

Strategic Plan

DRAFT January 13, 2020

The Commission’s Strategic Plan, adopted in 2012, is to be reviewed and updated every five years. This draft includes a new mission statement, goals, and objectives that reflect the critical need to reshape the way we manage water as California experiences an increasingly extreme hydrologic regime.

In April 2019, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-10-19, directing state agencies to develop a “water resilience portfolio.” An interagency working group prepared an inventory and assessment of key aspects of California water, and also solicited input from agencies, tribes, organizations, and individuals throughout the state. The Commission participated by conducting two “listening sessions” and submitted a set of [recommendations](#) to the working group. On January 3, 2020, Governor Newsom released the draft [Water Resilience Portfolio](#), which includes more than 100 actions to be carried out by agencies, tribes, local and regional entities. This plan includes the two actions assigned to the Commission in the draft Portfolio:

- Action 19.4 Direct the Water Commission to assess a state role in financing regional conveyance projects that could help meet needs in a changing climate; and
- Action 25.2 Research and explore ways to provide flood insurance beyond the national program.

This Strategic Plan is a living document—the Commission may adjust its goals or objectives as needed in light of policy developments or direction from the Governor or California Natural Resources Agency. The Commission will use this document to develop its annual work programs.

Mission Statement:

Using its public forum, the California Water Commission explores water management issues from multiple perspectives and formulates recommendations to advise the Department of Water Resources (Department), and as appropriate, the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), the Governor, and Legislature on ways to improve water planning and management in response to California’s changing hydrology.

Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives:

- 1. The Commission will serve as a primary public forum for the discussion of improving water management policy to assist regions in achieving climate resiliency, advise the Department, and inform the Governor and Legislature on selected statewide issues.**

- Water Code 161: “The Commission shall confer with, advise, and make recommendations to the director with respect to any matters and subjects under his/her jurisdiction.”
- Water Code 164: “The Commission may hold any hearings and conduct any investigations in any part of the state necessary to carry out the powers vested in it...”

For each objective, the Commission will gather information (from within and outside the Department) from individuals and organizations actively engaged in or studying these issues, and develop recommendations to the Department, CNRA, or Legislature, as appropriate.

Objectives:

1. Carry out actions of the Water Resilience Portfolio¹ assigned to the Commission— assess the state’s role in financing regional conveyance projects and research ways to provide flood insurance beyond the national flood insurance program;
2. Promote multi-benefit projects, healthy watersheds, and efforts to improve the quality and availability of water for disadvantaged communities;
3. Promote development of state policies to address the economic and land use issues associated with implementing sustainable groundwater management plans;
4. Explore the use of green infrastructure and potential for expanding use of green infrastructure projects to meet resiliency and sustainability objectives; and
5. Consider alternative approaches to water planning at the state, regional, and local levels to achieve climate resiliency.

2. The Commission will carry out its statutory responsibilities associated with the State Water Project.

- Water Code section 161.5 authorizes the Commission to name all facilities of the State Water Project (SWP), and by resolution, express its decision regarding the naming of specific facilities.
- Water Code sections 165 and 166 direct the Commission to conduct an annual review and make its report to the Department and the Legislature.
- Water Code section 166 directs the Commission to “hold public hearings on all additional facilities proposed to be added to the SWP...”

¹ The January 3 draft of the Water Resiliency Portfolio is being circulated for review and comment until February 7, 2020. A final version of the Portfolio will be issued soon thereafter.

Objectives:

1. Coordinate with the Department to remain apprised of the operations and construction activities of the State Water Project, focusing on how the SWP adapts and responds to hydrological extremes expected with climate change, restores critical ecosystems, and addresses aging infrastructure;
 2. Coordinate with the Department to enhance public engagement for the new Delta Conveyance Project; and
 3. Monitor the Department's efforts to address aging infrastructure through implementation of the asset management program, utilizing gray and green infrastructure.
- 3. The Commission will carry out its statutory authorities associated with the Department of Water Resources to ensure that the Department's decisions on key programs and activities are based on sound information and advance climate resiliency.**
- In the case of a taking by the Department, the Commission acts as the governing body per Code of Civil Procedure section 1245.210.
 - Water Code section 161 requires the Director of the Department to present all rules and regulations (other than those relating exclusively to the internal administration and management of the department) to the Commission for approval.
 - Water Code section 12313 requires the Department to submit a list of priorities for Delta special flood control projects to the Commission for approval.

Objectives:

1. Review, consider, and approve, as appropriate, all regulations by the Department, and provide public participation in the rulemaking process;
 2. Coordinate with the Department and the Delta Stewardship Council to ensure the priority areas for the Department's Delta Special Projects Program for flood control funding reflect the most pressing flood risks in the Delta; and
 3. Ensure that any of the Department's eminent domain proceedings are necessary and meet the standards specified in Civil Code 1245.230 by following the Commission's procedures for Resolutions of Necessity and Eminent Domain (revised February 20, 2013).
- 4. The Commission will carry out its statutory responsibilities for the Proposition 1 Water Storage Investment Program.**
- Water Code sections 75750-79760 authorize the Commission to administer the \$2.7 billion Water Storage Investment Program, which pays for the public benefits associated with new water storage projects. Public benefits include ecosystem

improvements, water quality improvements, emergency response, flood control, and recreation.

- In July 2018, the Commission approved maximum conditional eligibility amounts for eight projects that collectively would boost California’s water storage capacity by 4.3 million acre-feet. The projects range from expanding existing reservoirs to boosting groundwater storage.
- The applicants must complete the requirements specified in the Commission’s regulations and Proposition 1 before returning to the Commission for a final funding decision.

Objectives:

1. Keep the public apprised of applicants’ progress toward final funding hearings;
 2. Determine whether a project continues to be eligible and complies with the statutory deadline of January 1, 2022;
 3. Review draft contracts for the administration of public benefits developed by administering agencies (Department of Water Resources, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, State Water Resources Control Board);
 4. Visit project locations, as appropriate;
 5. Make final funding decisions; and
 6. Monitor the public benefits received after projects begin operating, as well as adaptive management actions taken to ensure public benefits materialize.
- 5. The Commission, in coordination with the Administration, will determine whether there is a need to reactivate its role of advocating for federal funding for flood risk reduction.**
- Water Code 12602: “Where appropriations committees are hearing requests for appropriations for flood control projects ...under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or the Bureau of Reclamation, the Commission shall present its views...shall consult with interested local, state, or federal agencies, and may report the views of any county, city, state agency, or public district regarding such appropriations...”
 - In 1967, the Legislature codified the Commission’s role of presenting California’s views to the appropriations committees of Congress. The Commission met regularly with members of Congress to secure federal appropriations for flood control projects in California. However, in the late 1990s, when the Commission lacked a quorum of members, it was unable to take official actions and the Department and the Central Valley Flood Protection Board (CVFPB) took over these duties.
 - Currently, the CVFPB and local flood control agencies represent their views to Congress when authorizations are being considered under federal statutes such as

the Water Resources Development Act. They also engage with federal agencies, including the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation, to develop plans for flood control projects.

Objectives:

1. Determine Commission role;
2. Develop annual work plan for advocacy; identify needed changes to staff and budget to implement plan; and pursue Budget Change Proposal if necessary; and
3. Implement work plan, engaging to the extent feasible with existing staff and resources.

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