

Tribal Consultation on Proposition 1 Water Bond: Meeting Summary

June 9-10, 2015

Cal/EPA Byron Sher Auditorium

The California Water Commission participated in a joint tribal consultation meeting with the Department of Water Resources (DWR), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and State Water Resources Control Board (State Board). The meeting was organized by the Departments' Tribal Liaisons.

On June 9, the meeting began with a welcome by Secretary for Natural Resources John Laird and DWR Director Mark Cowin. EPA Undersecretary Gordon Burns provided a high level overview of Proposition 1.

The main events of the morning were two panel presentations by department and agency executives. They discussed the relationship between Proposition 1 and the Governor's Water Action Plan, opportunities for agency alignment, and how the Governor's Water Action Plan will affect tribes. Member Paula Daniels spoke on behalf of the Commission. She provided an overview of the Commission's responsibilities related to Proposition 1 and offered a Commission roundtable with tribes to provide more time for a dialogue.

In the afternoon a panel provided more detailed information on Proposition 1 funding opportunities. Paula Landis, Commission Executive Officer, highlighted the key components of the Commission's Water Storage Investment Program and stressed the need for project applicants to develop proposals to bring forward to the Commission.

During the open discussion, many tribal representatives expressed the opinion that this meeting was informative, but did not serve as true tribal consultation. Some asked for regional consultation meetings with tribes, similar to the format of public meetings, but specifically for tribes. Tribes expressed many concerns including whether or not specific funding would be set aside for tribal governments, concerns regarding the CEQA process versus the NEPA process, and the length of time it takes for invoices to be paid when tribes to receive state funding.

On June 10, representatives from each agency provided detailed information regarding their funding programs. Rachel Ballanti, Commission Assistant Executive Officer, gave an overview of the Water Storage Investment Program and provided a program timeline and draft project eligibility criteria.

One attendee asked how the DFW priorities provided for the WSIP align with the its priorities for its other Proposition 1 funding programs. Attendees asked questions regarding the types of projects that could be funded, the geographic area in which projects can be located, and the timeline for actually seeing projects implemented.