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Commission Briefings Address Proactive Management of State Water Project for Climate Extremes

The California Water Commission will host the second 2022 State Water Project (SWP) briefing at the May 18 meeting, continuing this year's theme of preparing for climate extremes – ensuring a reliable State Water Project to meet the challenges of drought, flood, and wildfire.

The Commission will receive two presentations. A budget and cost planning briefing will provide an overview of the annual budget review and highlight programs' capital costs planned to secure reliable operation of the system as it addresses the impacts of climate change. A briefing on asset management and staffing changes to address aging infrastructure will detail the workplan to proactively manage SWP assets as it prepares for climate extremes.

“DWR is managing assets to secure the functions of the State Water Project for future generations by ensuring flexibility, reliability, and resilience in water supply and delivery to benefit the people of California and the environment while addressing the challenges of an aging infrastructure and climate change,” said State Water Project's Division of Operations and Maintenance Manager David Duval. “The Asset Management program evaluates infrastructure needs at all SWP facilities and it uses a risk-informed decision-making approach to planning, balancing the multiple objectives of the SWP, while keeping public safety at the forefront.”

Planned, constructed, and operated by DWR, the SWP is the largest state-built water and power generator and delivery infrastructure in the nation, providing a water supply for more than 27 million Californians and 750,000 acres of farmland, as well as flood control, power generation, fish and wildlife protection, and recreational opportunities. The role of the SWP is more critical than ever and will continue to be hugely important for supplying water for agriculture, urban areas, and ecosystems in a changing climate. It is generally accepted that, under a changing climate, California will experience bigger floods and more extreme droughts. At almost 60 years old, the SWP requires innovative solutions to meet the challenges of the 21st century, especially how it operates in these more extreme scenarios brought on by a changing climate.

Pursuant to Water Code section 165, the Commission conducts an annual review of the progress of the construction and operation of the SWP, focusing on how the SWP adapts and responds to hydrological extremes expected with climate change, restores critical ecosystems, and addresses aging infrastructure. The Commission reports its findings and recommendations to DWR and the Legislature. This briefing will serve to inform the Commission in preparation for the 2022 annual review. Future 2022 briefings will explore the impacts of drought, flood, and wildfire to SWP beneficiaries and update the Commission on SWP construction projects in 2022.

The California Water Commission will meet in person for the May 18 meeting in the new California Natural Resources Auditorium at 715 P Street in Sacramento. For those unable to attend, learn how you can comment remotely at cwc.ca.gov/meetings.

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The nine-member California Water Commission uses its public forum to explore water management issues from multiple perspectives and to formulate recommendations to advise the director of the California Department of Water Resources, and as appropriate, the California Natural Resources Agency, the Governor and Legislature on ways to improve water planning and management in response to California's changing hydrology. As required by Water Code section 165, the Commission conducts an annual review of the construction and operation of the State Water Project. For more information regarding the California Water Commission visit cwc.ca.gov.