

# Status of Water Transfers in California

*Tom Filler – Water Transfers Program*



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# DWR Water Transfers Initiatives

- Executive Order B-21-13 in May 2013
  - Expedite Review and Processing of Voluntary Water Transfers
- California Water Action Plan
  - Incorporate Management Actions in Support of Water Transfers
- Coordination Meetings
  - Buyers / Sellers
  - SWRCB, USBR, CDFW, USFW
  - Public Listening Session(s)



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# Ongoing Process Improvements

- DWR Streamlining Process
  - Improving Contracting Procedures for Transfers Dependent on SWP Facilities
  - Facilitating Fast-Tracking of Transfers With Appropriate Supporting Documentation
  - Improving Coordination and Alignment With Other Agencies SWRCB, USBR, CDFA, USFW
  - Updated Web Information
  - Clearinghouse Approach for Current Transfers



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# Public Outreach Tools



DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

## 2014 Department of Water Resources (DWR) Water Transfers Activities

### MANAGEMENT OF WATER TRANSFERS IN CALIFORNIA AND DWR'S ROLE

Voluntary water transfers assist in supplementing water supply portfolios for areas experiencing water scarcity. The volume of water transfers in the state has grown over the last 20 years, and since 2005, the annual totals have ranged from 1.2 million acre-feet (MAF) to 1.7 MAF (PPIC, 2012). Cross Delta transfers are a small component of the total.

Water transfers are voluntary actions proposed by willing buyers and sellers, and are not initiated by state agencies. DWR is one of several public agencies involved in approval and management of proposed water transfers in California, and DWR's involvement is due to its management of the State Water Project export facilities in the Delta. Others include the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, US Bureau of Reclamation, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, county governments, and local/regional water districts. DWR's jurisdiction is limited to transfers affecting the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) export facilities of the State Water Project; this represents a small fraction of statewide transfers. For example, for 2013, DWR facilitated about 265 thousand acre-feet of water transfers through State Water Project facilities.

DWR and other involved public agencies must address all legal requirements, ensure that transfers meet beneficial uses, that proposed transfers are a real water supply, and that they continue to serve as a responsible water shortage management tool in the public interest. Approval of transfers must consider water rights, environmental impacts, area of origin impacts, storage and conveyance agreements, and other issues; the complexity of the situation and the extent of necessary inter-agency coordination will dictate the time required to grant an approval. In coordination with other agencies, DWR's primary role is to approve and facilitate responsible transfers within its area of jurisdiction and coordinate with and provide guidance to buyers and sellers.

### Actions Underway

DWR is working to streamline and improve its processes and guidance for water transfers. DWR hosted a meeting with representative buyers and sellers in August 2013 where the following specific recommendations were received: (1) improve



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Or visit us on the Web at  
[www.water.ca.gov](http://www.water.ca.gov)

DWR Water Transfers website: <http://www.water.ca.gov/watertransfers/>

Transfers in coordination with the following agencies:



WATER TRANSFERS ACTIVITIES —  
MANAGEMENT OF WATER TRANSFERS IN CALIFORNIA AND DWR'S ROLE

PAGE 2

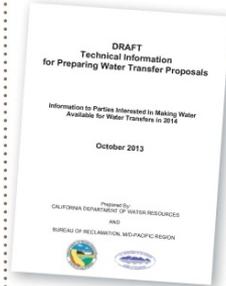
outreach, (2) refine transfer process schedule, (3) conduct regular coordination with applicants, (4) prepare technical guidance information, (5) simplify process and reduce administrative costs, (6) form work groups, (7) develop fast tracking procedures for proposals, (8) develop template agreements, and (9) rely on existing information and data from transfer proponents for crop land idling and groundwater substitution transfers. DWR is acting on these recommendations, along with additional direction from the Governor's California Water Action Plan (October 2013 draft), Governor's Executive Order B-21-13, and the California State Drought Emergency Proclamation declared on January 17, 2014. Because this process has already begun, the proclamation of drought by the Governor reinforces the need for work underway.

The following work is already underway to streamline processes for 2014 water transfers:

- **Maintain existing guidance for preparing water transfer proposals:** Sellers will continue to use the 2013 guidance materials for 2014 proposals. It can be found at <http://www.water.ca.gov/watertransfers/>.
- **Facilitate fast-tracking:** DWR has established an Addendum to DRAFT Technical Information for Preparing Water Transfer Proposals that will facilitate fast-tracking for many transfers in 2014. The addendum can be found at <http://www.water.ca.gov/watertransfers/>.
- **Improve contracting procedures:** DWR has developed standardized templates and related contracting materials to assist transfer proponents and approving agencies.
- **Agency alignment:** DWR is working to strengthen alignment of the management of short and long term water transfers with the State Water Board and USBR. Several coordination meetings have already been held since October.

Moving forward, DWR's strategic approach is to organize its improvements in the five key areas listed below, to support DWR's leadership in the broader arena of critical water shortage/drought management for California.

