



# **California State Water Resources Control Board**

2024 Strategic Work Plan

The State Water Resources Control Board's mission is to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper water resource allocation and efficient use, for the benefit of present and future generations. To this end, the State Water Resources Control Board develops statewide permits, policy, and regulations to protect water quality, regulates drinking water, administers California's water rights system, and supports Regional Water Quality Control Board efforts. In addition, the State Water Resources Control Board provides financial assistance in the form of grants and loans for projects that clean up and protect water quality and drinking water supplies, and that otherwise protect water resources. In all it does, the State Water Board works to advance several foundational values, including climate change resilience, environmental justice, and racial equity.

This strategic work plan update lays out actions to advance the State Water Board’s four thematic priorities and subsidiary goals, listed in this table of contents.

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## Highest-priority actions to work on or complete in 2024 (\*) and actions linked to California's Water Supply Strategy (W)

See full list for more information.

- 1.1.2. \* SAFER.
- 1.2.1. \* Chrome VI.
- 2.1.1. \* Fishery-protective permanent minimum instream flows.
- 2.1.8. \* ILRP panel update.
- 2.1.12. \* High-priority water quality petitions.
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- 3.1.1. \* W Implement water rights modernization efforts.
- 3.1.2. \* Drinking water drought response program.
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- 3.2.2. \* W Urban water use efficiency framework.
- 3.2.3. \* W Water Storage Investment Program.
- 3.2.4. \* W Develop new water supplies (recycled water, desalination, and stormwater capture).
- 3.3.1. \* W SGMA.
- 3.3.2. W Process water rights permitting for underground storage.
- 3.4.1. \* Statewide Utility Wildfire General Order.
- 3.5.1. \* Site-specific objectives guidance for copper and zinc.
- 3.5.2. \* Cost of municipal stormwater permit implementation.
- 3.5.3. W Stormwater: Infiltration.
- 3.6.1. \* Bay-Delta Plans.
- 3.6.2. \* W Delta conveyance.
- 4.2.3. \* Communications.
- 4.3.1. \* W Modernize water rights data.
- 4.4.1. \* Racial equity.

For each action below, acronyms in brackets list the main responsible organizations within the State Water Board; acronyms are defined at the end of this document. Note the State Water Board's priorities are subject to change based on need. Also note this work plan does not include everything related to the State Water Board's core workload or Regional Water Board efforts.

Key:

\* = highest-priority actions to work on or complete in 2024

W = linked to Water Supply Strategy

## 1. Protect public health by ensuring reliable access to safe, affordable drinking water and sanitation.

### 1.1. *Work to ensure state-regulated water systems meet drinking water and sanitation standards and Californians reliant on water systems not under state regulation ("state smalls" and private wells) know the quality of their water.*

- 1.1.1. **Water and wastewater affordability.** Consider affordability in board programs, where appropriate. Take specific action regarding arrearages and operation and maintenance (O&M) support. For the extended water and wastewater system arrearage program: Complete payments to systems (by April 2024) and collect reporting information on arrearage fund usage and bill credits to customers (by October 2024). For O&M support: Provide direct operation and maintenance (O&M) support to assist community water systems facing the highest affordability burdens. Approximately 30 systems will be invited to apply for direct O&M support. Direct O&M support agreements are expected to be issued to eligible systems with complete applications by September 2024. [DFA, DDW]
- 1.1.2. \* **SAFER.** With the Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) program is at its midpoint of its initial 10-year appropriation, increase the number of consolidations of water systems, expand the use of administrators where appropriate and need is demonstrated to expediate solutions, and continue to implement the Expedited Drinking Water Grant program to accelerate solutions for failing systems in small communities. Develop a long-term strategy. Improve efficiencies within program authorities based on earlier experiences with consolidations and administrators. Work toward developing solutions for private domestic wells and state small water systems in coordination with CV SALTS management zones, Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs), and county planning and development departments. Partner with local experts to engage domestic well and other hard to reach communities in development of drinking water solutions. [DDW, DFA, OSGM, Comms]
- 1.1.3. **PFAS: Investigations.** Continue investigations of industrial sources of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contaminants in public drinking water systems, at a regional level. Begin a multi-year study to monitor PFAS at community public water systems in the state serving disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities. Use the data from this study to understand the distribution and magnitude of PFAS across the state and begin strategic planning to test available treatment options and estimated treatment costs with the goal to develop a treatment-based maximum contaminant level for PFAS. [DDW, DWQ, DFA]

