



Memorandum

TO: SLDMWA Water Resources Committee Members and Alternates

FROM: Scott Petersen, Water Policy Director

DATE: September 8, 2025

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 2024 Record of Decision on Long-Term Operations of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project

On December 20, Reclamation executed the Record of Decision and both the Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries issued their Final Biological Opinions, beginning operations under the new operations regime.

On January 2024, President Trump issued Executive Order 14181, detailing analysis of potential changes to the operations in the 2024 ROD for consideration by the Administration. There is currently work underway to develop an implementation plan for the Executive Order and future action on project operations.

Adaptive Management Program

As part of implementation of the 2024 Record of Decision, state and federal agencies initiated and completed a structured decision-making process to assess alternatives to implement the Summer-Fall Habitat Action, including an analysis of summer and fall X2, for elevation to the agency directors to make a decision regarding summer-fall operations.



After completion of the analysis, the Directors elected to off-ramp Fall X2 operations for this water year and instead extended the operations of the Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates by 30 days.

Endangered Species Act Consultation Milestones

- TBD: Trinity Cooperating Agency Draft EIS/Draft Biological Assessment
- TBD: Trinity Public Draft EIS
- TBD: Trinity Biological Opinion, Final NEPA and ROD

Note: There are also Endangered Species Act consultations on the Trinity River and Klamath River that may have overlap/interactions with the operations of the CVP/SWP.

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.¹ 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 resolution² 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.

Most recently, on July 18, 2022, the State Water Resources Control Board issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP)³ 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).

The purpose of the NOP is: (1) to advise responsible and trustee agencies, Tribes, and interested organizations and persons, that the State Water Board or Board will be the lead agency and will prepare a

¹ Available at <https://water.ca.gov/-/media/DWR-Website/Web-Pages/Blogs/Voluntary-Settlement-Agreement-Meeting-Materials-Dec-12-2018-DWR-CDFW-CNRA.pdf>.

² Available at https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2018/rs2018_0059.pdf.

³ Available at https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/public_notices/notices/20220715-implementation-nop-and-scoping-dwr-baydelta.pdf



draft EIR for a proposed regulation implementing the LSJR flow and southern Delta salinity components of the 2018 Bay-Delta Plan, and (2) to seek input on significant environmental issues, reasonable alternatives, and mitigation measures that should be addressed in the EIR.

In response to the release of the NOP, the Water Authority and member agencies provided scoping comments⁴ and the State Water Board is working through a long-term process to address Phase 1 elements of the Water Quality Control Plan Update.

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

The July 2025 revised draft Bay Delta Plan (2025 revised draft) includes 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.

The State Water Board is seeking public input on the 2025 revised draft updates to the Bay Delta Plan. Comments on this revised draft will inform development of a final draft of the Plan for Board consideration in the future.

Current Activity

On July 24, 2025, State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board or Board) staff released for public review and comment a revised draft of updates to the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento San Joaquin Delta Watershed (Bay Delta Plan or Plan). The changes are focused on the portions of the plan relevant to the Sacramento River watershed, Delta eastside tributaries

⁴ Request from Authority staff



(including the Calaveras, Cosumnes, and Mokelumne Rivers), and Delta (Sacramento/Delta) for the reasonable protection of fish and wildlife beneficial uses.

State Water Board staff plan to release has released supplemental modeling results for the water supply adjustments under the regulatory pathway described in the revised draft Plan by August 22, 2025, to assist the public with their review. Modeling results for voluntary agreements and other scenarios are available in the 2023 draft Staff Report.

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.

Written comments on the revised draft updates are due to the Board on September 29, 2025 and the Board will be having two public hearings on September 24 and 25, 2025.

Schedule

LSJR Flow/SD Salinity Implementation Next Steps Assuming Regulation Path (Phase 1)

- Summer/Fall 2025
 - 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

Sac/Delta Update: Key Milestones

- Summer/Fall 2025: Response to comments and development of proposed final changes to the Bay-Delta Plan
- Fall/Winter 2025: Board consideration of adoption

San Joaquin River Restoration Program

Restoration Flows

On August 29, The Restoration Administrator, an independent body stipulated by the Settlement, has revised the river flow schedule in response to Millerton Lake conditions. This schedule has now been approved by Reclamation.

Restoration Flows ceased in late June to conserve the limited volume of cold water behind Friant Dam, which impounds Millerton Lake. Since late June, the only Friant Dam releases to the San Joaquin River have been to meet holding contract requirements which set a minimum of 5 cfs passing Gravelly Ford (located 38 miles downstream of Friant Dam).

