

# Opportunities and Challenges for Small and Disadvantaged Communities in Potential Water Bonds

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California Water Commission staff has prepared this document to facilitate discussion of opportunities for small and disadvantaged communities presented in the current and proposed water bonds.

## Opportunities

### **SBX7-2 (Cogdill); \$11.14 Billion (Currently on the 2014 Ballot)**

*Total Prioritized for DACs, Small Communities, and Technical Assistance\*: \$1,370,000,000*

*Minimum Available for DACs, Small Communities, and Technical Assistance\*\*: \$470,000,000*

SBX7-2, if passed, will provide \$11.14 billion for Drought Relief, Delta Sustainability, Regional Water Supply Reliability, State Water System Operational Improvement, Groundwater Protection and Water Quality, Water Recycling and Water Conservation, and Conservation and Watershed Protection.

- Chapter on groundwater protection prioritizes funding for DACs and includes dedicated funding for emergency actions to provide safe drinking water to DACs.
- Chapter on Conservation and Watershed protection includes technical assistance for fuel treatment.
- Regional Water Reliability may fund projects benefiting DACs and includes dedicated funding.
- Chapter on Drought Relief includes dedicated funding for DACs, small community wastewater treatment, and specific projects for specific DACs.
- Technical and grant writing assistance for DACs is included in multiple chapters.
- Local cost share requirements can be waived for DACs for some funds.

## **AB 1331 (Rendon); \$8 Billion**

*Total Prioritized: \$1,010,000,000*

*Minimum Available: \$1,000,000,000*

AB 1331 would provide \$8 billion for Clean and Safe Drinking Water, Protecting Rivers, Coasts and Watersheds, Regional Water Reliability, Drought Relief, Water Recycling, Delta Sustainability, and Water Storage.

- Chapter on Clean and Safe Drinking Water provides funding for small community wastewater with priority to DACs, and funding for emergency clean water and drinking water infrastructure dedicated to DACs, including dedicated funding for severely DACs. Planning assistance can exceed 10% for DACs.
- Grants for drinking water infrastructure may fund feasibility studies for to meet grant requirements, up to two years of operations and maintenance costs, and technical assistance.
- Chapter on Regional Water Reliability provides dedicated funds for DACs. It includes funding for recycled water with technical and grant writing assistance for DACs, and stormwater management projects that must address the entire watershed and incorporate the perspective of DACs.
- Local cost share requirements can be waived for DACs for some funds.

## **SB 848 (Wolk); \$6.825 Billion**

*Total Prioritized: \$962,500,000*

*Minimum Available: \$575,000,000*

SB 848 would provide \$6.825 billion for Safe Drinking Water and Water Quality, Water Supply Enhancement, Delta Sustainability, Watershed and Ecosystem Improvement, and Water Storage Projects.

- Chapter on Safe Drinking Water and Water Quality includes funds for drinking water infrastructure and small community wastewater, including technical assistance for DACs, with priority for DACs and dedicated funding for severely DACs. Provides additional dedicated funds for disadvantaged communities.
- Grants for drinking water infrastructure may fund feasibility studies to meet grant requirements and initial operation and maintenance of projects for DACs.
- Chapter on Watershed and Ecosystem Improvement includes funding for urban watersheds with dedicated funding for DACs.
- Chapter on Water Supply Enhancement may fund repair of aging infrastructure in DACs.
- Local cost share requirements can be waived for DACs for some funds.

## **SB 927 (Canella); \$9.217 Billion**

*Total Prioritized: \$1,269,000,000*

*Minimum Available: \$669,000,000*

SB 927 amends SBX7-2 and would provide \$9.217 billion for Drought Relief, Delta Sustainability, Regional Water Supply Reliability, State Water System Operational Improvement, Groundwater Protection and Water Quality, and Water Recycling and Water Conservation.

- Chapter on Groundwater Protection prioritizes DACs and includes dedicated funding for emergency actions to provide safe drinking water to DACs.
- Chapter on Regional Water Reliability may fund projects benefiting DACs and includes dedicated funding.
- Chapter on Drought Relief includes dedicated funding for DACs and small community wastewater treatment.
- Technical and grant writing assistance for DACs is included in multiple chapters.
- Local cost share requirements can be waived for DACs for some funds.

## **AB 2686 (Perea, Gray, and Salas); \$9.25 Billion**

*Total Prioritized: \$960,000,000*

*Minimum Available: \$950,000,000*

AB 2686 would provide \$9.25 billion for Clean and Safe Drinking Water, Protecting Rivers, Lakes and Watersheds, Regional Water Security, Delta Sustainability, Statewide Water System Operational Improvement.

- Chapter on Clean, Safe Drinking Water provides dedicated funding for small community wastewater treatment (with priority to DACs); emergency clean water with dedicated funding for wells serving DACs; and drinking water infrastructure for DACs, with dedicated funding for severely DACs. May provide technical assistance and planning assistance can exceed 10% for DACs.
- Grants for drinking water infrastructure may fund feasibility studies for to meet grant requirements, technical assistance, and initial and ongoing operations and maintenance for projects in DACs.
- Chapter on Regional Water Security provides dedicated funding for DACs.
- Local cost share requirements can be waived for DACs for some funds.

## AB 2043 (Bigelow and Conway); \$7.935 Billion

*Total Prioritized: \$1,079,000,000*

*Minimum Available: \$379,000,000*

AB 2043 would provide \$7.935 for Drought Relief, Water Supply Reliability, Delta Sustainability, Statewide Water System Operational Improvement, Groundwater Protection and Water Quality, and Water Recycling, Conservation, and Efficiency.

- Provides funding to clean up groundwater that serves as a source of drinking water, prioritizing funding for disadvantaged communities, with some funding dedicated to DACs.
- Chapter on Regional Water Reliability provides dedicated funding for DACs.
- Chapter on Drought Relief provides dedicated funds for small community wastewater treatment and drinking water for small and disadvantaged communities.
- Funding may be provided for technical and grant writing assistance from Drought Relief funds.
- Local cost share requirements can be waived for DACs for some funds.

## Challenges

Many small and disadvantaged communities are faced with barriers to accessing available grant and loan funds to improve their water systems. Many small water systems are run by volunteers who also have full time jobs; these systems often lack the capacity to complete complex, technical grant applications. DACs generally do not have the funds to hire professional consultants who are familiar with the grant processes. As a result, the communities most in need of grant funding to secure safe drinking water are the least equipped to secure such funds.

Despite special consideration for small communities and DACs, many of the water bonds contain elements that may serve as barriers to obtaining at least some of the funds in these bonds. Examples of these potential barriers include:

- Minimum local cost share requirements.
- Preference to applicants who have already made substantial investments in conservation.
- Funds dedicated to projects that are included within Integrated Regional Water Management Plans. (The barriers that make it difficult to obtain grant funding also serve as barriers to participation in Integrated Regional Water Management Planning.)
- Requirements that water agencies have adopted Urban Water Management Plans, Agricultural Water Management Plans, Groundwater Management Plans or Water Budgets in order to be eligible for grant funds.
- Assessment of the ability of grant recipients to pay for operation and maintenance of funded projects as part of the funding criteria.

**Notes:**

\* Includes special consideration, prioritization, or specified funding. Does not include funding available to Small or DACs with no preference or priority.

\*\* Specified funding only.

SB 1080 (Fuller) and SB 1250 (Hueso) will be added to the comparison when more information is available.

SB 1370 (Galgiani) and AB 1445 (Logue) do not specify funds for DACs, Small Communities, or Technical Assistance.