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Government Agencies that Protect California's Water Resources

Many different government agencies have roles that directly or indirectly affect the quality of California's water resources. This appendix identifies government agencies and describes their general functions. The purpose of this Appendix is to help the public differentiate the role of the Water Boards from the roles played by the other pertinent government agencies.

State Agencies

Department of Water Resources – operates the State Water Project and is responsible for overall water planning for the State. It, like any other water user, must apply for water rights permits from the State Water Board.

Department of Public Health, Division of Drinking Water and Environmental Management – regulates public water systems, certifies drinking water treatment and distribution operators, oversees water recycling projects, permits water treatment devices, supports and promotes water system security, provides support for small water systems and other related duties.

Department of Fish and Game – maintains native fish, wildlife, plant species and natural communities for their intrinsic and ecological value and their benefits to people. This includes habitat protection and maintenance in a sufficient amount and quality to ensure the survival of all species and natural communities.

California Coastal Commission – plans for and regulates land and water uses in the coastal zone consistent with the policies of the Coastal Act.

State Lands Commission – manages public trust lands of the State (the beds of all naturally navigable rivers, lakes, and streams, as well as the State tide and submerged lands along California's more than 1,100 miles of coastline).

Department of Pesticide Regulation – regulates pesticide sales and uses. It plays a significant role in monitoring for the presence of pesticides and preventing further contamination of water resources.

Department of Toxic Substances Control – provides technical oversight for the characterization and remediation of soil and water contamination.

California Department of Food and Agriculture – protects and promotes California's agriculture.

Department of Conservation, Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources – oversees the drilling, operation, maintenance, and plugging and abandonment of oil, natural gas, and geothermal wells.

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Department of Conservation, State Mining and Geology Board – adopts State policy for the reclamation of mined lands and the conservation of mineral resources.

Department of Forestry and Fire Protection – provides fire protection and stewardship of over 31 million acres of privately owned wildlands and offers varied emergency services in most counties.

Department of Parks and Recreation – manages more than 270 park units, which protect and preserve culturally and environmentally sensitive structures and habitats, threatened plant and animal species, ancient Native American sites, and historic structures and artifacts.

Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery--CalRecycle (formerly California Integrated Waste Management Board) – promotes zero waste California and manages about 93 million tons of waste generated each year.

Certified Unified Program Agencies – a unified program overseen by the California Environmental Protection Agency. It consolidates, coordinates, and makes consistent the administrative requirements, permits, inspection, and enforcement activities of six environmental and emergency response programs.

California Environmental Protection Agency – develops, implements and enforces the state's environmental protection laws that ensure clean air, clean water, clean soil, safe pesticides and waste recycling and reduction. It

consists of the Office of the Secretary, Department of Pesticide Regulation, the Department of Toxic Substances Control, the Office of Health Hazard Assessment, the Air Resources Board, the State Water Resources Control Board and the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards.

Resources Agency – restores, protects and manages the state's natural, historical and cultural resources for current and future generations. It includes the California Conservation Corps, Department of Boating and Waterways, Department of Conservation, Department of Fish and Game, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, and the Department of Water Resources. It also houses sixteen commissions, notably the California Coastal Commission, Native American Heritage Commission, and the Fish & Game Commission. It also contains ten conservancies designed to protect specific geographic areas of the state. These include the California Tahoe Conservancy and the State Coastal Conservancy.

Local Health or Environmental Health Departments – local primacy agencies for the Department of Public Health that implement, permit, monitor, and inspect public water systems serving fewer than 200 connections.

Resource Conservation Districts – “special districts” of the state that are locally governed agencies with their own locally appointed, boards of directors. They place particular emphasis on the conservation of soil and water resources and achieve this by providing assistance to private landowners and sponsoring educational efforts.

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Federal Agencies

United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation – constructs federal water supply projects and is the nation's largest wholesaler of water and the second highest producer of hydroelectric power.

United States Army Corps of Engineers – plans, designs, builds, and operates water resources projects (navigation, flood control, environmental protection, disaster response, etc.).

United States Environmental Protection Agency – protects human health and safeguards the natural environment—air, water, and land.

United States Geological Survey – provides water measurement and water quality research.

United States Department of Health and Human Services, Indian Health Service – includes a comprehensive environmental health services program through its Office of Environmental Health and Engineering. Program areas include water quality, waste management, food safety, air quality, industrial hygiene/occupational health, institutional environmental health, vector control, hazardous materials management, and emergency response.

United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service – provides technical and financial assistance to conserve, maintain and improve natural resources on private lands.

United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management – manages 15.2 million acres of federal lands in California. It also administers 47 million acres of subsurface mineral estate underlying federal surface land, 2.5 million acres underlying privately owned land, and 592,000 acres of Native American tribal land where BLM has trust responsibility for mineral operations.

United States Department of the Interior, United States Fish and Wildlife Service – conserves, protects, and enhances fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats. Some of its functions include enforcing federal wildlife laws, protection of endangered species, manage migratory birds, restore national significant fisheries, and conserve and restore wildlife habitat such as wetlands.

United States Department of Interior, National Park Service – manages national parks including their watersheds.

United States Department of Agriculture, United States Forest Service – manages public lands in national forests and grasslands. This includes management of forests, watersheds and other natural resources.

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission – regulates the interstate transmission of electricity, natural gas and oil. It also reviews proposals to license hydroelectric projects.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service – protects and preserves living marine resources, including anadromous fish.