

Foreword

Water Plan Update 2009 epitomizes collaboration. It reflects the perspectives of many and varied individuals, groups, and government entities representing the full spectrum of issues, concerns, and visions for the future of water management in California. Update 2009 has been enhanced by the leadership of 21 State agencies and departments that oversee or carry out water-related activities. Federal, Tribal, regional, and local entities helped shape the strategic plan—its goals, objectives, and recommendations—and 27 resource management strategies that are key to success.

Update 2009 reflects a new reality for resource management, a blueprint for sustainability, and a new direction for water decisions. This reality includes significant challenges: ecosystems in peril, the uncertainties of climate change and sea level rise, and population growth to name just a few. Update 2009 also spells out the urgencies that demand action: dealing with longer and more pronounced droughts, increased flood risk, threats to the environment, impaired water bodies, and aging infrastructure.

The Water Plan's outreach to Native American Tribes brought about a Tribal Communication Plan and culminated in the first of its kind California Tribal Water Summit in 2009. Update 2009 also introduces new water planning methods with the use of scenarios and response packages while evaluating the effects of future climate change.

This Water Plan marks a dynamic new approach to the way California manages its water resources—statewide and regionally. We must adapt California's water systems more quickly and effectively to keep pace with ever-changing conditions. With new urgency, regions must develop and implement truly integrated regional water management plans as roadmaps to meeting future water demands in sustainable ways. We must also continue our efforts at the statewide level to develop and implement plans for a sustainable Delta and to improve our flood management system. To assure balanced, effective solutions are implemented, we must develop long-term, reliable funding methods to make necessary system improvements and to invest in the continued resilience of California's water resources and the ecosystem that supports them.

In November 2009, the Legislature passed and Governor Schwarzenegger signed a comprehensive water package which is integral to Update 2009. Today, State government has the responsibility and opportunity to work with local partners within a new Delta governance structure to complete and implement plans for improving both the Delta ecosystem and the reliability of water supply derived from the Delta. We also must step up our efforts to integrate this work with our ongoing responsibilities to develop a Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, implement the FloodSAFE California initiative, and improve water storage statewide.

Regional water planning and management is essential for solving California's water issues. Local governments, agencies, and stakeholders have the best understanding of their water management challenges. DWR and other State agencies must partner with local agencies and governments to advance Integrated Regional Water Management, and to implement the new requirements for water conservation and groundwater monitoring. State government can provide expertise, technical assistance, and other essential support activities.

The California Water Plan Update 2009 will help chart our course toward more sustainable, integrated resources management. In broad strokes, this means considering water supply reliability, flood protection, water quality, and environmental stewardship in all resource management decisions. By doing so, we increase our chances of realizing the Water Plan's vision: a productive economy, healthy ecosystem, and desirable quality of life for all Californians.



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