- **Statewide management of water transfers/outreach:** Conduct public outreach and foster transparency to provide the public and all interested parties with detailed information on statewide water transfers.
- **Technical, operational, and administrative rules:** Continue to improve guidance by addressing internal review and contracting processes, as well as water transfer operations and verification methods.
- **Water management assessments:** Continue to develop and periodically update detailed technical guidance related to the different types of water transfers.
- **Environmental and local ordinance consideration:** Consider development of long term environmental documentation for water transfers to address potential cumulative impacts and other issues of concern.
- **Operational transfer system:** Continue to develop tools and analytical capabilities to address transfer capacity determination, system water management information, and transfer management.



rev. February 6, 2014

DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

DWR Water Transfers website: <http://www.water.ca.gov/watertransfers/>

Transfers in coordination with the following agencies:



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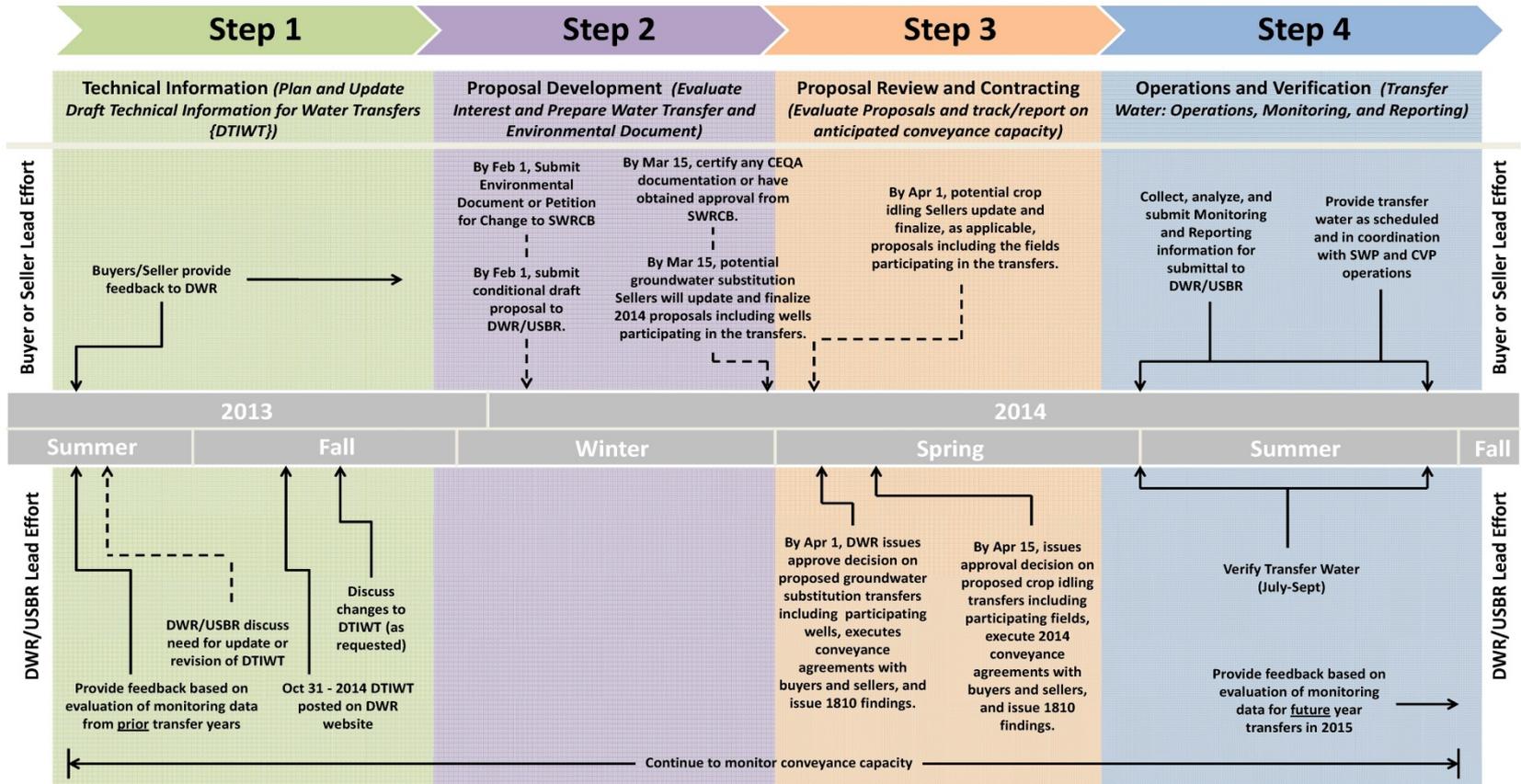
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# Short Term Improvements Process Streamlining

## At-A-Glance - 2014 Water Transfer Expedited Process and Schedule (Rev. Jan 13, 2014)



DWR and Reclamation will expedite review and approval of proposals meeting the above deadlines but does not preclude proposals submitted after the deadlines. When preparing proposals, please use the schedule along with the guidance provided in the 2014 Draft Technical Information for Preparing Water Transfer Proposals, <http://www.water.ca.gov/watertransfers/>.

