



News for Immediate Release

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DWR Director Approves Climate Action Plan To Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

SACRAMENTO -- The Department of Water Resources released a plan this week to dramatically curtail its greenhouse gas emissions in coming decades.

The plan approved recently by DWR Director Mark Cowin shows how the department can cut release of gases linked to global warming by 50 percent below 1990 levels within the next seven years. The plan also sets the stage for an 80 percent emissions reduction by 2050.

DWR operates the 700-mile-long State Water Project, which pumps water from Northern California rivers to the San Francisco Bay Area, Silicon Valley, Southern California cities, and Central Valley farms. The department both uses and generates large amounts of electricity in the course of moving water.

DWR estimates that its total greenhouse gas emissions in 1990 were nearly 3.5 million metric tons, roughly equivalent to the emissions of 680,000 cars operating for a year.

Measures in the department's climate action plan include:

- termination of a contract with a coal-fired power plant in Nevada that accounts for roughly 30 percent to 50 percent of the department's operational emissions;
- increasing the efficiency of pumps and turbines throughout the State Water Project system with state-of-the-art design, construction, and refurbishing;
- boosting the proportion of electricity consumed by the State Water Project that comes from renewable and high-efficiency natural gas-fired sources;

- exploring ways to develop renewable energy on land owned by DWR, such as installing solar panels on land adjacent to pumping plants;
- changing construction practices to minimize fuel consumption and landfill waste;
- participating in the Sacramento Municipal Utility District's Greenergy program, which will ensure that much of DWR's office space in Sacramento is powered by renewable sources;
- and buying 2,580 metric tons of carbon offsets each year of the next decade to fund projects that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"In total, these measures are expected to reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 by more than 1 million metric tons and by more than 2.5 million metric tons in 2050," said DWR Director Mark Cowin, who approved the plan on May 24.

"These are significant impacts in terms of climate change adaption for California's benefit."

Global warming has huge implications for California water resources, in particular the Sierra snowpack that supplies most of the state's urban and agricultural water users. Global warming is shifting the precipitation mix in California in favor of more rainfall and less snow, and the Sierra snowpack is melting earlier in the spring, leading to reduced water availability later in the year when demand is high. Sea level rise associated with global warming threatens coastal lands and infrastructure, and puts additional stress on levees in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, the heart of California's water supply system.

DWR's greenhouse gas reduction plan outlines steps DWR has taken and will take to reduce its emissions consistent with the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32) and Executive Order S-3-05, which establish emissions reduction targets for the State of California, and with DWR's Sustainability Policy and Targets.

The plan was provided to other state agencies, the State Water (Project) Contractors and the public for review and comment through the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process.

More information on this plan -- known officially as the DWR Climate Action Plan Phase I: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan -- is available online at <http://www.water.ca.gov/climatechange/CAP.cfm>

In addition to operating the State Water Project, DWR: maintains levees throughout the Central Valley; reviews and manages grant and local assistance programs; plans, builds and manages a range of water supply, flood control and environmental restoration projects; and regulates the safety of the majority of dams in California. Performing these activities can result in the release of greenhouse gas emissions.