

Water Conservation Accomplishments

There are many factors affecting the ability for California to meet its water demands. A variety of challenges include a growing population, aging infrastructure, local protections for fish species, and climate change. Conservation is a key tool for addressing these challenges.

Water Conservation is the most cost-effective and environmentally sound way to increase water supply. Investments of \$20 million provided by Proposition 84, along with \$380 million from Proposition 50 for Integrated Regional Water Management programs, and \$80 million of Proposition 50 Water Conservation programs have provided funding for projects to protect communities from drought, protect and improve water quality, and reduce dependence on imported water.

In February 2008, Governor Schwarzenegger wrote to leadership of the California Senate, outlining key elements of a comprehensive solution to problems in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The first element on the Governor's list was "a plan to achieve a 20 percent reduction in per capita water use statewide by 2020." Almost immediately, the "20x2020" Agency Team was convened to develop a plan to achieve that goal. DWR took the lead role in plan development and the final "20x2020" plan was released in 2010.

The 20x2020 Water Conservation Plan sets forth a statewide road map to maximize the state's urban water efficiency and conservation opportunities. It aims to set in motion a range of activities designed to achieve the 20 percent per capita reduction in urban water demand by 2020. These activities include:

- Improving an understanding of the variation in water use across California
- Promoting legislative initiatives that provide incentives to water agencies to promote water conservation
- Creating evaluation and enforcement mechanisms to assure regional and statewide goals are met

When the Governor's Comprehensive Water Reform Package was signed into law in 2009, the 20x2020 Plan served as a basis for the new water conservation legislation (Senate Bill X7 7) which requires urban water agencies to reduce per capita water use 20% by 2020. The bill requires DWR to develop methodologies by which the urban water suppliers can meet the water use reduction targets. It also requires certain agricultural water suppliers to measure water deliveries, adopt a price structure based on quantity of water delivered, and submit Agricultural Water Management Plans including information on water efficiency measures and improvements to DWR. DWR has made progress implementing these requirements to assist agricultural and urban water suppliers achieve their targets.

DWR is reaching out to the people of California with the "Save Our Water" program. The Save Our Water program was launched in 2009, in partnership with the Association of California Water Agencies, in response to the Governor's drought emergency proclamation. The program aims to promote water conservation, educate Californians about the challenges facing the state's water supply system, and achieve a permanent change in the way Californians use water. Outreach efforts include partnering with local water agencies, state and county fair exhibits, an interactive website, social networking, and distribution of educational materials.

In addition to working with water agencies, DWR provides direct assistance to agencies and the public. One important technical assistance DWR provides to the public is the California Irrigation Management Information System, a network of over 130 weather stations across the state that provides weather data for irrigation scheduling.

www.water.ca.gov/wateruseefficiency • www.saveourh20.org

