



---

December 14, 2021

Teresa Alvarado, Chair  
Joe Yun, Executive Officer  
California Water Commission  
P.O. Box 942836  
Sacramento, California 94236-0001

Dear Chair Alvarado and Executive Officer Yun,

Thank you for supporting implementation of the Water Resilience Portfolio. We appreciate your work to date and seek additional assistance to implement a drought-related action in the Portfolio.

In the past year, the Commission assessed a state role in financing water conveyance projects (action 19.4) and is now weighing the potential risks and rewards of groundwater trading (action 3.6). The Commission's white paper on conveyance helped to inform budget discussions this year. Early next year, the Commission will draft a white paper on groundwater trading to help guide state actions and investments and assist local agencies as they implement the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. In both cases, the Commission has organized thoughtful discussions with experts and stakeholders, with ample and early opportunity for public input.

Portfolio action 26.3 asks state agencies to "develop strategies to protect communities and fish and wildlife in the event of drought lasting at least six years." The state agencies that must inform development of such strategies include the State Water Resources Control Board, Department of Water Resources, Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Department of Food and Agriculture. These agencies are currently managing the impacts of two years of severe drought and preparing for a third. Chances are slim that this winter will bring enough rain and snow to reverse drought conditions. We would appreciate it if, while other state agencies manage immediate drought response, the Water Commission steps back to gain a wide perspective and begins to educate itself about potential long-term strategies for managing sustained drought. This may include, for example, learning about how governments in other parts of the world have managed droughts lasting six years or longer.

Our hope is that in 2022, the Commission can begin to investigate potential strategies for managing long-term drought while coordinating with state agencies to develop a framework to advance this work without disrupting immediate drought response efforts. Eventually, we hope your work can result in the distillation of a set of investments and policies that would better position the state to manage severely constrained water supplies for at least six consecutive years. The experience of the current drought, which may be entering its third year, should shape that guidance.

Thank you for considering this request and for catalyzing important conversations about water resilience in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Ross". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K'.

Karen Ross  
Secretary of Agriculture

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jared Blumenfeld". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Jared Blumenfeld  
Secretary for Environmental Protection

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wade Crowfoot". The signature is written in a bold, cursive style with a large initial 'W'.

Wade Crowfoot  
Secretary for Natural Resources