



Water Storage Investment Program: Willow Springs Water Bank Conjunctive Use Project Update
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Introduction

The California Water Commission (Commission) administers the Water Storage Investment Program (WSIP) to fund the public benefits associated with water storage projects using funds from Proposition 1, the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1), codified at Water Code section 79750 *et seq*, and supplemented by funds from Proposition 4, the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 (Proposition 4).

One of the WSIP projects, the Willow Springs Water Bank Conjunctive Use Project (Willow Springs), will store groundwater in exchange for pulse-flow releases from Lake Oroville for ecosystem improvement and emergency response benefits. The project requires a State Water Contractor to forego its allocation from Lake Oroville and agree to substitute water from the Willow Springs Water Bank to achieve the public benefits for the WSIP.

Over the past three years, the Commission has requested four separate project updates from the Willow Springs Water Bank project proponent, the Southern California Water Bank Authority, to track the project's progress and key milestones. During those updates, the project proponent provided information related to the progress towards securing a relationship with Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency (AVEK), and the status of negotiations with potential State Water Contract partners. The project will utilize AVEK's facilities, which requires coordination with AVEK, and the State Water Contract partners will provide a share of stored water in the water bank for the public benefits. Southern California Water Bank Authority provided its most recent update in April 2025. At that meeting, the Commission requested the project proponent to provide a diagram detailing the project proposal in the next project update in 2026.

At this meeting, the Commission will hear from representatives leading the Willow Springs project. This meeting will provide the Commission with information on the project's status and will help the Commission understand whether the project is making demonstrable progress and will be able to provide viable public benefits.

Background

Through the WSIP, the Commission will invest \$2.65 billion in the public benefits of water storage projects, consistent with the requirements of Proposition 1 and Proposition 4. In July 2018, the Commission made Maximum Conditional Eligibility Determinations (MCEDs), which

set the amount of WSIP funding potentially available to each project. One project received a final award at the June 2023 Commission meeting. The remaining WSIP applicants successfully met Proposition 1 interim requirements by the deadline of January 1, 2022, and are working to complete the remaining statutory requirements. These include obtaining permits and completing environmental documents, executing contracts for the administration of public benefits, and completing contracts for non-public benefit cost share. When the applicant completes these requirements, the applicant will return to the Commission for a final award hearing, at which the Commission will decide whether to award final funding.

On November 19, 2025, the Commission approved [modifying its WSIP regulations](#). The modification allows the Commission to increase the amount of conditional funding committed to a project on a case-by-case basis, to account for inflation and increased public benefits. These supplemental funding determinations can be made prior to or after the final funding hearing.

This agenda item relates to Goal One of the [Commission's Strategic Plan](#), which calls on the Commission to implement the WSIP to achieve public benefits.

Meeting Overview

At the August meeting, Southern California Water Bank Authority representatives John Perez, Managing Director, Government Affairs; Kris Bale, 1st Vice President, Investments, and Alan Sollof, Vice President of Development will provide an update on the project.

Following their remarks, the Commission will hear Tribal and public comment on the information presented. Commissioners will then have an opportunity to ask questions and make comments, and to direct staff or invite applicants to supply specific information to the Commission for its consideration at a later meeting.

This is an informational item.

Contact

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