- 1.1.4. **USEPA sanitary survey compliance.** Improve State Water Board compliance with the USEPA mandated sanitary survey by increasing inspections and redirecting staff back to core regulatory program from emergency response activities (i.e., arrearages, fire response, and drought). [DDW]
- 1.1.5. **Statewide Wastewater Needs Assessment.** Contract to identify communities without adequate sanitation systems through a comprehensive evaluation of data on at-risk communities and the condition of the sanitation systems. The assessment will include analysis of technical, managerial, and financial factors to determine and identify solutions for inadequacies, including possible consolidation with another wastewater treatment system. This work was launched in summer 2023. [DWQ, DFA]

## 1.2. *Adopt and enforce standards for contaminants that threaten human health.*

- 1.2.1. **\* Chrome VI.** Adopt a maximum contaminant level for hexavalent chromium; adopt regulation package in early 2024 and submit record to OAL for approval. Begin working with water systems to develop implementation plans as required by regulations and provide technical assistance to small water systems. [DDW, DFA]
- 1.2.2. **Lead and Copper Rule.** Develop Lead and Copper Rule conforming revisions to new federal rule issued in 2021 and anticipated Lead and Copper Rule improvements expected by October 2024. Begin work on private-side lead service line surveys. Develop new data system to track service line surveys and reporting requirements. [DDW]
- 1.2.3. **PFAS: PHG and MCL.** Finalize a public health goal (PHG) and start the process to develop a maximum contaminant level (MCL) for perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA). Develop notification levels for other detected PFAS in public water system wells along with and developing a strategy for regulating additional per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances. [DDW]

## 1.3. *Ensure groundwater quality meets or exceeds objectives.*

- 1.3.1. **Prioritize Funding of SCAP projects in disadvantaged communities and environmental justice communities.** Prepare recommended changes to the SCAP Resolution ([2023-0011](#)) and Fundable List to ensure limited SCAP resources are directed to disadvantaged and environmental justice communities. Coordinate with Regional Water Boards, the Department of Toxic Substances Control, and local agencies to encumber funds to address highest priority cleanup projects in economically disadvantaged communities and environmental justice communities (i.e., those with high CalEnviroScreen scores). [DFA]
- 1.3.2. **Orphan Site Cleanup Fund (OSCF) projects and stalled case initiative.** Coordinate with the Regional Water Boards, and USEPA to identify stalled cleanup efforts at sites associated with leaking USTs. There are approximately 55 sites on the current Priority List totaling about \$20 million. Consistent with the Racial Equity Action Plan, DFA and DWQ will evaluate the current Priority List, as well as other stalled cases in need of funding, to focus on sites that are in environmental justice or disadvantaged communities. DFA will prepare a revised Priority List by April 30, 2024. [DFA, DWQ]

## 2. Protect and restore watersheds, marine waters, and ecosystems.

### 2.1. *Ensure surface water quality, flow, and management protects fish, wildlife, recreation, and other beneficial uses.*