Reclamation regularly monitors water temperatures in Millerton Lake. The data indicate that resuming Restoration Flows in late September would be beneficial to salmon. Restoration Flows will recommence in accordance with the approved schedule below. The public is encouraged to check Friant Dam releases before recreating near the San Joaquin River as conditions and flow schedules may change.



Date	Friant Dam Releases	Flow Target at Gravelly Ford
September 1 – 24	240 – 260 cfs	5 cfs
September 25 – 30	Approximately 340 cfs	Increasing to 95 cfs
October 1 – 5	Approximately 490 cfs	Increasing to 235 cfs
October 6 – 31	450 – 500 cfs	235 cfs
November 1 – February 28, 2026	400 – 500 cfs	255 cfs

Last spring, Reclamation biologists found a [record-setting number of returning adult Spring-run Chinook salmon](#). These adult salmon will soon begin forming redds in the river channel (“redds” are a cleared depression in the gravel and cobbles where fish deposit eggs). Once salmon eggs are deposited and fertilized, they require cold water to develop. Restoration Flow releases from Friant Dam are scheduled to provide salmon the best chance of survival and reproduction.

Additionally, the Program provided its 2024 Annual Report⁵ to the Court.

Delta Conveyance Project

Petition for Change of Point of Diversion and Rediversion for the Delta Conveyance Project

The State Water Resources Control Board Administrative Hearings Office is holding a Public Hearing on the pending Petitions for Change of Water Right Permits 16478, 16479, 16481, and 16482 (Applications 5630, 14443, 14445A, and 17512, respectively) of the **Department of Water Resources**.

The evidentiary portion of the Public Hearing **will continue on May 1** (starting at 1:00 p.m.), **2, 5, 14, 15, 21-23, 27 & 28 and June 10 & 11, 2025**, and additional dates as necessary.

Policy statements will be **heard in person and by Zoom Webinar on May 19, 2025, starting at 9:00 a.m.**, at Joe Serna Jr. CalEPA Building, Byron Sher Hearing Room, 1001 I Street, Second Floor, Sacramento, California.

The portion of the hearing for presentation of Protestants’ cases-in-chief will begin on **August 12 and will continue on August 13, 14, 18 & 25, and September 2, 5, 9, 10, 11, 15, 29 & 30, and October 1, 6, 9 & 10, 2025**.

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Reclamation Manual

Documents out for Comment

Draft Policy

- There are currently no draft Policies out for review.

⁵ Request from Authority Staff



Draft Directives and Standards

- There are currently no draft Directives and Standards out for review.

Draft Facilities Instructions, Standards, and Techniques (FIST)

- There are currently no draft Facilities Instructions, Standards, and Techniques out for review.

Draft Reclamation Safety and Health Standards (RSHS)

- There are currently no Safety and Health Standards out for review.

Draft Reclamation Design Standards

- There are currently no Design Standards out for review.

San Joaquin Valley Water Blueprint

The Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley (Blueprint) is a non-profit group of stakeholders, working to better understand our shared goals for water solutions that support environmental stewardship with the needs of communities and industries throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

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."*

Committees

Executive/Budget/Personnel

Blueprint contribution requests have been circulated and Board members will be following up with participants.

Technical Committee

At the last Board meeting the Technical Committee provided a list of potential engagement by the Blueprint in facilitating groundwater recharge. The Board is reviewing these activities to determine what the Blueprint will engage in. The Board has requested that Stantec update the South Valley Water Resiliency Plan (Trans valley Pipeline) to act as a possible planning guide.

The following list was shared with the Board: 1) Streamlining Funding Distribution; 2) Engaging on Multi-Benefit Land Repurposing Regulations; 3) Providing Educational Resources for On-Farm Recharge; 4) Identify obstacles to recharging high flow water and developing possible solutions; 5) Advocate for expanded CVP place of use; 6) Monitoring and Documenting Groundwater Overdraft Impacts.

Activities

Executive Orders

The Blueprint has developed a set of recommendations to guide federal action under Executive Order 14181 and state action under Executive Order N-16-25, with a primary goal of increasing California's water supply by 9 million acre-feet per year by 2040. Letters of Support to President Trump and Governor Newsom were submitted to advocate for coordinated implementation.

