved or expanded conveyance facilities throughout the San Joaquin Valley. Alignment with Recommendations 2 and 4.

SJV Water Collaborative Action Program (CAP) Vision for the San Joaquin Valley

The CAP's Vision for the San Joaquin Valley outlines desired outcomes, investment strategies, and policy reforms needed to transition the region toward sustainable water management for people, agriculture, and the environment.

An alternative future scenario could see the development of new or reoperated water supplies, which could increase reliability in areas that were previously groundwater dependent, resulting in a reduction in retired acreage required to bring basins into balance and adjust to water scarcity. The proposed investments in this plan include funding that would support either scenario, so the total investment amount is greater than for just one scenario. Decisions from federal, state, and local officials need to be made soon about what the future path should be.

1) **Challenges**. There are seven major categories of challenges:
    a) Drinking Water Insecurity - Many small, rural communities (SRCs) lack safe, reliable, and affordable drinking water
    b) Agriculture Changes - The San Joaquin Valley is heavily impacted by reduced access to groundwater pumping. As previously stated, over 1 million acres of the San Joaquin Valley's 4.5 million acres of irrigated agriculture may need to come out of production to support the groundwater balance required to achieve sustainability .
    c) Water Supply and Demand Imbalance - From 2003 to 2017, the average annual overdraft increased to 2.4 MAF per year.
    d) Habitat Loss and Ecological Decline – Less than 10 percent of the historical habitat remains, and what exists is fragmented and degraded3. Many of the habitat areas are "too small to support sustainable populations of many fish and wildlife species."
    e) Aging and Insufficient Infrastructure. Most water infrastructure is more than 70 years old. Subsidence caused by groundwater overdraft has reduced the capacity of major canals. This reduces the region's ability to move and store water, worsening shortages and reliability.
    f) Policy Fragmentation and Limited Local Capacity - Local governments face unfunded mandates, declining tax revenues, and insufficient staffing to manage complex water program.

2) **Vision**: The CAP's comprehensive vision for the Valley's future:
    a) Universal access to safe, reliable, affordable drinking water
    b) Sustainable water supplies that support communities, ecosystems, and agriculture
    c) Expanded and connected habitat areas, including floodplain, riparian, wetland, and upland ecosystems
    d) A resilient agricultural economy that preserves as much viable farmland as possible
    e) Aligned state and federal policies and sufficient public investment
    f) Capacity building for local governments, tribes, and community organizations
    g) Science-based, adaptive management to guide decisions over time

3) Investments

a) Safe Drinking Water Investments

The CAP identifies more than $4.1 billion in necessary long-term and interim solutions. These include water system consolidations, new and replacement wells, centralized and decentralized treatment, secure interim supplies, technical and managerial assistance, community engagement, and system-level administrative support. An estimated $8 billion over twenty years is required for operations and maintenance to support system reliability and affordability, particularly for small systems serving small,

[3] (Brown, 2000)

rural communities. The CAP estimates that more than $12.4 billion in infrastructure and capacity expansion is required to ensure safe drinking water for all communities in the San Joaquin Valley.

Proposed Solutions include: consolidation of small systems, centralized or decentralized treatment, new wells or backup supplies, interim bottled water or point-of-use treatment; long-term O&M support to ensure affordability; and operator training and workforce development. Alignment with Recommendation #1.

b) Ecosystem Restoration Investments

To reverse ecological decline and restore habitat connectivity, the CAP identified a need to restore roughly 715,000 acres of various habitat types. Based on recent estimates of habitat restoration project costs, the restoration to meet these goals could exceed $27 billion, including for on-the-ground restoration and land acquisition, across the Valley floor and adjacent foothills. Programs like the Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program (MLRP) and the implementation of Regional Conservation Investment Strategies across the Valley will help to advance restoration, but additional targeted restoration projects and programs will also be necessary to achieve functional habitat and regional corridors. In addition to these restoration needs, the CAP advocates targeted investments in the San Joaquin River Restoration Program, adequate refuge water supplies, and support for long-term land management. Additional capacity-building investments are recommended to improve permitting efficiency, support native seed production, enhance workforce development, and strengthen tribal and community engagement. Habitat Types to be restored include: riparian, floodplain, seasonal and semi-permanent wetlands, upland habitat. Alignment with Recommendation #6.