Buyer/Seller **OR** DWR/USBR Activity      Buyer/Seller **AND** DWR/USBR Activity



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# 2014 Fast Tracking

- Groundwater Substitution Transfers:
  - Expedite Transfer Proposals Similar to Transfers Approved in 2013
  - Accept Wells Previously Approved by DWR from 2009 through 2013
  - Streamflow Depletion Factor for Groundwater Substitution Transfers Will Not Change in 2014



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# Long Term Management Improvements

- **Statewide Management of Water Transfers/Outreach**
  - Continue to Conduct Public Outreach with Stakeholders to Foster Transparency
  - Continue to Provide Detailed Information to Public About Water Transfers
- **Technical, Operational, and Administrative Rules**
  - Continue to Improve Efficiencies in
    - Internal Review Processes
    - Contracting Processes
    - Water Transfer Operations and Verification Methods



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# Long Term Management Improvements

- **Water Management Assessments**
  - Continue to Develop and Periodically Update Technical Guidance for Different Types of Water Transfers
- **Environmental and Local Ordinance Consideration**
  - U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and SLDMWA Developing a Long-Term Environmental Document
  - Butte County Groundwater Restrictions
- **Operational Transfer System**
  - Continue to Develop Tools and Analytical Capabilities to
    - Better Determine Transfer Capacity
    - Evaluate System Water Management Information, and
    - Improve Transfer Management



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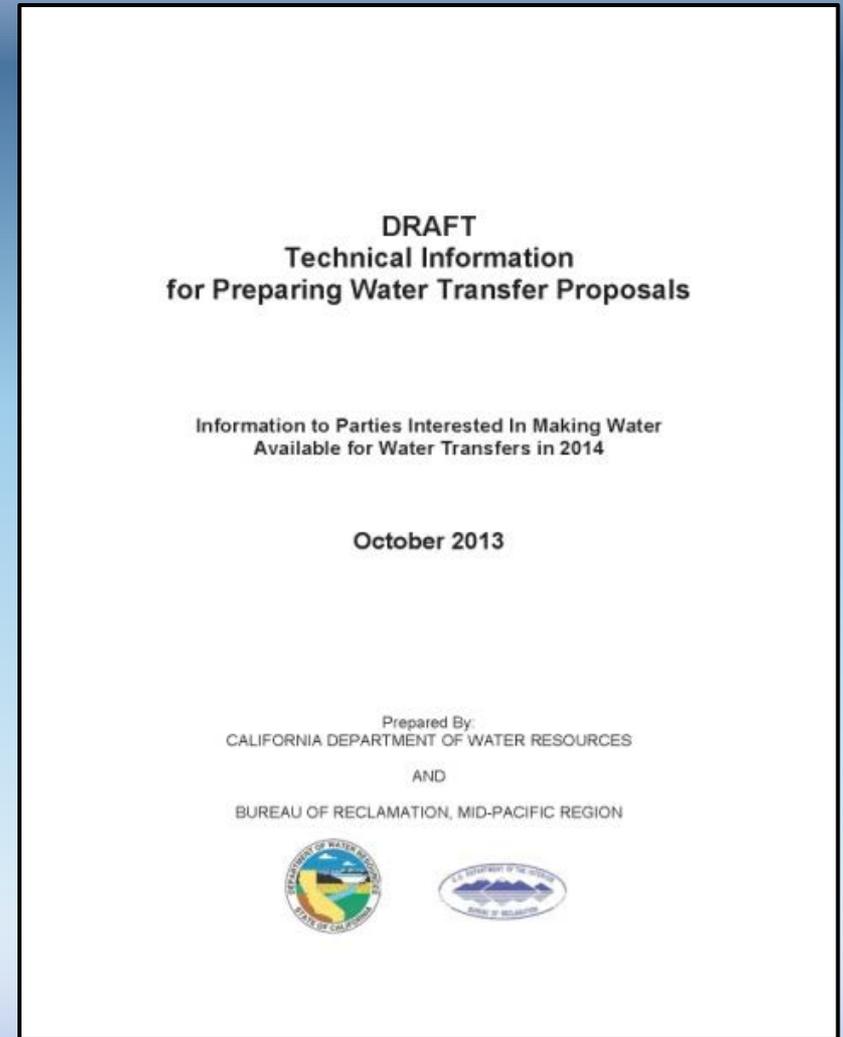
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# Long Term Management Improvements

## Guidance Restructuring

- **Policy Guidance (Process)**
  - Step-by-Step Guidance for Proposal Development
  - Where, When, and How
- **Technical Guidance**
  - GW Substitution
  - Land Use
  - Storage



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# For Additional Information on Water Transfers

<http://www.water.ca.gov/watertransfers/>

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