



Assessing a State Role in Financing Conveyance: Panel Discussion on State Considerations and Cross-Cutting Issues

Introduction

As directed by the Water Resilience Portfolio, the Commission is assessing a State role in financing conveyance projects to meet the needs of a changing climate. The Commission has hosted expert presentations at Commission meetings and regional public workshops. The Commission will use the information gathered from experts and public stakeholders to inform a succinct white paper describing key issues and considerations, including recommendations for state policymakers to consider as they weigh the financing options for water conveyance infrastructure.

At this meeting, the Commission will hear from a panel of speakers about state policy considerations for conveyance and the cross-cutting issues of flood-managed aquifer recharge (flood-MAR), green infrastructure, collaborative partnerships and governance, and innovation. The objective of the panel is to position the Commission to better understand the implications of water rights and reduced Delta reliance on conveyance projects, and to make recommendations specific to how policy-makers should consider Flood-MAR, green infrastructure, partnerships and governance, and innovation when applying state financing to water conveyance projects.

Background

On July 28, 2020, the California Natural Resources Agency, California Environmental Protection Agency, and the California Department of Food and Agriculture issued the final [Water Resilience Portfolio](#) (portfolio) in response to Governor Newsom’s Executive Order N-10-19, which calls for a “set of actions to meet California water needs through the 21st century.” The portfolio outlines a broad suite of actions designed to move the state toward water resilience. The portfolio calls on the Commission to fulfill Action 19.4: assess a state role in financing conveyance projects that could help meet needs in a changing climate. Action 19.4 is embedded in a section of the portfolio that is focused on building connections, which includes actions designed to help increase physical connections and coordination between and among the decentralized elements of California’s water system.

The Commission’s work on conveyance implements Goal One of the Strategic Plan, which calls on the Commission to “serve as a primary public forum for the discussion of improving water

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management policy to assist regions in achieving climate resiliency ... including those actions of the Water Resilience Portfolio assigned to the Commission.”

Meeting Overview

The Commission will hear from the following speakers on the topic of state policy considerations impacting conveyance projects:

- Erik Ekdahl, Deputy Director, State Water Resources Control Board
- Michael George, Delta Water Master, State Water Resources Control Board

Following a discussion of state policy considerations, the Commission will hear from the speakers below on cross-cutting issues pertinent to the topic of climate-resilient conveyance:

- Dr. Graham Fogg, UC Davis Professor Emeritus of Hydrogeology
- Jennifer Marr, Supervising Engineer, Department of Water Resources
- Sharon Farrell, Executive Vice President, Projects, Stewardship & Science, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy
- Dr. Michael Kiparsky, Director, Wheeler Water Institute, Center for Law, Energy & the Environment, UC Berkeley School of Law

This is an informational item.

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