



# Official Memorandum

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To: SLDMWA Water Resources Committee // Board of Directors and Alternates

From: Scott Petersen, Water Policy Director

Date: December 8, 2025

RE: Committee to Consider Recommendation to Board of Directors to Adopt Policy Framework and Policy Action Plan for Fiscal Year 2027

## Background

This document serves as the Policy Action Plan that staff will implement as part of the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority Policy Framework for Fiscal Year 2027.

## Scope of Policy Work

### Water Supply Reliability

Advocacy for infrastructure investment, regulatory flexibility, and operational improvements to enhance reliability of water deliveries from the Central Valley Project and other sources.

Program Name		Project Stage/Program Purpose
<b>CVP Operations</b>		
<b>Central Valley Project Operations</b>		Support and implement scientifically justified adaptive management and operational provisions of the 2019 and 2024 Biological Opinions to be incorporated into the anticipated Consultation on the Coordinated Operations of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project
<b>Water Allocation Process Improvements</b>		Support the development and advancement of an improved water allocation process, striking a supportable balance between accuracy and timeline of announcement
<b>Major Infrastructure Projects</b>		
<b>Delta-Mendota Canal Subsidence Correction Project</b>		Pursue or establish state and federal funding programs to improve affordability of project for ratepayers.
<b>San Luis Canal Subsidence Correction Project</b>		Pursue or establish state and federal funding programs to improve affordability of project for ratepayers.
<b>B.F. Sisk Dam Raise and Reservoir</b>		Pursue or establish state and federal funding programs to improve affordability of project for ratepayers, in particular, funding for State Route 152 improvements.

<b>Expansion Project</b>	
<b>Shasta Dam Raise</b>	Pursue or establish state and federal funding programs and necessary authorities to improve affordability of project for ratepayers.
<b>South Delta Operable Gates</b>	Pursue or establish state and federal funding programs and necessary authorities to improve affordability of project for ratepayers.
<b>Member Agency Projects</b>	
<b>Various</b>	Aggregate list of projects to be implemented by SLDMWA member agencies and disadvantaged communities in the SLDMWA member agency service area and pursue or establish state and federal funding programs and necessary authorities to improve affordability of project for ratepayers.
<b>Frontline Communities</b>	Pursue federal funding to support the development of a disadvantaged community water resilience strategy in the Westside-San Joaquin Integrated Regional Water Management Planning Region

## Water Quality and Resource Management

Policies related to salinity control, groundwater management, drainage, and habitat restoration.

Program Name	Project Stage/Program Purpose
<b>Salinity Control / Drainage</b>	
<b>CV-SALTS</b>	Coordinate with Grassland Basin Drainage Management Activity Agreement member agencies and others to support efforts to implement CV-SALTS.
<b>Habitat Restoration</b>	
<b>HRL Program</b>	Support implementation of habitat restoration efforts associated with the advancement of the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes alternative to implementing the Bay-Delta Plan Update.
<b>San Joaquin River Restoration Program</b>	Support efforts to implement the San Joaquin River Restoration Program and support efforts to ensure sufficient project implementation and third-party protections enshrined in the authorizing statute.

## Environmental and Regulatory Compliance

Engagement in policies affecting implementation of the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, and related state and federal laws.

Program Name	Project Stage/Program Purpose
<b>Endangered Species Act</b>	
<b>Section 7 Consultation Process</b>	Pursue legislative and regulatory changes to improve the Section 7 consultation process, including measures to ensure specialized knowledge is incorporated into the process and measures to improve the accountability of actions taken for listed species protection.
<b>Clean Water Act</b>	

<b>Waters of the United States</b>	Pursue legislative and regulatory changes to clarify jurisdictional waters and to improve the certainty and cost associated with the Clean Water Act permitting process.
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## Climate Adaptation and Resilience

Support for science-based adaptation strategies that prepare for hydrologic variability and climate change.

## Energy and Conveyance Efficiency

Promotion of policies that improve water conveyance and power cost efficiency within the Authority's operations.

## Funding and Finance

Advocacy for equitable and practical mechanisms to finance infrastructure, habitat, and water management investments.

Program Name	Project Stage/Program Purpose
<b>U.S. Department of the Interior</b>	
<b>Large-Scale Water Recycling Program</b>	
<b>Title XVI Water Reclamation and Reuse Program</b>	
<b>Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Sec. 40902 Storage Projects</b>	
<b>Conveyance Funding</b>	Support efforts to establish and expand non-reimbursable federal and state funding for conveyance projects, including major arterial capacity restoration projects.
<b>Environmental Protection Agency</b>	
<b>Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) Program</b>	Support efforts to improve access to WIFIA program funding for Authority-led and member agency projects, including expanding financing flexibility.
<b>Army Corps of Engineers</b>	
<b>Rehabilitation of High Hazard Potential Dams Program</b>	

<b>Corps Water Infrastructure Financing Program</b>	
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## Stakeholder Engagement and Communication

Coordination with federal and state agencies, water users, NGOs, and the public to promote understanding and build coalitions around shared objectives.



