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## State Water Resources Control Board

### **October 2023 State Board Liaison Report – Region 9**

#### **Media Releases**

- **September 14:** [State Water Board Press Release: Board advances water resilience and safe drinking water through \\$1.2 billion in financial assistance \(ca.gov\)](#)
- **September 19:** [Board orders BlueTriton to cease unauthorized diversions in San Bernardino Mountains \(ca.gov\)](#)
- **September 28:** [State Water Board initiates public process for Bay-Delta Plan updates \(ca.gov\)](#)

#### **Notable Media Coverage**

On September 27 the *Los Angeles Times* published an article titled, [“A ticking time bomb’: Why California can’t provide safe drinking water to all its residents.”](#) which offered an in-depth examination of the scope, complexity, and challenges for drinking water solutions and the state board’s work through SAFER to address the issue.

#### **Making Conservation a Way of Life – Water Use Efficiency**

Formal rulemaking began for the [Making Conservation a Way of Life regulation](#) on August 18, 2023.

- State Water Board staff held a [public hearing](#) on October 4, 2023. The first public comment period is open until October 17, 2023. The hearing will include an overview of the proposed regulation, the regulatory timeline and process, and presentations from interested parties.

#### **Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund Expenditure Plan FY 2023-24**

- At its October 3 meeting the State Water Board [adopted the SADW FEP for fiscal year 2023-2024](#). The fund provides up to \$130 million per year to develop and implement solutions for domestic wells and water systems that are not sustainable or have violations of drinking water standards. The fund generally prioritizes small, disadvantaged communities or low-income households. The FY 2023-24 FEP is informed by [the annual statewide drinking water needs assessment](#), which was released in May 2023, and developed in consultation with stakeholders.

#### **Water and Wastewater Extended Arrearage Payment Program**

- The State Water Board also [adopted new guidelines for an Extended Arrearage program](#) at its October 3 meeting that will provide up to \$600 million dollars in payments to both water and wastewater customer arrearages for a relief period from March 4, 2020 through December 31, 2022. State Water Board staff will

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provide an application package to all eligible applicants, establish an online portal for submittal of applications, and provide 60 days to receive applications. All community water systems, wastewater treatment providers, and wastewater billing entities, whether they participated in the original programs or not are eligible to apply for funding, but periods of eligibility vary. Staff has developed a [FAQ](#) and has a [program website](#) that providers should consult.

## **California Water Supply Strategy and Implementation Actions**

The Water Supply Strategy outlines California's strategy and priority actions to adapt and protect water supplies based on new data and accelerated climate change. To ensure California has the new water needed for generations to come, this strategy outlines four sets of actions the State will pursue, sets targets, and identifies specific implementation steps to prepare California for its new climate reality. The following is an update on the milestones and implementation steps since the last Executive Director's Reporting.

### **Division of Water Quality**

Staff have revised the Draft Seawater Desalination Siting and Streamlining Report based on comments received during the public comment period. Staff sent the revised report to the Desalination Interagency Group for their review by October 3, 2023. Staff will make any final revisions based on the Interagency Group's review and send the final report to the Governor's Office.

### **Division of Drinking Water**

#### **Recycled Water DPR (Action 1.1)**

The Administrative Procedure Act (APA) public hearing for the proposed Direct Potable Reuse (DPR) regulations was held on September 7, 2023 at the board workshop. The purpose of the APA hearing was to obtain oral public comments on the proposed regulations. The public comment period closed on September 8, 2023. Division of Drinking Water (DDW) staff is reviewing both the oral and written public comments received. In accordance with the APA, all comments received by the close of the comment period will be addressed in subsequent regulation documents developed by DDW staff and will be made available to the public. DDW staff anticipates board adoption of the DPR regulations in December 2023 to meet the deadline established by the legislature in [AB 574 \(Water Code, Division 7, Chapter 7.3\)](#) and commitment by the State Water Board in the governor's 2022 [California's Water Supply Strategy](#).

### **Division of Water Rights**

#### **Water Rights Modernization (Action 4.3)**

- **Updating Water Rights Data for California (UPWARD)**  
The UPWARD Advisory Group held its first meeting on September 19, 2023. The group provides advice and feedback to ensure the state's new water rights data management system (CalWATRS) best accommodates California's needs. The

group is comprised of 25 members representing small and large water rights holders, consultants/agents of water rights holders, water districts, non-governmental organizations, tribes, academia, agriculture, water law, and water data practitioners/coordinators. The group meets every six months and meeting recordings will be posted to the [UPWARD website](#).

- **Telemetry Pilot Project**

Staff executed a 30-month \$2.3M contract with the California Water Data Consortium for a comprehensive report that assesses existing telemetry practices and equipment across the country, evaluates useful and equitable applications of telemetric water data processes within California, and provides recommendations for a physical telemetry pilot project that will begin in 2026.

- **Supply & Demand Assessment**

Staff expects to execute a contract and begin data collection and water supply modeling efforts in three pilot watersheds within the coming month.

Simultaneously, staff will conduct a public engagement process to prioritize additional watersheds for work under this contract.

#### Groundwater Recharge (Action 2.1)

- **Groundwater Recharge Temporary Permits**

Staff continues to process groundwater recharge temporary permit applications for the coming wet season. As of September 6, three applications were pending: Scott Valley Irrigation District (noticed 7/21-9/1); North San Joaquin Water Conservation District (noticed 8/29-9/29) and Stockton East Water District (noticed 8/31-10/1). The current status of pending temporary permit applications for recharge is available on the Board's [temporary recharge permit website](#).

- **Flood Diversions Under Executive Orders**

Reports for diversions of flood waters for groundwater recharge made under the Governor's Executive Orders N-4-23 and N-7-23 were due by September 15.

The reports identify the diverter, conditions that triggered the diversion, point of diversion, flooded area, when diversions occurred and ceased, and the amount of water diverted. These reports and associated maps are available on the Board's [flood diversion for recharge website](#).

#### **Office or Research, Planning, and Performance**

The rulemaking process to make conservation a California way of life started in August. The first comment period ends October 17, after a Board Hearing on October 4.

#### **Division of Financial Assistance**

The Division of Financial Assistance administers funding for recycled water projects through the Water Recycling Funding Program and Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF). The Board workshop to discuss the 2023/24 CWSRF Intended Use Plan (IUP) took place on June 20, 2023, and written public comments were due on June 23, 2023. The proposed 2023/24 CWSRF IUP was adopted by the Board on September 6, 2023.