President Trump's January 24, 2025, Executive Order 14181 and Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-16-25 on California Water mark a historic opportunity to restore reliability to the San Joaquin Valley's water supply. The directives instruct state and federal agencies to take immediate and comprehensive steps to



increase water deliveries, modernize regulations, and accelerate infrastructure investment. (See planning target in SB72 Caballero - Water Code SEC 5. Section 10004.6 (f))

Water Resiliency Projects

The Blueprint is working with Stantec to develop a water supply plan for the San Joaquin Valley that is consistent with the Blueprint's mission of maximizing accessible, affordable, and reliable supplies for sustainable and productive farms and ranches, healthy communities, and thriving ecosystems in the San Joaquin Valley.

With assistance from the Hallmark Group, the Blueprint developed a water supply strategy comprised of three phases: increasing use (primarily recharge) of surplus local water, modernizing Delta regulations (removing ineffective/inefficient Delta regulations), and improved Delta infrastructure (to increase exports without harm to listed species).

We have reviewed the documents DWR provided and there is significant overlap and consistency between DWRs plan and Blueprint goals. The Blueprint has also reviewed the Governor's Water Resiliency Portfolio and see alignment under that strategic framework between DWRs efforts (SWP Adaptation Plan, watershed studies and conveyance studies) and Blueprint efforts (increased capture and use of surplus water).

State Water Project Adaptation Plan - Continued maintenance and restoration of degraded conveyance capacity in California Aqueduct is a high priority because restoring degraded conveyance capacity in the California Aqueduct increases Table A deliveries compared to a future without these investments.

San Joaquin Basin Watershed Studies - Additional recharge of high flow water provides benefits for water supply, flood management, groundwater sustainability, subsidence correction, and ecosystems. The Blueprint is working with Stantec to develop a water supply plan for the San Joaquin Valley that is consistent with the Blueprint's mission of maximizing accessible, affordable, and reliable supplies for sustainable and productive farms and ranches, healthy communities, and thriving ecosystems in the San Joaquin Valley.

The Blueprint supports and encourages DWR Near Term strategies to increase groundwater recharge, especially implementation of GSP water supply projects, MLRP (especially where subsidence is problematic), and FIRO.

Groundwater Banking Program Investigation

The Blueprint and Metropolitan Water District have established a partnership to work towards several objectives, including improving groundwater sustainability in the San Joaquin Valley and improved water supply reliability for Southern California.

The Groundwater Banking Program Investigation will apply a phased approach to identify, evaluate, select, and implement groundwater banking projects in the San Joaquin Valley that have mutual benefits to Metropolitan and Blueprint members.

Phase 1 of the work includes (1) descriptions of potential areas of recharge, (2) an initial assessment of critical risks, (3) the development of a draft evaluation methodology and evaluation criteria, and will inform data needs for Phase 2 of the Investigation.

Unified Water Plan for the San Joaquin Valley

The Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley Education Fund and the California Water Institute - Research and Education Division are working together to develop a Unified Water Plan for the San Joaquin Valley. This two-year project will culminate in publishing a report to be submitted to Congress, with the following



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

Authority staff continues to recommend that Authority member agencies increase their engagement with the Blueprint Technical Committee to ensure accuracy and support of the work product being developed for the westside of the San Joaquin Valley.

San Joaquin Valley Water Collaborative Action Program (SJVW CAP)

Background

The CAP Plenary Group adopted work groups to implement the CAP Term Sheet⁶, 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 funds 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.

On a parallel track, the subgroup recommends that each caucus develop up to three top-priority actions that will advance the outcomes of the Term Sheet.

⁶ Request from Authority staff



ATTACHMENTS

J. Scott Petersen

From: Water Blueprint <info@waterblueprintca.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 28, 2025 11:00 AM
To: J. Scott Petersen
Subject: Investment in San Joaquin Valley Water Infrastructure is Critical—Proposition 4 Funds Must Be Allocated!

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

[View this email in your browser](#)

Water Blueprint



for the San Joaquin Valley

Last November, voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 4, reaffirming their commitment to secure a reliable water supply for our state's future. **Now, it is the Legislature's turn to act.** Before adjourning in September, lawmakers must allocate the first pot of funds so critical projects can begin breaking ground.

