



**FAQ on the Water Storage Investment Program  
Revised Public Benefit Ratios**  
April 2018

**1. Q: Where are we in the Water Storage Investment Program process and what happens next?**

**A:** Commission staff and technical review teams continue to evaluate 11 applications seeking \$2.7 billion in funding under the Proposition 1 Water Storage Investment Program (WSIP). Initial technical reviews were released Feb. 1 on the public benefits associated with the proposed projects, and applicants submitted additional supporting information during an appeal process from Feb. 2 to Feb. 23. Updated reviews will be released on April 20, and it is anticipated that some recommendations regarding Public Benefit Ratios (PBRs) will change based on that additional information.

The Commission will consider the updated information at its May 1-3 meeting and has discretion to accept the staff-recommended Public Benefit Ratios, accept applicants' appeals, or send the recommendation back to staff for re-evaluation.

Coming into the May meeting, the Commission has not made any decisions on funding levels and all projects remain active and viable in the review process.

**2. Q: When is the Commission scheduled to make funding determinations?**

**A:** The Commission looks forward to beginning the public decision-making process in May, focused first on determining a final PBR for each project. Following evaluation of three other component scores, the Commission will determine application scores in June, and make preliminary funding decisions in July.

**3. Q: How is the Commission ensuring it is engaging with applicants and the public to understand the public benefits proposed by the applicants?**

**A:** The Commission added a series of constructive and beneficial meetings in February in response to public input. Following requests for additional interactions, the Commission is scheduling another round of meetings with applicants and reviewers April 24-25. The meetings, which will be open to the public, will provide an opportunity for reviewers to walk through the revised PBR recommendations and allow for identification of any issues requiring clarification.

Commission staff will summarize and brief Commissioners on those issues during the May 1-3 meeting. The discussion with staff will also help applicants prepare their presentation and comment for the Commission's May 1-3 meeting.

Public comments received throughout the process are provided to the Commission and will be considered during decision-making meetings. All public comments are posted on the Commission's website on the Project Correspondence page, <https://cwc.ca.gov/Pages/ProjectCorrespondence.aspx>

**4. Q: What are public benefits and why is the technical review focused on them?**

**A:** Proposition 1 allows the state to fund specific public benefits associated with storage projects to help make them financially viable for local project proponents. Specific public benefits defined in Proposition 1 are ecosystem improvements, water quality improvements, flood control, recreation and emergency response.

**5. Q: What is a Public Benefit Ratio?**

**A:** It's a metric used to describe the return on investment the state would receive in the form of public benefits if the project were funded at the requested amount. More specifically, it is the ratio of the monetized public benefits to the funding requested. The Public Benefit Ratio is one of four component scores that will be used to determine eligibility for Proposition 1 funding. The other components, which include Relative Environmental Value, Resiliency, and Implementation Risk, will be determined once the Public Benefit Ratio is finalized by the Commission in May.

**6. Q: How are the revised Public Benefit Ratio determined?**

**A:** Clarifying information submitted by applicants during the appeal period is being reviewed by the technical review teams consistent with program regulations. This step is a key part of the task of quantifying the public benefits associated with the proposed projects.

**7. Q. You mentioned that a technical team has reviewed the applications to determine the Public Benefit Ratios – who is part of that team?**

**A:** Review teams consist of subject matter experts from the Commission, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Water Resources and the State Water Resources Control Board. Each agency's review focused on specific subject matter, such as a type of physical benefit or water operations.

**8. Q: Are staff intentionally making it harder for water storage projects to receive funding?**

**A:** No. The Commission is committed to investing in the public benefits associated with new water storage. Proposition 1, as passed by the Legislature and approved by voters in 2014, is very specific about how the \$2.7 billion for water storage projects can be used and factors that must be evaluated in this competitive and public process.

The Commission developed the program with extensive input from stakeholders over a two-year period, and has made every effort to communicate with applicants about the information needed to meet the statutory requirements and be eligible for funding. Commissioners, staff and technical reviewers share the desire to award funding to eligible projects that offer the best return on the public investment.

**9. Q: Is this program unfairly favoring some projects over others?**

**A:** No. The Commission is committed to a fair, competitive and transparent process.

**10. Q: How can I stay up to date with decisions being made by the Commission?**

**A:** Please visit the website at [www.cwc.ca.gov](http://www.cwc.ca.gov) or sign up for the listserv by emailing [cwc@water.ca.gov](mailto:cwc@water.ca.gov).