- 2.1.1. \* **Fishery-protective permanent minimum instream flows.** Continue existing efforts to develop appropriate science and environmental documentation to establish permanent minimum instream flows in streams where the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or another fisheries or wildlife government agency has submitted emergency recommendations to protect fisheries, wildlife, habitat, or other public trust resources, particularly those streams subject to 2021-2022 drought emergency fisheries flows. [Division of Water Rights]
- 2.1.2. **Clear Lake Hitch.** Engage in efforts to protect the Clear Lake Hitch by protecting instream flows, evaluating regulatory compliance with existing water right requirements, and enforcing on illegal diversions and unlicensed cannabis cultivation, while considering other stressors. Implement the December 2023 emergency regulation, along with local voluntary actions and ongoing monitoring efforts led by tribes, to collect data to evaluate the effects of pumping on streamflow. Develop collaborative and voluntary actions to help preserve streamflow, remove fish passage barriers, and ensure best management practices for water diversion and use are followed. [Division of Water Rights, OE]
- 2.1.3. **Temperature management for fisheries.** Improve management of surface water temperatures to reduce fish mortality and improve watershed and ecosystem health in the Bay-Delta watershed, with a focus on the Sacramento River and Water Rights Order 90-5 compliance and emphasis on development of robust modeling and data to inform decisions, early and transparent planning, collaborative solutions, and where appropriate, consideration of additional, voluntary options that balance multiple beneficial uses. [Division of Water Rights]
- 2.1.4. **Ocean acidification and hypoxia.** Develop an Ocean Plan amendment to add water quality objectives and a program of implementation to address ocean acidification, hypoxia, and the effects of anthropogenic sources of nutrients in ocean waters. Initiate investigation of feasibility of nutrient removal at wastewater treatment plants that discharge to the ocean. [DWQ, DFA]
- 2.1.5. **Cannabis enforcement.** Enforce water quality violations associated with illegal cannabis cultivation sites in priority watersheds. Conduct a comprehensive review and update of the Cannabis Program Report addressing program priorities, workplan, metric tracking, and goals. [OE, DWQ, Division of Water Rights]
- 2.1.6. **HABs.** Implement the statewide harmful algal bloom (HAB) strategies, which align the mandates of Assembly Bill 834 (2019) by expanding event response and ambient monitoring through the freshwater HAB program and improving communication to tribes and the public. Establish statewide procedures for event response and ambient monitoring. Participate in the multi-agency Delta Cyanobacterial HAB Monitoring Strategy, in coordination with the Delta Stewardship Council's Delta Science Program. Support the HAB Monitoring Strategy's efforts to unify existing monitoring activities, standardize data, and make available data timelier and more accessible. [OIMA, Division of Water Rights, Comms]

- 2.1.7. **Biostimulatory substances, cyanotoxins, and biological integrity.** Develop policy options for a statewide water quality objective and implementation program for nutrients and other biostimulatory substances and cyanotoxins for streams, rivers, lakes, and reservoirs. Formalize and expand the use of biological condition assessment methods, scoring tools, and targets aimed at protecting biological integrity of wadeable streams. [DWQ]
- 2.1.8. \* **ILRP panel update.** Reconvene an expert panel to evaluate the data collected per the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) East San Joaquin Petition Order adopted by the State Water Board in 2018 and to recommend possible regulatory approaches to protect groundwater quality. Develop proposed questions for the expert panel and work with stakeholders to refine the questions. [DWQ, OCC]
- 2.1.9. **Broadband middle mile.** Support infrastructure to bring high-speed broadband service to unserved and underserved communities through development of streamlined permits that also protect beneficial uses of water. Implement the streamlined programmatic permitting authorized in the statewide NPDES Construction Stormwater General permit. Develop and implement additional general permits and water quality certifications to streamline permitting for the Broadband Middle Mile project. [DWQ]
- 2.1.10. **DDT clean-up funding.** Administer \$5.6 million from a one-time budget appropriation via grants to California Sea Grant to support DDT clean-up near southern California. Funding will be directed to research projects and community outreach efforts to communicate findings. Research projects will focus on chemistry and toxicity of DDT and its breakdown products, risks of DDT contamination to public health and ecosystems, and improved characterization of DDT dump sites. [DWQ, DFA]
- 2.1.11. **NPDES pesticide application permits.** Reissue the following existing (expired) statewide NPDES permits to allow updated pesticide applications: (1) Vector Control Permit, (2) Aquatic Weed and Algae Control Permit, (3) Spray Applications Permit, and (4) Aquatic Animal Invasive Species Control Permit. [DWQ]
- 2.1.12. \* **High-priority water quality petitions.** Adopt Water Quality Orders regarding the Central Valley Regional Water Board's General Waste Discharge Requirements for Existing Milk Cow Dairies (SWRCB/OCC File A-2283(b)). [OCC, DWQ]
- 2.1.13. **Carmel River.** Continue oversight of the cease-and-desist order related to California American Water Company and illegal diversions from the Carmel River. [Division of Water Rights]
- 2.1.14. **Mono Lake.** Evaluate progress in reaching lake level requirements established in Decision 1631 (D-1631) and the effect of the 2023 wet season; continue participating in technical discussions regarding lake level modeling and development of new tools and approaches for evaluating future lake levels; continue ongoing coordination with settlement parties, tribes, the Lahontan Regional Water Board, and the public in evaluating trends and data; and establish a timeline for Board consideration for initiating the lake level hearing described in D-1631, and the potential scope of that hearing. [Division of Water Rights]
- 2.1.15. **2024 Integrated Report.** Adopt the 2024 California Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters and submit the 2024 Integrated Report to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. [DWQ]