Governor Newsom's Proposition 4 Spending Plan recommends investing just over \$1 billion for water projects, which is the minimum amount that should be allocated to make a **pivotal step towards implementing needed projects to improve water supply reliability in the San Joaquin Valley.** The plan identified essential categories that require immediate funding:

- Regional Conveyance and repair projects
- Conservation

- Stream gauges
- Multibenefit land repurposing
- Groundwater management
- Streamflow enhancement
- Habitat enhancement and restoration
- Water quality improvement
- Flood control and stormwater management

For the San Joaquin Valley, where farms, communities, and ecosystems depend on reliable water, this action is urgent. **Every season of delay increases risks of crop loss, subsidence, drinking water insecurity, and ecosystem decline.**

By allocating the maximum amount of Proposition 4 funds that can be used this year before September adjournment, the Legislature will ensure shovel-ready projects can break ground, creating jobs, strengthening drought resilience, protecting habitat, and delivering clean, more reliable water for millions of Californians.

Voters have already spoken. Proposition 4 is a mandate to act. Lawmakers: move these vital funds before September to safeguard California's water future.



Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley
Advocacy Fund



Copyright © 2025 The Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley, All rights reserved.

You are receiving this email because you opted in to receive information from Water Blueprint.

Contact us!

Phone: (559) 437-1990

Mailing address:

The Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley
2907 S. Maple Ave
Fresno, California 93725

[Add us to your address book](#)

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).



J. Scott Petersen

From: Water Blueprint <info@waterblueprintca.com>
Sent: Monday, August 18, 2025 3:33 PM
To: J. Scott Petersen
Subject: SGMA Implementation and the Future of Valley Agriculture: Water Blueprint Board Chair Addresses State Board of Food and Ag

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

[View this email in your browser](#)

Water Blueprint



for the San Joaquin Valley

2907 S. Maple Avenue
Fresno, CA 93725
(559) 437-1990

SGMA Implementation and the Future of Valley Agriculture: Water Blueprint Board Chair Addresses State Board of Food and Ag

On August 5th, Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley Board Chair Eddie Ocampo delivered a pivotal presentation to the California State Board of Food and Agriculture panel on “Agricultural Transitions and Cost – SGMA Implementation”. His presentation highlighted the far-reaching impacts of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), particularly in the state’s agricultural heartland of the San Joaquin Valley.

Ocampo underscored that SGMA could result in the fallowing of up to one million acres of farmland across California. A vast majority of this would occur in the San Joaquin Valley, where the loss is projected to cost over \$1.1 billion in employee income, alongside the loss of approximately 42,000 agricultural jobs, underscoring the scale of the challenge facing the region's food system and rural communities.

Despite these sobering figures, Chair Ocampo maintained an optimistic tone. He pointed to encouraging developments such as the *Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program*, which he described as a key opportunity to strike a balance between enhanced environmental outcomes and greater water supply certainty. Such initiatives, he noted, reflect meaningful progress and a path forward amid the difficult realities of SGMA implementation.

Calling for greater coordination, he urged state and federal agencies to align more closely in order to restore water supply reliability across California. He emphasized that the Water Blueprint is a “coalition of the willing”: a diverse alliance united around the common goal of ensuring that when water is available, it reaches the San Joaquin Valley.

Ultimately, Chair Ocampo reaffirmed that water access must be prioritized for the San Joaquin Valley, not only to support agriculture, but to preserve the economy and communities that depend on it. The Water Blueprint continues to advocate for solutions that sustain California’s agricultural future while supporting long-term environmental resilience.



Copyright © 2025 The Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley, All rights reserved.

You are receiving this email because you opted in to receive information from Water Blueprint.

Contact us!

Phone: (559) 437-1990

Mailing address:

The Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley
2907 S. Maple Ave
Fresno, California 93725

[Add us to your address book](#)

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).





SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY WATER

Collaborative Action Program

August 22, 2025

The Honorable Mike McGuire
Senate President pro Tempore
California State Senate

The Honorable Robert Rivas
Speaker of the Assembly
California State Assembly

The Honorable Scott Wiener
Chair, Senate Budget Committee
California State Senate

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
California State Assembly

The Honorable Ben Allen
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee
California State Senate

The Honorable Steve Bennett
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee 4
California State Assembly

RE: Prioritize Proposition 4 Funding and Disadvantaged Communities in Fiscal Year
2025-26

Dear pro Tem McGuire, Speaker Rivas, Senator Wiener, Assemblymember Gabriel,
Senator Allen, and Assemblymember Bennett:

The San Joaquin Valley Water Collaborative Action Program (CAP) is writing to express our strong support and need for immediate funding to address critical San Joaquin Valley water infrastructure, habitat, and safe drinking water needs. This investment will help address several State policy objectives, including implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA); drought resiliency in a hotter, drier climate; the human right to water; maximizing water supplies and storage during wet year conditions; and protection and restoration of habitat. Proposition 4 (Prop 4) approved by voters in 2024 has significant funding to address these needs, and in many cases, there are projects ready to be implemented in the San Joaquin Valley.

