



**Briefing on State Water Project Recruitment and Retention Issues**

**Background**

Recognizing the serious workforce recruitment and retention crisis facing the State Water Project (SWP) and its effects on water operations and employee and public safety, the Water Commission has urged action to resolve this issue.

On March 29, 2011, the Commission wrote to Natural Resources Secretary John Laird and Department of Personnel Administration Director Ronald Yank, expressing its concern over a serious recruitment and retention crisis that is impacting operations and costs. The Commission noted that "the present situation is not sustainable" and workforce issues "continue to impact the reliability of California's water systems, the state's economy, its farms and its people." On July 3, 2012 a second letter was sent in which the Commission noted that recruitment and retention for SWP personnel in the specialized hydroelectric power trades and crafts classifications had continued to deteriorate, posing a potential threat to the SWP's ability to meet its obligations to deliver water, produce energy, and operate safely and meet other regulatory requirements. One measure of this decline is that between 2005 and 2012, the operational availability of SWP pumping units dropped from 92% to 77%.

In January 2013, Commission members asked for a hearing to discuss SWP Recruitment and Retention. In March, SWP employee Sean Rossi spoke to the Commission on staffing issues and the impacts on operations, maintenance and safety. At that time, the Commission directed staff to schedule an agenda item to receive an update on the matter.

**Contact**

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