- 2.1.16. \* **Water quality protection gaps left by US Supreme Court *Sackett* decision.** Issue waste discharge requirements to replace 401 water quality certifications and the construction and industrial stormwater general NPDES permits, adopt delineation procedures for stream delineation, complete aquatic resource verifications, and update data systems. In coordination with US EPA, conduct training for staff at the State and Regional Water Boards to build capacity to assume tasks formerly conducted by the US Army Corps of Engineers. Develop internal guidance documents and training on enforcement strategies utilizing existing state enforcement authorities in response to the recent US Supreme Court decision, *Sackett v. EPA* (2023). [DWQ, OE, OCC]
- 2.1.17. **Water Rights Enforcement Policy.** Consider a Water Rights Enforcement Policy that establishes a framework for strong, fair, transparent, and efficient enforcement of the state's water rights priority system. [OE, Division of Water Rights]
- 2.1.18. **Salton Sea.** Oversee, monitor, and assess progress on the implementation of the Salton Sea Management Program recognizing megadrought in Colorado River basin, potential water shortages and related impacts to the Sea, and federal investments and collaboration within the watershed. [Division of Water Rights]

### 3. Increase statewide water resiliency in the face of climate change and other threats by expanding and integrating California's water supply portfolio.

#### 3.1. *Prepare for, respond to, and learn from drought.*

- 3.1.1. \* **W Implement water rights modernization efforts.** Use staff and resources gained in Fall 2022 to initiate a telemetry pilot project, expand the Division of Water Rights' drought planning capabilities (including refinement of methods and models for curtailments and water unavailability and development of new methods and models), enforce water rights during times of limited water availability, and expand drought and curtailment modeling into additional watersheds. Establishing and implementing these programs will help plan for future droughts and prepare for drought response. [Division of Water Rights]
- 3.1.2. \* **Drinking water drought response program.** Collect technical information from water systems to ensure they are implementing resiliency measures and that may have drought impacts to track their status. Follow-up for water systems that experience an outage, have a water shortage, or have a water shortage anticipated. Connect water systems to the resources they need to build drought resilience for future years. Implement strategy for water systems that do not meet source capacity requirements in conjunction with the implementation of the requirements of Senate Bill 552 (2021). Support water system source capacity planning studies, infrastructure enhancements, and where appropriate, actions such as mandatory consolidations or source water investigation orders. Coordinate with the Drought Resiliency Interagency and Partners (DRIP) Collaborative on water shortage resiliency efforts for water systems, domestic wells and state small water systems. [DDW]

#### 3.2. *Increase resilience of local and regional water supplies.*

- 3.2.1. \* **W Infrastructure funding programs.** Implement State Water Board priorities for the \$2.0 billion in State General Fund infrastructure programs and for the federal

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law/State Revolving Fund funds: (1) drinking water (including PFAS/emerging contaminants and lead service line replacement funding), (2) wastewater, (3) groundwater cleanup, (4) water recycling, and (5) cross-border water quality. By June 30, 2024, amend drinking water and clean water State Revolving Fund policies to help streamline processes and amend priorities, to support the Water Supply Strategy's water recycling and stormwater capture goals. [DFA]