The CAP is a coalition of over 80 leaders from agriculture, water agencies, safe drinking water advocates and technical assistance providers, environmental organizations, academia, and state and federal agencies. The San Joaquin Valley is ground zero for California's water management and climate resilience challenges, and is also where

innovations and partnerships exist which can provide solutions that can benefit the rest of the state.

We write to respectfully urge the Legislature to appropriate ***at least \$694.45M*** to the San Joaquin Valley, consistent with the Administration's proposal, in Prop 4 investments for fiscal year 2025-26 in Chapter 2 Safe Drinking Water, Drought, Flood, and Water Resilience, and ***at least \$135M*** in Chapter 6 Protect Biodiversity and Accelerating Nature-Based Climate Solutions. We also want to remind the Legislature that the voters understand that California is facing a climate emergency and approved \$10B for ***new projects***. We urge the Legislature to categorically reject any attempts to backfill existing programs with Prop 4 funds that are needed for shovel-ready projects now.

Structural underinvestment has been a fact of life in the San Joaquin Valley, which contains hundreds of small, disadvantaged communities. The San Joaquin Valley has a need for resources to supplement existing efforts and programs to provide for people and ecosystems, like the SAFER Program and San Joaquin River Restoration. Prop 4 directed spending to several specific geographies throughout the state but included very few line items specific to the San Joaquin Valley. Our ready-to-go projects are desperately needed for the San Joaquin Valley and provide benefits that reverberate throughout the State.

Consistent with the intent of Prop 4 Chapter 2 Safe Drinking Water, Drought, Flood, and Water Resilience, there are projects ready and funding requests in the following categories:

- Regional Water Conveyance – \$75M
- Multibenefit Land Repurposing – \$50M
- Safe Drinking Water for Disadvantaged Communities – \$183.2M
- Groundwater Storage and Recharge – \$386.25M

Consistent with the intent of Chapter 6 Protect Biodiversity and Accelerating Nature-Based Climate Solutions, there are projects ready and funding needs for over \$135M to implement floodplain restoration that restores critical habitat, replenishes groundwater, reduces flood risk, and provides amenities for local communities.

The CAP strongly recommends increasing the amount of funding eligible for technical assistance beyond the current 10% threshold and establishing more support frameworks where necessary. This will ensure more projects can benefit from Prop 4 and other funding necessary to meet the human right to water policy.

Further, the intent of the voters in Prop 4 is clear that ***at least 40 percent*** of funds must provide ***direct and meaningful benefits to disadvantaged communities***. However, not all programs within the bond can meet this bar. To that end, the Legislature should ensure that programs that can more easily provide benefits for DACs are expected to meet

higher percentages, in order to meet the 40 percent floor. Within the Water Chapter, we believe that the programs for drinking water and wastewater, groundwater storage, the Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program, flood control, dam safety, stormwater capture, watershed climate resilience, the state's conservancies, and the Salton Sea are prime examples for supporting DACs.


Additionally, the water conservation funding could provide benefits to DACs, which are some of the highest impact opportunities for water conservation, but programs for direct install of water-efficient appliances into low-income households must be created to ensure direct and meaningful benefits can be provided. The Legislature should work with stakeholders and DWR to create such programs over the interim.

While Prop 4 funding is critical this year, the Legislature must ensure a steady pipeline of projects continues to be developed, particularly for DACs, by reauthorizing the SAFER program. This includes funds for technical assistance and community capacity building that cannot be funded by bond dollars, but is absolutely critical to close the gap on drinking water access. We ask that the Legislature include SAFER reauthorization as part of a Cap and Trade deal this year. SAFER and Prop 4 together are needed to bring relief to the too many Californians with dry wells and toxic taps.

We urge the legislature to deploy a portion of Prop 4 funds this year to the challenges facing the San Joaquin Valley, which will only become more expensive, complex, and detrimental to people, the environment, farms, and businesses the longer we wait to act.

We look forward to the ribbon-cutting!