Additional Ecosystem Investments

- *$758 million to complete Stage 1 of the San Joaquin River Restoration Program*
- *Funding for refuge water supply infrastructure to meet CVPIA obligations*
- *Workforce development and seed propagation capacity*
- *Long-term land management*
- *Streamlined permitting ("Cutting the Green Tape")*

Restoration must be landscape-scale and connected to support ecological function.

c) Water Supply Investments

The CAP identifies more than $14 billion in investments in conveyance, storage, and diversified supply to modernize aging infrastructure, address subsidence-related capacity losses, expand groundwater recharge, and enhance drought and flood resilience. In identifying water supply investment opportunities, the CAP referred to components of the "Unified Water Plan for the San Joaquin Valley" (Unified Water Plan) being prepared by the California Water Institute and Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley. Where projected costs for projects are derived from the Unified Water Plan, they will be denoted. Priority categories include regional and interregional conveyance improvements, surface and groundwater storage development, recycled water and brackish desalination projects, agricultural and urban conservation programs, and enhanced implementation of Flood-Managed Aquifer Recharge (Flood-MAR). Expanding technical and managerial capacity to maintain infrastructure and to implement other local projects introduces additional costs. In total, the CAP estimates $15.3 billion worth of investments in priority water supply infrastructure projects and actions to improve water supply reliability for the San Joaquin Valley.

To stabilize water availability, investments must include:

- $2.67 billion for groundwater recharge projects*
- $6.13 billion for region and interregional conveyance*

    - $1.09 billion for local projects*
    - $5.04 billion for capacity correction on major infrastructure*
- $503 million for local surface water storage*
- $1.19 billion for diversified supply development (recycled water, desalination, etc.)*
- $198.4 million for water conservation*
- $13.2 million for Flood-MAR watershed studies
- $91 million per wet year for on-farm recharge
- $200 million for recharge basins benefiting SRCs
- $64 million for long-term O&M for recharge and ecosystem projects

* Indicates that the costs for investment categories are identified in the Unified Water Plan

These investments aim to increase flexibility, capture high-flow events, and reduce groundwater overdraft. Alignment with recommendations 2,3,4 but the costs in the Unified Water Plan draft are overstated for local projects where insufficient surplus water is available to implement all projects.

d) Land Repurposing and Demand Reduction

SGMA implementation, changes in surface water availability and droughts could require the repurposing of over a million acres of irrigated farmland. The CAP recommends the funding of approximately $13.6 billion to the MLRP to facilitate agricultural land transitions that promote habitat restoration, lower-water crops, groundwater recharge basins, renewable energy development, open space, and community amenities. Additional measures include support for the implementation of groundwater allocation programs, expanded incentives, such as the LandFlex program, and policy improvements related to energy transmission siting and the Williamson Act. CAP estimates a total of $14.6 billion worth of investments to provide adequate support for land transitions and demand reduction.

Repurposing options include: habitat restoration; lower-water-use crops; multi-benefit recharge basins; rangeland, solar development, community parks and buffers.

Key Programs

- $13.6 billion for Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program
- $1 billion to expand the LandFlex program
- Support for groundwater allocations and monitoring technologies
- Policy reforms (e.g., Williamson Act subventions, Prop 218 reform*)*

Alignment with Recommendation #6 and 8e. Conversion of irrigated land to lower-water use crops, rangeland and solar development will likely occur as a result of water demands not being met, and not as part of a water supply plan*.*

4) Funding Models and Sources

A modern, integrated financing approach is essential to support regional water investments at the scale needed while improving affordability, equity, and participation. This is especially true for small, rural communities. Alignment with Recommendation 8a.

Key considerations include:

- Develop comprehensive, system-level financing strategies rather than relying solely on project-by-project funding.
- Leverage blended funding models that combine public grants, low-cost and below-market financing, philanthropic investments, and revenue-based mechanisms to enable landscape-scale outcomes.

- Engage financial experts to help design creative and sustainable funding structures aligned with priority investments.
- Reform Proposition 218 to enable funding for pass-through mandates (e.g., SGMA and flood control) and ensure inclusive rate-setting that incorporates small, rural communities.
- Establish and fund rate-assistance programs for low-income water customers.
- Create financing structures that support collaboration between small, rural communities and landowners on groundwater recharge, including land acquisition where necessary.