- 3.2.2. \* **W Urban water use efficiency framework.** Adopt urban efficiency regulation applying to urban retail water suppliers to implement the Making Conservation a California Way of Life laws (Senate Bill 606 and Assembly Bill 1668, 2018). [ORPP]
- 3.2.3. \* **W Water Storage Investment Program.** Implement the State Water Board's parts of the Proposition 1 (2014) Water Storage Investment Program (WSIP). State Water Board staff will process new water right applications and petitions, hold necessary hearings, and develop public benefit contracts needed to support WSIP projects. Continue the public process for the Sites Reservoir water rights application. [Division of Water Rights, ORPP]
- 3.2.4. \* **W Develop new water supplies (recycled water, desalination, and stormwater capture).** Continue to lead the strike team to resolve permitting and funding obstacles for planned recycled water projects. Consider grant and loan programs to fund planning and building of desalination projects. Identify opportunities to expand the production and use of desalinated brackish groundwater. Identify mitigation sites and propose Ocean Plan Amendments to facilitate approval of seawater desalination projects. Implement a contract to estimate current stormwater capture and use statewide and develop a method to re-evaluate every five years to track progress towards the 2030 and 2040 goals. [DWQ]
- 3.2.5. **On-site reuse regulations.** Adopt regulations for local governments to implement onsite treatment and reuse of non-potable water by Spring 2024. Senate Bill 966 (2018) requires the State Water Board to adopt regulations for risk-based water quality standards for the onsite treatment and reuse of non-potable water for non-potable end uses in multifamily residential, commercial, and mixed-use buildings. [DDW]
- 3.2.6. **CEC management strategy.** Develop and implement a statewide constituent of emerging concern (CEC) program strategic plan to prioritize and manage CECs and proactively ensure protection of drinking water supplies, public health, and the environment. The development of a CEC strategic plan supports the Administration's Water Resilience Portfolio required by Executive Order N-10-19 and the State Water Board's charge to protect and restore water quality by driving pollution reduction from a range of sources. [DWQ, OIMA, DDW]
- 3.2.7. **Sanitary sewer collection system environmental justice initiative.** Conduct sanitary sewer collection system inspections, in coordination with the Regional Water Boards, focused on systems serving environmental justice communities. These inspections, compliance assistance, and enforcement efforts identify deficiencies in systems maintenance, operation, and long-term capital improvements, which can lead to discharges of pollutants that threaten local water quality and can cause adverse health impacts in already overburdened communities. Provide technical assistance, including assistance in applying for funding, to qualifying systems. [OE, DFA]

### 3.3. *Support sustainable management of California’s groundwater resources.*

- 3.3.1. \* **W SGMA.** Implement the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Complete the programs’ transition to the new Office of Sustainable Groundwater Management (OSGM). Make determinations on basins that come into the State Water Board’s jurisdiction and implement state intervention where needed. Develop comprehensive staff reports for basins scheduled for probationary hearings that include clear plan deficiencies and potential actions to address deficiencies. Engage with stakeholders by conducting workshops, meetings, and providing plain-language outreach materials. Regularly meet with GSAs to provide technical feedback on their proposals to address deficiencies. Provide tools, resources, and incentives to encourage long-term drinking water solutions and water quality planning. Coordinate with the SAFER Drinking Water Program, the Recycled Water Policy program, CV-SALTS, and the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program, where appropriate. [OSGM]
- 3.3.2. **W Process water rights permitting for underground storage.** Prioritize water rights applications for underground storage, including 180-day and 5-year temporary permits, standard water rights applications, and applications that pursue the Board’s recently developed streamlined pathway for capturing high flow events. Continue to coordinate with the Department of Water Resources to facilitate applications, conduct outreach and education, and assist applicants in accordance with the Water Supply Strategy. [Division of Water Rights]
- 3.3.3. **SDWA: underground injection control.** Support the California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) review of pending aquifer exemption proposals with overlying beneficial use groundwater to bring the state into compliance with the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). Reviews will include a conduit analysis and remediation of idle and abandoned wells. [DWQ]

### 3.4. *Manage natural and working lands and soils so they provide water-related benefits.*

- 3.4.1. \* **Statewide Utility Wildfire General Order.** Finalize permit for electric utilities that conduct wildfire mitigation, and electric operations and maintenance activities with the potential to affect waters of the state. Release draft order for public comment in early 2024 and bring it before the board for consideration of adoption in late summer 2024. [DWQ]

