



Governor Newsom's Water Resilience Portfolio Initiative: Listening Session Part 1

Background

On April 29, 2019, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-10-19, directing the secretaries of the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency, and the California Department of Food and Agriculture to prepare a water resilience portfolio that meets the needs of California's communities, economy, and environment through the 21st century. The Order instructs the agencies to reassess priorities contained in the 2016 California Water Action Plan, update projected climate change impacts to the state's water systems, identify key priorities for the administration's water portfolio moving forward, and identify how to improve integration across state agencies to implement these priorities.

The Executive Order calls for extensive outreach to inform the process, including public listening sessions at boards and commissions across the State. The Commission's listening session will be one of the first to gather input on what constitutes a "climate resilient water portfolio." A panel of water management experts will explore various aspects of the portfolio concept, including potential changes to infrastructure and policy to enable more flexible water management. The panelists will offer their perspectives on what a "climate-resilient water portfolio" for California could look like, models for resiliency, and priority actions for achieving that resiliency.

The Commission will take public comment on these ideas, and discuss how they align with the seven principles expressed in [Executive Order N-10-19](#):

1. Prioritize multi-benefit approaches that meet multiple needs at once;
2. Utilize natural infrastructure such as forests and floodplains;
3. Embrace innovation and new technologies;
4. Encourage regional approaches among water users sharing watersheds;
5. Incorporate successful approaches from other parts of the world;
6. Integrate investments, policies, and programs across state government; and
7. Strengthen partnerships with local, federal, and tribal governments, water agencies, and irrigation districts, and other stakeholders.

The featured speakers are:

Caitrin Chappelle, Associate Director at the PPIC Water Policy Center. Water management is at the forefront of climate change adaptation in California. Caitrin Chappelle will discuss the anticipated impacts of climate change to our water systems, and how the Water Resilience Portfolios can anticipate these impacts through specific actions such as planning, upgrading the water grid, modernizing water allocation rules, and finding sustainable funding.

Caitrin Chappelle is associate director at the PPIC Water Policy Center, where she manages research and operations. Her own research focuses on natural resource management and California water policy. She has co-authored work on the statewide drought, funding gaps in water management, and multiple ecosystem stressors in the Sacramento—San Joaquin Delta. Previously, she worked for the U.S. Geological Survey. She holds an MPP from the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley and a BS in ecology from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.

PPIC has recently released several reports/fact sheets that help describe California's current water system and recommendations for how to adapt to a changing climate. Their recommendations require strong leadership at the state and local levels, and cooperation among all entities:

[Managing Drought in a Changing Climate](#)- this landing page has links to both the [full report](#) and the summary of [recommendations](#);

[Water Use in California](#) fact sheet; and

[California's Water Market](#) fact sheet.

John Cain, Conservation Director for River Partners, will talk about the water supply benefits of floodplain restoration with a focus on the opportunity for integrating flood management in the San Joaquin Valley with implementation of the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan and the Sustainable Groundwater Management Plan. As described in the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan 2017 Update, predicted flood magnitudes in the San Joaquin River watershed are expected to increase by 60 to 80% relative to historical conditions. Wise land use and floodplain management, with inundation leading to improved habitat and aquifer conditions, are sure to play an important part of California's strategy for adapting to these changing conditions.

John Cain, M.L.A. is the Conservation Director for River Partners. Over the last 20 years, his work has focused on the interrelated issues of river restoration, water supply

management, and flood management in California's Central Valley and Delta where he has advanced several large-scale habitat restoration efforts including the 1,200 acre Dutch Slough tidal marsh restoration project and the re-watering of the San Joaquin River. Since 2009 his work has focused on integrating ecosystem restoration into the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan and integrating flood plain restoration into state and federal efforts to reduce flood risk, improve water quality, recharge aquifers, and restore fish and wildlife habitat. At River Partners, he is responsible for building partnerships to accelerate the pace and scale of riparian and floodplain restoration across the state of California.

Bob Wilkinson, Emeritus Professor, UCSB Bren School of Environmental Science and Management, will present thoughts on framing considerations for developing resilience strategies, multiple benefits analysis and approaches, and portfolio development in the context of climate change. He recently co-authored a study with the Pacific Institute, [Moving toward a Multi-Benefit Approach for Water Management](#). The study proposes a framework for systematically identifying and incorporating the multiple benefits and trade-offs of water management strategies into decision-making processes. He will focus on how the portfolio could help the state achieve multiple benefits.

Dr. Robert Wilkinson advises government agencies, businesses, non-governmental organizations, and foundations on water policy and environmental issues. He currently serves on the public advisory committee for California's State Water Plan, and he has represented the University of California on the Governor's Task Force on Desalination. He has advised the California Energy Commission and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on climate research, and has served as coordinator for the climate impacts assessment of the California Region for the U.S. Global Change Research Program and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

This is an informational item. The Commission may direct staff to organize a second listening session in August to pursue selected topics raised during the discussion.

Contact

Jennifer Ruffolo
Assistant Executive Officer
California Water Commission
(916) 653-7937