5) Tribes, Stakeholders, and Community Engagement

Capacity building is needed for: Tribal governments, Community-based organizations, Water system boards, Domestic well owners Consistent

6) Path Forward

The CAP calls for:

- Streamlined processes Alignment with Recommendation 8c.
- Integrated, multi-benefit planning Alignment – see top of p.2
- Comprehensive financing systems Alignment with Recommendation 8a.
- Continued collaboration across sectors. Alignment with Recommendations: 3 and 8g, 8h

Across all areas, three cross-cutting needs are essential to successful implementation:

- Enhanced local, state, and federal capacity to plan, permit, implement, and maintain water and habitat projects. Alignment with Recommendation #3.
- Streamlined and coordinated regulatory pathways tailored to multi-benefit and ecosystem restoration projects. Alignment with Recommendation 8c, 8e.
- Robust, equitable, and durable financing mechanisms that blend public, private, and philanthropic capital and ensure affordability for small, rural communities. Alignment with Recommendation 8a.

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY WATER
Collaborative Action Program

Plenary Group Meeting
Summary

June 23, 2026 | 3:00 – 5:00 PM

Participation

On June 23, 2026, the Plenary Group had 26 members participate in the discussion, and all five caucuses were represented.

#1 In-Person Meeting Recap

Jim Kramer shared an update on the most recent in-person meeting on June 12, 2026 at the El Capitan Hotel. The discussions centered on legislative updates, CAP's vision for the Valley, caucus work plan priorities, and goals for the remainder of 2026. CAP's vision for the San Joaquin Valley is focused on covering environmental restoration, land repurposing, safe drinking water, and water supply, with the goal of developing a common message and short advocacy document for the incoming state administration.

#2 Legislative Update

Kyle Jones shared a legislative update. Bills are moving through second-house policy hearings. CAP submitted support letters where applicable, but did not reach consensus on a formal position for AB 2026. Most surviving bills are likely heading to appropriations over the July summer recess. AB 2026 is expected to pass Senate Natural Resources and Water. CAP will monitor amendments and revisit if needed. No new formal positions were adopted.

#3 GRA SGMA Summit

Sam Cunningham shared an update on the GRA SGMA Summit that took place in Clovis. The Summit had high attendance, with a notable increase in participation from GSA managers and local representatives compared to state officials. A recurring theme during the event was the critical need for trust among stakeholders and institutions, with participants noting that progress is limited by the speed of trust. Participants identified a lack of alignment in current incentive structures, funding mechanisms, and governance frameworks as significant barriers to SGMA implementation.

#4 DWR Vision for the Valley Presentation and Comment Deadline

DWR released a vision document that synthesizes three technical studies: the State Water Project Adaptation Strategy, the San Joaquin Basin Watershed Studies, and the San Joaquin Valley Conveyance Study. The vision projects a decline in State Water Project deliveries due to shifting hydrology. Proposed strategies include the Delta Conveyance Project, the Aqueduct Subsidence Program, and the implementation of FIRO. The document emphasizes the need to address subsidence, and advocates for a portfolio approach, including managed aquifer recharge and pilot testing strategies to capture high flows.

The public comment period for the document is open until July 21st. CAP will gather feedback from individual caucuses to formulate a collective response to influence the document's direction.

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY WATER
Collaborative Action Program

June 10, 2026

Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry
1021 O Street, Suite 8210
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2026 (Aguiar-Curry) Water Diversion: Groundwater Recharge: Permit– SJVWCAP Requested Feedback

Thank you for introducing AB 2026 and raising awareness about the need to streamline groundwater recharge as a way to support local agencies to comply with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), improve groundwater storage, and potentially improve flood protection through better capture of increasingly volatile and climate change driven flows. The San Joaquin Valley Water Collaborative Action Program (CAP) appreciates the request to provide feedback on the bill. The CAP includes many of the parties that should be part of a final agreement, alongside the Legislature and state agencies, to develop a way forward. Ultimately, streamlining groundwater recharge in a manner that protects other water rights holders, communities, and the environment will require significant work to collaborate and understand the needs of all parties involved.