Sincerely,



Ann Hayden
Environmental Defense Fund



Sarah Woolf
Water Wise

Co-Chairs
San Joaquin Valley Water Collaborative Action Program

CC:

Kip Lipper, Chief Policy Advisor, Senate President pro Tempore's Office
James Barba, Policy Consultant, Senate President pro Tempore's Office
Elisa Wynne, Staff Director, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Joanne Roy, Consultant, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee 2

Keith Cialino, Policy Consultant, Assembly Speaker's Office
Jason Sisney, Budget Advisor, Assembly Speaker's Office
Christian Griffiths, Chief Consultant, Assembly Committee on Budget
Christine Miyashiro, Consultant, Assembly Budget Subcommittee 4



SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY WATER

Collaborative Action Program

Plenary Group Meeting Summary

August 26, 2025 | 3:00 – 5:00 PM

Participation

On August 26, 2025, the Plenary Group had 43 members participate in the discussion, and all five caucuses were represented.

#1 Review Agenda & Updates

The group reviewed the agenda, and there were no additions.

#2 Bay-Delta Water Quality Plan Update – Sean Maguire, State Water Resources Board Member, and Erik Loboschefskey, Department of Water Resources

Erik Loboschefskey, Engineer at DWR, and Sean Maguire, board member at State Water Resources Control Board, were introduced to the group. Sean provided an update on the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan process. The State Water Board recently released an updated draft plan that proposes merging the HRL approach with a regulatory backstop. Sean highlighted that this would provide a more pragmatic and flexible approach compared to previous unimpaired flow proposals. The updated plan was released for public comment on July 23, 2025. Hearings are scheduled for late September, and it was noted that a potential trailer bill in the legislature could help expediate the plan's adoption.

Eric shared an overview of the Healthy Rivers & Landscapes (HRL) program. The program aims to integrate increased environmental flows from tributaries with habitat restoration projects to benefit native species. The program would dedicate over 8,000 acre-feet annually and would cost around \$2.9 Billion over 8 years. The funding would be split between 4 categories: Habitat construction, Science and governance, Prop 1 env. Water, and water purchase.

The source of water for the HRL program would come from purchases from water agencies, as well as export reductions by Central Valley Project contractors. It was noted that the intent is to minimize direct impacts to water users as much as possible.

#3 Implications of DWR's Subsidence BMPs – Stephanie Anagnoson, Madera County, and Aaron Fukuda, Tulare Irrigation District

Subsidence Best Management Practices (BMP) were released by DWR. Aaron Fukuda provided a high-level overview of the BMP document, highlighting its purpose to guide groundwater managers on managing and minimizing land subsidence. It was also noted that the BMP provides detailed technical information on monitoring subsidence, and it recommends closely monitoring groundwater levels and pumping to estimate critical head.

The BMP outlines actions like reducing groundwater pumping and implementing managed aquifer recharge, however there is concern that the BMP presents an idealized 'best case scenario' for addressing subsidence, without fully acknowledging the real-world social and economic challenges of its implementation. It was noted that there is a lack of discussion of differential subsidence, which is where the biggest impacts occur.

Overall, it was acknowledged that the BMP represents solid technical work, but the implementation will be difficult, and there is a need for continued collaboration between DWR, GSAs, and local stakeholders to find solutions that balance environmental needs with economic realities.

#4 CAP Priority Actions Update

Jim shared an update on the progress made on the CAP priority action items established at the June in-person meeting. CAP wants to work with PPIC to potentially do a report on regulatory impairments to flood safety. The report is being refined and will be brought to the full CAP group for consideration before moving forward with a discussion with PPIC.

CAP sent a letter to the legislature encouraging Prop 4 funding for the San Joaquin Valley. A subcommittee of CAP is developing recommendations on Prop 4 implementation to provide guidance to state agencies. In the September Plenary Group meeting, there will be staff from the Natural Resource Agency that will come talk about their thoughts on guidelines.

A letter of recommendations to improve the drinking water system consolidation process was developed and sent to the State Board as part of the comment period on the intended use program and their funding program. There was an extensive list of recommendations, and CAP is following up with the State Board and staff to see what their response to that will be.

A letter was sent supporting continued funding from the GGRF funds for SAFER implementation.

Earlier this year, a letter was sent to the Governor and State Legislature about expediting groundwater recharge and making the process more certain. A new letter will be coming that emphasizes the previous recommendations as well as encouraging improved coordination

across state agencies. This letter will be shared with the Plenary Group in the near future for consideration.

Almost half of the priority action items established in June have seen significant process thanks to the collaborative efforts of the CAP members. If there are additional questions on the status of priority actions, please contact Jim Kramer, jim@jkramer.co.

The next CAP Plenary Group meeting will be held on September 30th, followed by an in-person CAP meeting on October 7th at the El Capitan hotel in Merced.