### 3.5. *Use stormwater more fully and effectively to provide multiple benefits.*

- 3.5.1. \* **Site-specific objectives guidance for copper and zinc.** Adopt guidance for Regional Water Boards to develop site-specific water quality objectives for copper and zinc using a metal bioavailability model (e.g., biotic ligand model) that includes receiving water body characteristics and monitoring data. The implementation of more accurate site-specific water quality objectives will reduce the cost of compliance for municipal stormwater permittees, while protecting beneficial uses. [DWQ]
- 3.5.2. \* **Cost of municipal stormwater permit implementation.** Adopt requirements for standardized cost reporting for the implementation of NPDES municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permits as part of the stormwater cost of compliance. Information and data will be used by State and Regional Water Boards when issuing new permits. [DWQ]

- 3.5.3. **W Stormwater: Infiltration.** Develop requirements for siting, design, and monitoring criteria for urban stormwater capture and infiltration systems. Incentivize local agencies to develop stormwater capture projects. Implement a contract to estimate current stormwater capture statewide. [DWQ]
- 3.5.4. **Statewide Industrial Stormwater General Permit.** Release public review draft of the revised statewide NPDES Industrial Stormwater General Permit. Include an evaluation of costs to comply with the secondary maximum contaminant levels for infiltrated stormwater as part of the stormwater cost of compliance. [DWQ]
- 3.5.5. **Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4): NPDES statewide phase II small MS4 permit.** Release public review draft of the updated statewide Phase II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) Permit. [DWQ]
- 3.5.6. **STORMS program evaluation.** Initiate a Strategy to Optimize Resource Management of Stormwater (STORMS) program evaluation to identify opportunities to improve the process for receiving meaningful stakeholder input and selecting STORMS projects considering scope, resources, and the greatest impact towards meeting the 2030 and 2040 stormwater goals in the Water Supply Strategy. [DWQ]
- 3.5.7. **Stormwater non-filer enforcement initiative.** Continue to prioritize investigation and enforcement for industrial facilities in environmental justice areas that are suspected of not being enrolled in the Industrial Stormwater General Order. Focus on refining outreach, notifications, and enforcement procedures to utilize state authority more extensively and focus on resolving existing non-filers in Environmental Justice communities having a CalEnviroScreen percentile score of 90 percent or above. [OE]

### 3.6. *Manage the Bay-Delta to balance water supply reliability and a healthy ecosystem.*

- 3.6.1. \* **Bay-Delta Plans.** Implement the San Joaquin/Southern Delta Bay-Delta Plan, including the consideration of voluntary agreements. Complete the Sacramento/Delta update to the Bay-Delta Plan, including consideration of voluntary agreements. Consult with tribal governments during development of Bay-Delta Plan update. [Division of Water Rights]
- 3.6.2. \* **W Delta conveyance.** Implement the State Water Board's responsibilities for processing water rights change petitions and water quality certifications related to the proposed Delta conveyance project, including providing public notice of petitions and conducting and overseeing any necessary water rights hearing. [Division of Water Rights]
- 3.6.3. **Delta Alternative Compliance Plan.** Apply OpenET to determine crop evapotranspiration and consumptive water use in the Legal Delta via implementation of the Delta Alternative Compliance Plan. [ODW]

## 4. Strengthen internal capacity and systems to accomplish the State Water Board’s mission strategically, transparently, equitably, and efficiently.

