

California Department of Water Resources

NEWS RELEASE

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**November 15, 2002**

**DWR ANNOUNCES 2003 DRY YEAR WATER PURCHASE PROGRAM**

SACRAMENTO---The California Department of Water Resources is initiating a 2003 Dry Year Water Purchase Program to help public agencies throughout California supplement their water supplies if 2003 is dry. While it is too soon to tell if this winter will be wet, dry, or about average, some agencies have already expressed interest in such a program after experiencing dry conditions in 2001 and 2002.

During 2001 and 2002, some areas of California experienced water deficiencies. DWR responded by implementing the 2001 and 2002 Dry Year Water Purchase Programs. In 2001 DWR secured 138,800 acre-feet of water from willing sellers in Northern California, and provided it to eight water agencies throughout the State to help offset their water shortage conditions. In 2002, DWR secured 22,000 acre-feet of water from willing sellers in Northern California and provided it to four water agencies throughout the State.

The 2003 Program will allow agencies that enter the Program by December 2, 2002 to request DWR to obtain options for water that would be exercisable by February 13, 2003 if next year turns out dry. The Program also plans to allow agencies that sign up prior to March 31, 2003 to participate in direct purchases of water provided by willing sellers through DWR. The Program is intended to reduce the possibility of adverse economic impacts and hardship associated with water shortages, and is open to all agencies whether or not they are State Water Project contractors.

Interested participants may access the Memorandum of Understanding and the request forms at <http://wwwswpao.water.ca.gov/new.html> or contact [Teresa Geimer](#) at: Department of Water Resources, State Water Project Analysis Office, P.O. Box 942836, Sacramento, CA 94236-0001. Her telephone number is (916) 653-4547.

The following principles have been developed for this year to assure cooperation among DWR, the Bureau of Reclamation and local agencies in regions able to make dry-year water supplies available:

1. **Local Leadership** - DWR recognizes the importance of local leadership in making decisions to better manage the State's water resources. Accordingly, we will work cooperatively with local water associations, their member agencies, and other leaders in the Sacramento Valley and other regions to assist local interests in the management of their resources in a manner that fully meets local objectives.
2. **Assuring Adequate Local Supplies** - Before regions are asked to make supplies available for others, there must be assurance that local water needs are being met. Accordingly, DWR will work with local water associations and other local interests in the Sacramento Valley and other regions to assist in assuring that supplies are available to meet local needs in those regions.
3. **Locally Developed Programs** - Strategies for making supplies available must be locally driven and developed in cooperation with local public leaders. DWR, water sellers and water purchasers will respect the right of individual local water districts to determine the best way in which local districts can make water available for local, regional, and statewide use. Local agencies will be responsible for compliance with all applicable laws, including local ordinances. California law recognizes transfers as a beneficial use of water and protects the underlying water rights involved in a transfer.
4. **Third Party Impacts** - Water management strategies developed as part of this program will be designed to avoid third party impacts. Strategies to monitor developing conditions and actions to prevent injury to water users will be included as part of the local program. The overall program will be geographically diverse and balanced. The program will establish effective mechanisms to identify any net third party economic impacts and address these effects. Administration of these mechanisms will be at the local level and under local control. DWR will provide technical assistance.
5. **Environmental Protection** - Actions to develop additional supplies for water users will be implemented in a manner that will not interfere with ongoing environmental protection and restoration programs including for example the CALFED Environmental Water Account, Ecosystem Restoration Program as well as any local actions to protect environmental resources. In addition, water supply actions will be designed to not cause significant impacts to fish and wildlife and will in some cases improve environmental conditions.
6. **Statewide Perspective** - In fulfilling its obligations, DWR recognizes that it must represent the interests of all parts of the State, both those areas needing additional supplies and those that can make supplies available. DWR will coordinate the activities of the Dry Year Water Purchase Program with other local, State, and federal actions to purchase water in 2003.

*The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.*