# POLICY FRAMEWORK

San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority

J. Scott Petersen, P.E.  
December 8, 2025



## Purpose and Intent

The purpose of this Policy Framework is to guide the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority (“Authority”) in developing, prioritizing, and implementing policy initiatives that advance the collective interests of its member agencies. The framework provides structure to ensure that policy actions are aligned with the Authority’s mission, reflect the shared values of its members, and are carried out with transparency, collaboration, and accountability.

This document is intended to serve as an internal guide for Authority staff, committees, and member agency representatives engaged in policy analysis, advocacy, and coordination activities.

## Mission and Guiding Principles

### Mission Statement

To operate and maintain the Delta-Mendota Canal and related facilities reliably and cost-effectively, and to support member agencies in restoring and protecting adequate, affordable water supplies to benefit people, wildlife, and the economy.

### Guiding Principles

- 1. Collaboration:** Promote cooperation among member agencies and with partners to achieve shared objectives.
- 2. Integrity:** Ensure all policy activities are conducted ethically, transparently, and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
- 3. Science and Evidence-Based Decision-Making:** Ground policy recommendations in sound technical, hydrologic, and economic analysis.
- 4. Stewardship:** Support policies that advance sustainable and resilient water management for agricultural, municipal, environmental, and economic needs.
- 5. Regional Leadership:** Represent the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority’s service area as a trusted, solution-oriented voice in California and federal water policy discussions.

## Scope of Policy Work

The Authority’s policy activities will encompass, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- 1. Water Supply Reliability** – Advocacy for infrastructure investment, regulatory flexibility, and operational improvements to enhance reliability of water deliveries from the Central Valley Project and other sources.
- 2. Water Quality and Resource Management** – Policies related to salinity control, groundwater management, drainage, and habitat restoration.



**3. Environmental and Regulatory Compliance** – Engagement in policies affecting implementation of the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, and related state and federal laws.

**4. Climate Adaptation and Resilience** – Support for science-based adaptation strategies that prepare for hydrologic variability and climate change.

**5. Energy and Conveyance Efficiency** – Promotion of policies that improve water conveyance and power cost efficiency within the Authority’s operations.

**6. Funding and Finance** – Advocacy for equitable and practical mechanisms to finance infrastructure, habitat, and water management investments.

**7. Stakeholder Engagement and Communication** – Coordination with federal and state agencies, water users, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the public to promote understanding and build coalitions around shared objectives.

## Policy Development Process

To ensure consistency and alignment across the Authority’s policy work, the following process will guide policy development and adoption:

**1. Issue Identification** – Emerging issues may be identified by Authority staff, member agencies, committees, or the Board. Staff will evaluate each issue for relevance to the Authority’s mission and member priorities.

**2. Analysis and Recommendation** – Staff will conduct or coordinate technical and policy analyses to evaluate potential implications. Draft recommendations will be developed in consultation with member agencies and reviewed by the Water Resources and Policy Committees.

**3. Board Consideration** – Policy positions or major initiatives will be submitted to the Board of Directors for discussion and approval. Approved positions will guide Authority engagement at the state, federal, and regional levels.

**4. Implementation and Advocacy** – Staff, under the direction of the Executive Director and consistent with Board-approved positions, will engage with legislative, regulatory, and stakeholder entities. The Authority may collaborate with coalitions or associations where mutual benefit exists.

**5. Review and Accountability** – The Authority will maintain a Policy Action Plan, reviewed annually, summarizing active and emerging policy initiatives. Staff will provide periodic updates to the Board on outcomes, progress, and any adjustments needed to reflect changing conditions.

## Roles and Responsibilities

**Board of Directors** – Approves the Policy Framework, annual priorities, and major policy positions. Provides strategic direction and oversight.

**Executive Director** – Directs policy staff and ensures implementation of Board-approved positions consistent with Authority objectives.





**Water Policy Director** – Leads analysis, coordination, and communication on policy initiatives; ensures alignment with member needs; serves as principal staff liaison for policy matters.

**Member Agencies** – Provide input, technical support, and local context; communicate member-specific needs and perspectives to inform collective action.

**Policy and Technical Committees** – Review and advise on policy proposals; ensure coordination between policy and technical efforts.

**Advisory and Partner Organizations** – Collaborate as appropriate to enhance the Authority’s regional and statewide influence.

## Transparency and Communication

The Authority will ensure that its policy positions and actions are communicated clearly and timely to its members, stakeholders, and the public. Transparency will be maintained through:

- Regular policy briefings and reports to the Board.
- Publication of major policy statements and legislative positions.
- Coordination with member agencies to align messaging and representation.

## Periodic Review

This Policy Framework will be reviewed at least every five years, or more frequently as conditions warrant, to ensure continued alignment with member priorities and regional needs. Updates will be approved by the Board of Directors.

Adopted by the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority Board of Directors

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Executive Director: \_\_\_\_\_