### 4.1. *Incorporate effective public participation into State Water Board decisions and support effective partnerships.*

4.1.1. **Engagement.** Strengthen our ability to engage with the public and with California Native American tribes to improve our decision-making processes. [OPP]

- **Internal capacity.** Enhance internal capacity to integrate public engagement skills, strategies, and expertise into all Water Boards programs by expanding training, guidance, resources, and tools for all staff. Support implementation of meaningful and culturally relevant outreach to disadvantaged communities and tribes on water quality planning, permitting, and policy processes (Assembly Bill 2108, 2022). Develop and implement a public engagement training curriculum to help staff implement the “Advancing Equity in Water Boards Decisions” guidance and assess equity impacts of their projects and programs. Finalize and implement guidance for providing language services. Provide training guidelines to regions, divisions, and offices.
- **External capacity.** Develop a community capacity building pilot fund to support tribal-led and community-led projects that address environmental clean-up projects. Leverage and promote the CalEPA Environmental Justice Action Grants to support community and tribal-led projects while the Water Boards program is being developed.
- **Tribal affairs.** Enhance internal capacity to consult, engage, and collaborate with California Native American tribes and tribal communities by expanding training, guidance, resources, and tools. Partner with the Native American Heritage Commission to update statewide tribal contact information to allow for efficient outreach and engagement.

4.1.2. **Advance, and make consistent, tribal beneficial use designations.** DWQ will work with the Regional Boards, OPP, and OCC to identify options for accelerating the designations of tribal beneficial uses around the state, including finalizing and releasing an educational guidance document describing the process to designate tribal beneficial uses. [DWQ, OPP, Division of Water Rights, OCC]

### 4.2. *Track and communicate the State Water Board’s work.*

4.2.1. **Website.** Continue to evaluate, improve, and maintain the Boards’ websites. [DIT, Comms]

4.2.2. **Enforcement performance.** Identify future enforcement goals and track enforcement performance measures that drive meaningful enforcement to obtain those goals with a focus on programs with low compliance rates. Implement and track new enforcement goal of providing inspection reports to the regulated entity within the required 30-45 days of the inspection. Improve existing tracking of Mandatory Minimum Penalty violation goals to better identify and prioritize violations that remain unaddressed beyond 12, 24, and 36 months from the date they occurred. [OE]



- 4.2.3. \* **Communications.** Through communications, media relations and effective brand management, continue informing and educating the media, interested parties, and the public of the Boards’ work and decision-making processes to raise awareness of the impacts of our work, equitably empower people to take action, and strengthen meaningful public involvement. Increase capacity for strategic communications, process improvements, proactive media outreach, brand development storytelling, website and multimedia content, and active engagement on social media platforms. [Comms]

#### 4.3. *Manage data effectively.*

- 4.3.1. \* **W Modernize water rights data.** Continue actions to update California’s water rights data, including digitization of existing paper and other physical records and ongoing development of the Updating Water Rights Data for California (UPWARD) system; engage diverters and reporters to receive more accurate water diversion data; provide technical assistance related to metering and measurement data and reporting. [Division of Water Rights]
- 4.3.2. **Data management plan.** As outlined in the Strategic Data Action Plan driven by State Water Board Resolution No. 2018-0032, deliver data literacy (training and education) and data quality training and outreach to priority program areas to help staff make better decisions and inform the public on key interests. Align data governance with enterprise technology modernization efforts to ensure business needs are met efficiently, effectively and in a reusable work and dataflow. [OIMA]
- 4.3.3. **New systems for water quality data.** Replace a data receiving and storage ecosystem—the California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN)—and prioritize the modernization of the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP). Chemistry module followed by other data types are current priorities. [OIMA, DIT]
- 4.3.4. **Modernize data analysis tools for the Integrated Report.** Improve data analysis tools, including the California Water Quality Assessment (CalWQA) data system to facilitate comprehensive, efficient, and accurate water quality assessments and identify impaired surface waters. [DWQ, DIT, OIMA]

#### 4.4. *Support evolution of organizational structures, processes, and culture.*

- 4.4.1. \* **Racial equity.** Implement the Racial Equity Action Plan to address systemic, institutional, and individual racism. Continue to assess racial equity needs and targets through survey results and metrics. Analyze courses and create a racial equity curriculum to meet the needs of the organization. Formulate an advisory committee to assist in the analysis and approval of racial equity training needs. Continue to roll out racial equity courses in our learning management system. Maintain accountability on progress via quarterly roundtable meetings and annual report to the board. Consider reevaluating Racial Equity Action Plan performance measures to better measure progress and align with the results-based accountability framework. [OPP, OIMA, ORPP]
- **Racial Equity Train-the-Trainer.** Continue to provide racial equity training to equip employees with the skills to deliver a three-part racial equity virtual course, or a two-day in-person course, to as many Water Boards employees as possible. The course “Advancing Racial Equity at the Water Boards” is an

opportunity to engage with peers to develop a shared understanding of fundamental racial equity concepts and tools, and a framework for becoming an organization that eliminates systemic racism, discrimination, and prejudice, and promotes equity and justice for all.

