

Ways to Participate in the SAFER Advisory Group Meeting

Watch only: Visit video.calepa.ca.gov

Submit a comment:

Email safer@waterboards.ca.gov with subject “AGM Public Comment,” and follow instructions in return email to join the meeting.

Technical or language interpretation assistance:
safer@waterboards.ca.gov



SAFER Advisory Group Meeting #1

Onboarding and Collaboration
Session

February 13, 2024
Via Zoom



**Congratulations on your
appointment!**

Thank you for being here!

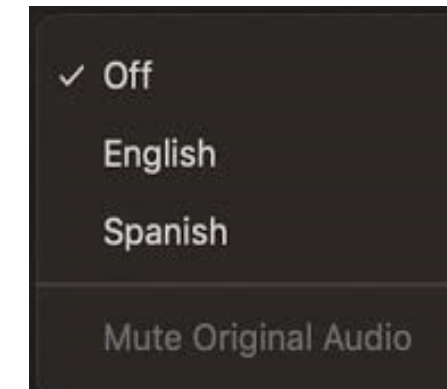
Meeting Logistics

Marina Pérez
Office of Public Participation

Language Interpretation through Zoom

Click the Interpretation icon in your meeting controls

- Navigate to Language Channels
- You must select English or Spanish
- Mute Original Audio

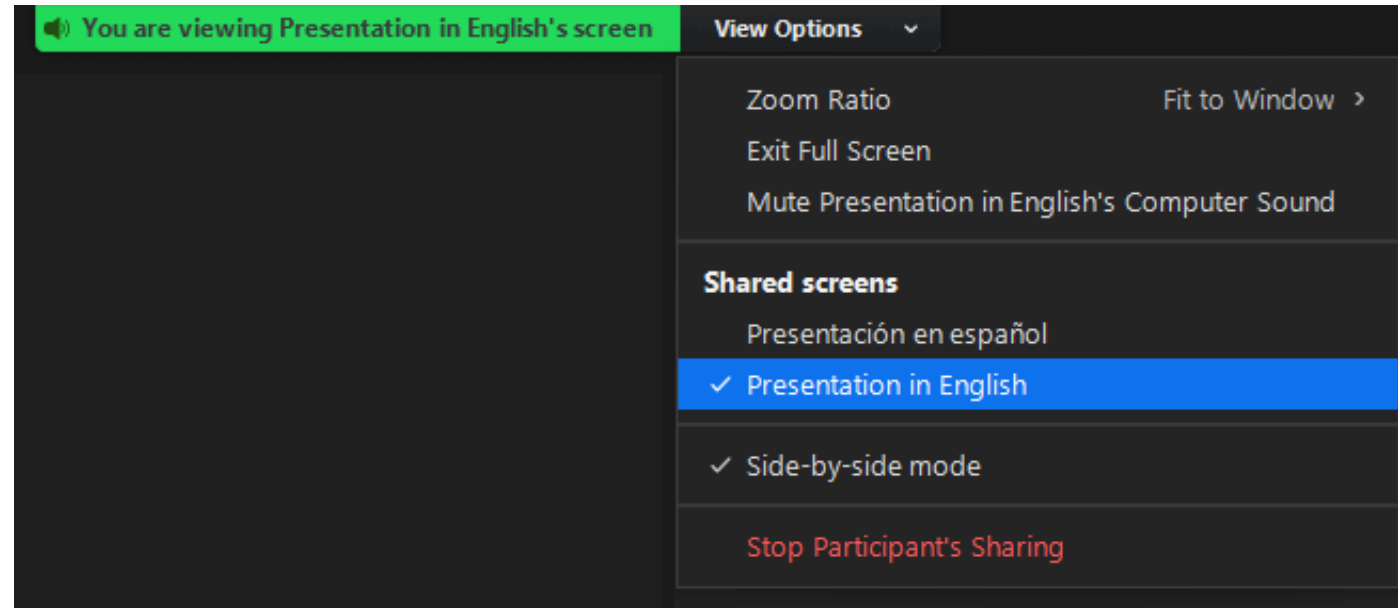


For technical assistance, email: SAFER@waterboards.ca.gov

View Options on Zoom

Click on View Options at the top of your screen and select:

- "Presentación en español"
- or
- "Presentation in English"