However, we are confident that there is a solution to capture and use floodflows to benefit the aquifers of the San Joaquin Valley and elsewhere while protecting existing water right holders. As a testament to how challenging this work is, we have deliberated your legislation for over a month in all caucuses within the CAP. Given the complexity of these issues, we are unfortunately still unable to reach full agreement on the best way to reach that balance. The language in AB 2026 does however contain many helpful elements that will support moving permits forward and advance groundwater recharge.

One of the key areas of disagreement centers on new diversions of water and how those diversions impact other legal users of water and the environment. Additional work could determine the appropriate flow volume required to ensure no harm to water rights holders, while also ensuring water can be diverted for groundwater recharge.

Our feedback on various elements of the bill is provided below.

Areas of Strong CAP Support

The CAP strongly supports reforms proposed in AB 2026 that would immediately help permits move forward. This includes the proposed changes to 180-Day and Five-Year Temporary Permits to include:

- Addition of Sections 1425(e) and 1431.1 to provide permittees flexibility so that the timelines in permits begin to run when hydrological conditions begin, rather than the time of the issuance of the permit,
- Specification that recharge projects to meet compliance with SGMA meet the definition of "urgent need," and
- Limited CEQA exemptions for permits.

Areas of CAP Support with Amendments

In addition to the above reforms, the CAP recommends additional amendments to provide permit applicants with more certainty that permits are being processed and available to help ensure full implementation of SGMA, including:

- Require the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) to determine that a water right application substantially complies with the requirements of the Water Code and State Water Board regulations within two years of fee submission by the applicant,
- Require the State Water Board to communicate known deficiencies with permit applications to applicants within 30 days of being accepted,
- Requiring the State Water Board to make a decision on an accepted permit application within two years of it being deemed complete, unless the State Water Board and the applicant agree on a different timeline, and
- Conditioning all permits for recharge uses so that any future extractions of water pursuant to a water right must comply with rules and regulations by an overlying Groundwater Sustainability Agency.

Areas that Need Further Stakeholder Engagement this Year

The CAP believes that it is important to ensure that new water rights permits do not injure legal users of water or unreasonably impact the environment or instream beneficial uses. Consensus among stakeholders on the language effectuating water rights and environmental protection should be sought. At this time, we are unable to reach consensus within the CAP, the membership of which includes water suppliers from multiple watersheds within the San Joaquin Valley as well as the Federal and State Contractors, and environmental NGOs.

Consider a Working Group to Address Streamlining Local Diversion Criteria and Identifying and Addressing Impacts to Water Rights Holders

There remains significant disagreement on how to avoid impacts to the SWP and CVP, and other water rights holders and how to further streamline permits that incorporate local diversion criteria. We are also concerned about the need to determine how to streamline more local

diversion criteria other than the 90/20 method that can benefit all portions of the state. For that reason we feel that DWR Prop 4 Watershed Pilot Projects could be a mechanism to better understand the actual impacts of diversions and opportunities during high flow and flood events, and how those impacts could be mitigated.

A workgroup convened by the Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency that includes the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), State Water Board, and key stakeholders could be convened to develop a set of recommendations to the Legislature by January 1, 2029, that would address:

- How to determine and mitigate impacts to the Delta, SWP and CVP,
- How watershed modeling, including some of the existing work by DWR could inform local diversion criteria for water rights permitting,
- How to further streamline approval of local diversion criteria, and
- What kind of stream monitoring network would be needed to implement more efficient recharge.

We believe this workgroup should replace the language in proposed Sections 1420-1423.

Remove Amendments to Floodflow Diversion Program in Section 1242.1 other than the Sunset Extension

Finally, we are concerned about the inclusion of expansion of emergency floodflow diversions proposed in Section 1242.1. This section focuses on unpermitted diversions and should remain a limited program, rather than be expanded. There is concern about the potential abuse of this law, particularly with the proposed expansions in AB 2026. As such, we believe it would be better to focus on working to reform the water rights permitting system rather than continue to make changes here and urge removing any amendments from the bill. We agree with extending the sunset on Section 1242.1 to 2034, as proposed in the bill and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss further reforms to Section 1242.1 during the next legislative session.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on this proposed legislation, and are happy to meet to discuss these issues further.

Sincerely,

Ann Hayden and Sarah Woolf
Co-Chairs
San Joaquin Valley Water Collaborative Action Program