- **Results Based Accountability Training.** Provide one additional cohort of Results Based Accountability training, a training framework for assessing if programs benefit the communities they intend to serve. A long-term sustainable training approach will be developed following the completion of the second cohort training.
  - **Racial Equity Data Action Plan.** Help staff incorporate racial equity concepts into the planning and design of data collection and visualization, expand public participation in science and community data gathering programs, and make data to inform the implementation of the Racial Equity Action Plan more accessible.
- 4.4.2. **Fi\$Cal.** Stay current in Fi\$Cal processing. Routinely produce “management reports” for various program areas, including the Cleanup and Abatement Account, the Division of Water Rights, and DWQ, to allow them to monitor their expenditures in as close to “real time” as possible. [DAS]
- 4.4.3. **DFA process improvements.** Continue to evaluate and refine DFA processes to streamline and simplify funding for drinking water and clean water projects. Continue to improve the processes associated with disbursing funds in the drinking water, clean water, stormwater, and groundwater programs. [DFA]
- 4.4.4. **Workforce strategy.** Continue actions to ensure appropriate staffing, organizational support for staff, and opportunities for staff. [DAS, DIT, OPP]
- **Reduce vacancies.** Reduce vacancy rate to 5 percent or less for State and Regional Water Boards.
  - **Workforce and Succession Plan.** Finalize workforce and succession plans.
  - **Develop a plan to support employee engagement, retention, wellness, inclusion, and belonging.**
- 4.4.5. **Contracts and processes for laboratory and science services.** Continue to reduce the number of contracts and improve business services and workflows by consolidating statewide contracts for analytical laboratory services and science consulting services. [OIMA]

## **Acronyms or short names of State Water Board Divisions and Offices**

Comms	=	Communications Office, which includes the Office of Public Affairs (OPA) and the Office of Public Participation (OPP)
DAS	=	Division of Administrative Services
DDW	=	Division of Drinking Water
DFA	=	Division of Financial Assistance
DIT	=	Division of Information Technology
DWQ	=	Division of Water Quality
OCC	=	Office of the Chief Counsel
ODW	=	Office of the Delta Watermaster
OE	=	Office of Enforcement
OIMA	=	Office of Information Management and Analysis
OLA	=	Office of Legislative Affairs
OPP	=	Office of Public Participation (within Communications Office)
OPA	=	Office of Public Affairs (within Communications Office)
ORPP	=	Office of Research, Planning, and Performance
OSGM	=	Office of Sustainable Groundwater Management



# Selected changes from the State Water Board 2023 Strategic Work Plan

In updating this work plan from the 2023 version, actions have been added and removed.

## **Added**

Orphan Site Cleanup Fund (OSCF) projects and stalled case initiative.

Mono Lake.

2024 Integrated Report.

Water quality protection gaps left by US Supreme Court *Sackett* decision

Water Rights Enforcement Policy

Sanitary Sewer Collection System Environmental Justice Initiative.

## **Removed**

Actions were removed because they are no longer needed or have been completed or largely completed (<sup>a</sup>) or because work on the action has stopped (<sup>b</sup>) or been deprioritized due to the need to focus on competing priorities.

<sup>a</sup> Onsite wastewater treatment system waiver

<sup>a</sup> Prop 1: groundwater

<sup>a</sup> Climate change: Sea-level rise

<sup>a</sup> Once-through cooling policy amendments

<sup>a</sup> TUCPs

<sup>a</sup> Emergency urban water conservation

<sup>a</sup> Direct potable reuse supply

<sup>a</sup> Water quality enforcement policy review and update

<sup>b</sup> Vapor intrusion

<sup>b</sup> Refine and expand water rights drought response