



## State Water Project Briefing: Optimizing Operations in a Changing Climate

### Agenda Item at a Glance

- The [State Water Project](#), called “SWP,” is a system of canals, pipelines, reservoirs, and hydroelectric power facilities that stores and delivers water throughout California. It is managed and operated by the [Department of Water Resources](#), called “DWR.”
- This briefing will provide information on SWP priorities and planning for 2025, including employee safety, and how the new State operation permit helps the project respond to real-time conditions.
- This is an informational item, important to anyone interested in how DWR is managing the SWP. Every year, the Commission receives presentations from DWR about the SWP, then reports its findings and recommendations to DWR and the California Legislature.
- At this meeting, the Commission will receive information from staff at DWR. Commissioners can ask questions of presenters and Commission staff. Tribes and the public will have an opportunity to make a comment to the Commission before the Commission discusses this agenda item.

### Introduction

The first State Water Project (SWP) briefing of 2025 will cover safety in the workplace, and how the SWP is optimizing operations in a changing climate. It will also include an update on current planning and operations.

### Background

The State Water Project, operated by the Department of Water Resources (DWR), consists of 36 water storage facilities and 700 miles of rivers, pipelines, and canals, supplies water to 27 million people and irrigates 750,000 acres of farmland. The system includes 21 pumping plants, powered by a system of power-generation and power-recovery plants. The SWP also operates the world’s tallest water lift – the Edmonston Pumping Plant – which pumps water more than 1,900 feet up and over the Tehachapi Mountains into Southern California.

In 2024, the SWP released its risk-informed [Strategic Plan](#) that considers external risks to the continued operation of the SWP. In addition to advancing an industry-leading safety culture, other goals include being an employer of choice; accelerating adaptation and strengthening resiliency for a changing climate; promoting awareness of the SWP’s significance; and optimizing infrastructure, financial integrity, and operations.

Goal Five of the Commission’s [Strategic Plan](#) directs the Commission to receive briefings on the State Water Project, and to produce a report, as specified by Water Code section 165, that includes findings and, as appropriate, recommendations for DWR and the California Legislature.

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These briefings and reports improve the public's understanding of decision making within the SWP, create accountability by using previous findings and recommendations to guide subsequent briefings, and inform the Commission of SWP activities in preparation for the Commission's 2025 annual review.

### **Meeting Overview**

At the February meeting, SWP Deputy Director John Yarbrough will provide a high-level overview of the SWP's Strategic Plan and implementation of the priorities for the year.

SWP Division of Operations and Maintenance Manager Behzad Soltanzadeh will provide an update on the safety metrics and data collection, and the use of this data to identify trends and reduce injuries, illnesses, and unsafe conditions. Mr. Soltanzadeh will also highlight the enhancements and improvements made over the past 15 years that showcase SWP's commitment to enhancing a safety culture among its employees.

Dr. Lenny Grimaldo, the SWP Environmental Director, will present on the new State-issued SWP long-term operations permit, which was issued in November 2024. The presentation will highlight how the new State requirements allow the SWP operators to respond more nimbly to real-time conditions.

SWP Water Operations Manager Tracy Hinojosa will provide an update on current year operations, including the current water-year allocation, planning decisions made to date, hydrology to date, and considerations for the rest of the year.

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