



# THE CALIFORNIA WATER COMMISSION

*Promoting smart water management today for a sustainable California tomorrow*

## MISSION STATEMENT

Using its public forum, the Commission explores water management issues from diverse perspectives and formulates recommendations to advise State decision-makers on ways to improve water policy, planning, and management in response to California's changing hydrology.

## WHAT WE DO

### **Administer the Water Storage Investment Program**

The Commission administers \$2.7 billion in voter-approved bond funding in the Water Storage Investment Program (WSIP). Voters approved the use of these funds for the public benefits of locally led water storage projects. Six projects are eligible for WSIP funding. These projects, if completed, would boost California's water storage capacity by 2.65 million acre-feet. They would also provide important public benefits to California. They would aid the movement of young salmon to the ocean; enhance wetland habitats, riparian habitats, and wildlife refuges; make available stored water for use during a drought emergency or seismic event that disables water import infrastructure; and increase recreational opportunities for camping, picnicking, boating and hiking. The Commission ensures that Californians receive public benefits from these projects.

### **Provide a public forum for the discussion of water management**

The Commission provides a public forum for the discussion of statewide water issues, promotes public discourse on the future of water management in California, and provides transparent access to information, including webcasts of its meetings. The public is encouraged to attend Commission meetings in person or remotely via Zoom. Public comments can be made in person or remotely.

### **Enhance transparency around State water management and decision making**

The Commission serves as a public board related to the Department of Water Resources' (DWR) activities, enhancing transparency and ensuring appropriate public process for things such as DWR regulations, Resolutions of Necessity (when DWR wants to exercise Eminent Domain), and the construction and operation of the State Water Project.

## The Commission's Work in Action

### **WATER STORAGE INVESTMENT PROGRAM**

In June 2023, the Commission awarded final funding in the amount \$277.5 million to the Harvest Water Program, a project that will coordinate the management of surface and groundwater resources to supply treated wastewater to agricultural lands that also provide habitat to wildlife in southern Sacramento County.



## ABOUT THE COMMISSION

The California Water Commission consists of nine members appointed by the Governor “in such a manner as to afford representation on the commission of all parts of the state so far as it is practicable” (Water Code section 152). Commissioners are confirmed by the State Senate. Seven members are chosen for their general expertise related to the control, storage, and beneficial use of water, and two are chosen for their knowledge of the environment. Current Commissioners bring their experience of water from various backgrounds such as agriculture, green non-governmental organizations, local water agencies, and utilities; as well as geographic locations ranging from the Sacramento Valley, San Joaquin Valley, San Francisco Bay Area, Greater Los Angeles area, and San Diego.

### TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT

In 2023, after seeking input and review from the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians, the Commission adopted a California Native American Tribal Leadership Comment Policy, acknowledging the sovereign status of Tribes and recognizing that Tribal Leaders are more than interested parties, members of the public, or an ethnic group. The policy is intended to show appropriate respect to elected Tribal Leaders and delegated Tribal representatives to contribute their unique perspective and knowledge to the water management issues the Commission engages in.

### Current strategic planning and engagement efforts

The Commission’s work is a blend of long-standing statutory obligations that date back 60 to 80 years, as well as newer responsibilities. The Commission is currently in the process of developing a revised strategic plan that will chart a course for blending old and new duties.

In tandem with the strategic planning effort, Commission staff is working to increase the engagement of interested parties in the Commission’s work to encourage the sharing of diverse perspectives, increase transparency and accountability, and improve decision-making related to water policy, planning, and management.

### The Commission’s Work in Action

#### WATER RESILIENCE PORTFOLIO

Over the past four years, the Commission has, at the request of the Governor and the Secretaries for Agriculture, Environmental Protection, and Natural Resources, led three collaborative water policy efforts in support of actions within the Water Resilience Portfolio, the State’s blueprint for water policy in the 21st century. The Commission has advanced balanced solutions on drought, groundwater trading, and conveyance infrastructure by engaging hundreds of representatives from Tribes, local government, water districts, communities, nonprofit organizations, academia, special districts, local and State agencies, agriculture, environmental groups, and other states and countries as the basis for its water policy work.

#### STATE WATER PROJECT

As it has since its inception, the Commission conducts an annual review of the construction and operation of the State Water Project (SWP), which is managed and operated by DWR. The Commission submits the annual review to the California State Legislature and the Director of DWR, along with any recommendations it may have. In implementing its annual SWP review, the Commission receives multiple briefings throughout the year from DWR. The Commission is interested in what climate resilience means to the SWP, such as how it manages aging infrastructure, how it considers land subsidence, and its role in supporting ecosystems. The briefings have public educational value, and provide transparency around DWR decision-making related to the SWP.