For technical assistance, email: SAFER@waterboards.ca.gov

7

Ways to Participate

Watch only: Visit video.calepa.ca.gov

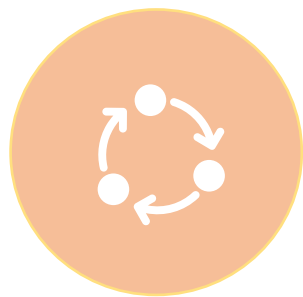
Submit a comment:

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Technical or language interpretation assistance:
safer@waterboards.ca.gov



Meeting Goals



**Learn more about
the SAFER
Drinking Water
Program**



**Meet and get to know
your fellow advisory
group members and
key SAFER Staff**



**Review Advisory
Group Member
expectations**

Agenda Overview

Morning

- Welcome & meeting logistics
- Executive leadership welcome
- Introductions
- State Water Boards Overview
- SAFER Program overview
- SAFER Program presentations
- **LUNCH: 12:30 – 1:30pm**

After lunch

- Collaboration Session
- Charter, expectations and legal obligations
- Meeting format, best practices, language access, and resources
- SAFER Updates & Next Steps
- Public comment

Meeting Guidelines

- Mute yourself when not speaking.
- Join by video.
- Speak slowly.
- Use the raise hand feature to ask questions.

- Limit discussions to agenda.
- Actively participate.
- Take breaks as needed.
- Network with fellow SAFER Advisory Group members.

For assistance, email safer@waterboards.ca.gov

Welcome and Introductions

Marina Pérez
Office of Public Participation

Welcome from Eric Oppenheimer

**Executive Director
State Water Resources Control Board**

SAFER Advisory Group Introductions

- Your name.
- Community you represent and/or come from.
- Type of community/organization you represent.
- Whether are a newly appointed or continuing advisory group member.
- One thing you are looking forward to as a SAFER Advisory Group member.



State Water Boards Overview & Resources

Adriana Renteria
Office of Public Participation

Water Board 101: History of the Water Boards



Water Boards

Water Boards 101: Water Landscape



Water Boards

Water Boards 101: Water Boards Vision & Mission



Water Boards 101: Water Boards Structure



Water Boards 101: Working with Californians



CALIFORNIA

Water Boards



Water Boards' Mission

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.

Break

Please return by: **10:45AM**



SAFER Program Overview

**Alisha O'Loughlin
Office of Public Participation**

SAFER DRINKING WATER

SAFE AND AFFORDABLE FUNDING FOR EQUITY AND RESILIENCE



What is SAFER?

A set of tools, funding sources, and regulatory authorities designed to help struggling water systems sustainably and affordably provide safe drinking water.

Why is the SAFER drinking water program necessary?

Public water systems:

~400 out of ~3,000 community water systems do not meet drinking water health standards

Domestic wells and state smalls:

- ~350,000 domestic wells
- ~1,350 state smalls

Tribal water systems:

13 out of 128 federally regulated tribal water systems do not meet drinking water health standards.



Drinking Water Challenges



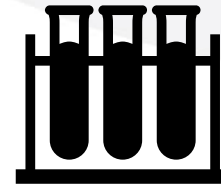
Managerial



Water supply



Technical capacity



Water quality



Financial



Governance

SAFER DRINKING WATER

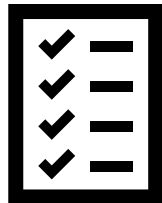
SAFE AND AFFORDABLE FUNDING FOR EQUITY AND RESILIENCE

SAFER Program Tools

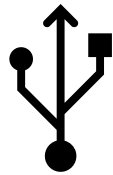
To support safe, affordable, and reliable drinking water, SAFER uses the following tools:



