



2020 Strategic Plan

The California Water Commission's Strategic Plan

is to be reviewed and updated every five years to evaluate the effectiveness of Commission activities and to ensure that the Commission focuses on current and important California water issues.

This version includes a new mission statement, goals and objectives that reflect the critical need to reshape the way we manage water as California experiences an increasingly extreme hydrologic regime.

The Strategic Plan is a living document and the Commission may adjust its goals or objectives as needed to respond to policy developments or direction from the Governor. The Commission will use this document to develop its annual work plans.

Today's Commission traces its roots back to the mid-1950s, when the California State Legislature created the Department of Water Resources. Members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate. Seven members are chosen for their general expertise related to the control, storage and beneficial use of water, and two are chosen for their knowledge of the environment.

The Commission provides a public forum for the discussion of water issues and to further the development of policies that support integrated and sustainable water resource management and a healthy environment. Statutory duties include advising the Director of the Department of Water Resources (Department), approving Department rules and regulations, and monitoring and reporting on the construction and operation of the State Water Project.

In January 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom released the draft Water Resilience Portfolio, with more than 100 actions to be carried out by agencies, tribes, local and regional entities. The Portfolio includes two actions assigned to the Commission: assess a state role in financing regional conveyance projects that could help meet needs in a changing climate; and research and explore ways to provide flood insurance beyond the national program. These actions have been incorporated into Goal 1.

Mission Statement



Using its public forum, the California Water Commission explores water management issues from multiple perspectives and formulates recommendations to advise the Department of Water Resources, and as appropriate, the California Natural Resources Agency, the Governor and Legislature on ways to improve water planning and management in response to California's changing hydrology.

Goal 1

The Commission will serve as a primary public forum for the discussion of improving water management policy to assist regions in achieving climate resiliency, advise the Department, and inform the Governor and Legislature on selected statewide issues, including those actions of the Water Resilience Portfolio assigned to the Commission. The Commission will promote the development of state policies to address economic and land use issues that will arise as the State moves toward more sustainable and resilient water management.

Objectives

- Gather information from individuals and organizations actively engaged in water policy and management issues, such as multi-benefit projects, healthy watersheds, green infrastructure, and improving water quality and availability in disadvantaged communities.
- Produce publicly available reports, summaries, articles, and other meeting materials to educate and encourage the public to participate in Commission meetings.
- Convene panel discussions or presentations and invite public comment and discussion at Commission meetings.
- Conduct meetings or workshops in different locations throughout the state, as appropriate to the subject, to highlight projects or water management issues and engage the public.
- Develop recommendations to the Department, the California Natural Resources Agency, or Legislature, as appropriate.



The California Water Commission holds a meeting on July 24, 2018, regarding the Water Storage Investment Program. Photo by Kelly M. Grow, Department of Water Resources.



A section of the California Aqueduct within the State Water Project in Kern County.
Photo by Ken James, Department of Water Resources.

Goal 2

The Commission will carry out its statutory responsibilities associated with the State Water Project.

Objectives

- Coordinate with the Department to remain apprised of the operations and construction activities of the State Water Project, focusing on how the SWP adapts and responds to hydrological extremes expected with climate change, restores critical ecosystems, and addresses aging infrastructure.
- Coordinate with the Department to enhance public engagement for the new Delta Conveyance Project.
- Monitor the Department's efforts to address aging infrastructure through implementation of the asset management program, utilizing gray and green infrastructure.

Goal 3

The Commission will carry out its statutory authorities associated with the Department of Water Resources to ensure that the Department's decisions on key programs and activities are based on sound information and advance climate resiliency.

Objectives

- Review, consider, and approve, as appropriate, all regulations by the Department, and provide public participation in the rulemaking process.
- Coordinate with the Department and the Delta Stewardship Council to ensure the priority areas for the Department's Delta Special Projects Program for flood control funding reflect the most pressing flood risks in the Delta.
- Ensure that any of the Department's eminent domain proceedings are necessary and meet the standards specified in Civil Code 1245.230 by following the Commission's procedures for Resolutions of Necessity and Eminent Domain (revised February 20, 2013).



A view looking south of the Dutch Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration Project in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta near Oakley, Calif. Photo by Ken James, Department of Water Resources.

Goal 4

The Commission will carry out its statutory responsibilities for the Proposition 1 Water Storage Investment Program.

Objectives

- Keep the public apprised of applicants' progress toward final funding hearings.
- Determine whether a project continues to be eligible and complies with the statutory deadline of January 1, 2022.
- Review draft contracts for the administration of public benefits developed by administering agencies (Department of Water Resources, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, State Water Resources Control Board).
- Visit project locations, as appropriate.
- Make final funding decisions.
- Monitor the public benefits received after projects begin operating, as well as adaptive management actions taken to ensure public benefits materialize.



Site of the proposed Sites Reservoir near Maxwell, Calif.
Photo by Kelly M. Grow, Department of Water Resources.



In this photo from 2017, floodwaters from the Tuolumne River have inundated a trailer park on River Road in Modesto, Calif. Photo by Dale Kolke, Department of Water Resources.

Goal 5

The Commission, in coordination with the Administration, will determine whether there is a need to reactivate its role of advocating for federal funding for flood risk reduction.

Objectives

- Determine Commission role.
- Develop annual work plan for advocacy; identify needed changes to staff and budget to implement plan; and pursue Budget Change Proposal if necessary.
- Implement work plan, engaging to the extent feasible with existing staff and resources.