Comprehensive water system support



Regulatory authorities



Technical assistance



Funding sources



Annual drinking water needs assessment

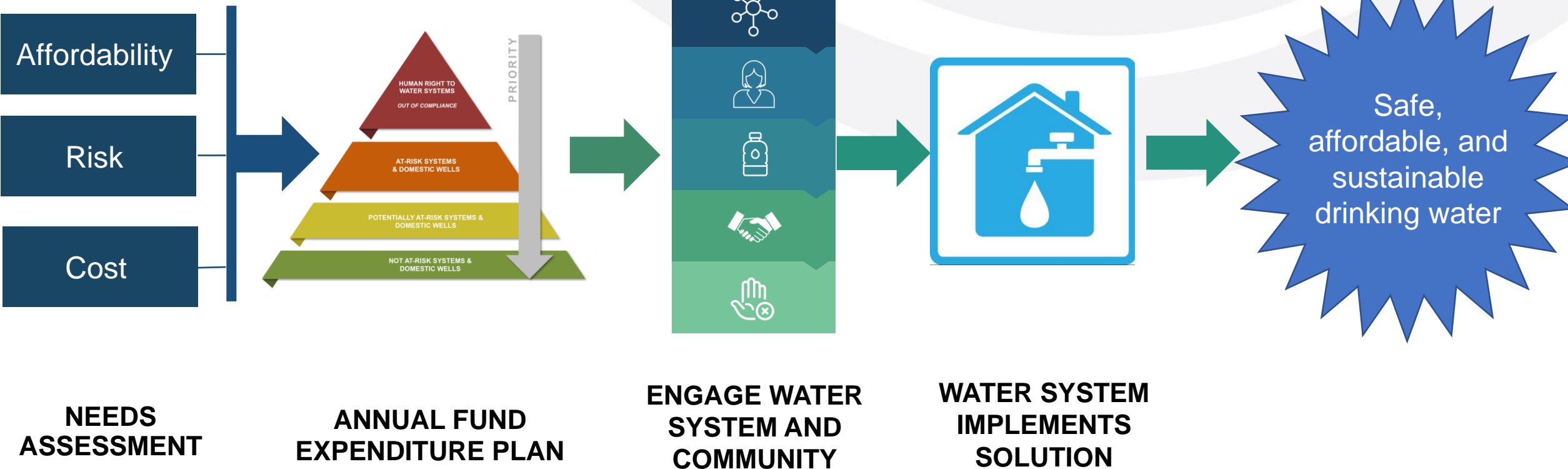


Community outreach and engagement



SAFER Advisory Group

Process for Achieving Safe Drinking Water



What can SAFER fund?

- **Emergency Drinking Water**
 - Temporarily connecting to safe water sources
 - Point-of-use or point-of-entry treatment systems
 - Bottled water or hauled water
- **Technical Assistance**
 - Preparing grant funding requests
 - Planning and budgets
 - Reviewing project alternatives
 - Compliance audits
 - Addressing permit violations or operations
- **Operations and Maintenance**
- **Community Outreach and Education**
- **Training for Technical and Managerial Staff**

Capital Infrastructure:

- Infrastructure improvements and upgrades
- Drilling wells into uncontaminated aquifers
- Consolidation and regionalization (connecting domestic wells or smaller systems to larger systems)

Who Implements SAFER?

Community Groups

Department of Information Technology

Non-profits **Advisory Group** **Office of Public Affairs**

Division of Drinking Water **Funding Partners**

Technical Assistance providers **Water systems**

Department of Financial Assistance

Office of Legislative Affairs **Residents** **Elected Officials**


Legislature **Office of Public Participation** **California tribes**

Office of Communications **Indian Health Services**

Office of Chief Counsel **Schools**

Domestic well residents

Accomplishments






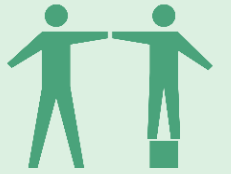


\$785M
Grants to small, disadvantaged communities



2M
People previously without access that now have safe drinking water

* As of January 2024

 <p>200 Failing systems that have returned to compliance</p>	 <p>4,600 Households assisted with interim solutions</p>	 <p>385 Solutions accelerated via technical assistance</p>
 <p>90 Drought resiliency projects funded</p>	 <p>150 Schools received assistance</p>	 <p>65% Of committed funding to failing systems benefitted Hispanic-dominant communities*</p>

* Funding approved or committed as of the end of FY 2022-23



SAFER DRINKING WATER

SAFE AND AFFORDABLE FUNDING FOR EQUITY AND RESILIENCE

Contact Us

waterboards.ca.gov/safer

safer@waterboards.ca.gov

(916) 445-5615

SAFER Drinking Water Program



Identifying Water Systems in Need, Implementing Sustainable Solutions, and Comprehensive Water System Support

Chad Fischer
Division of Drinking Water

Division of Financial Assistance: Role within the SAFER Program

Identify Systems in Need

- Collect and assess water system data.
- Perform Annual Needs Assessment.
- Provide continuous water system monitoring.

Regulatory Authority

- Address consistently out of compliance systems.
- Appoint system Administrators to manage failing systems.
- Mandate consolidations between failing systems.

Comprehensive Water System Support

- Expedite long-term solution planning.
- Provide interim solutions and emergency drinking water.
- Accelerate voluntary consolidations and regional solutions.

Division of Drinking Water – SAFER Units

- Needs Analysis
 - Annual Needs Assessment
 - Determination of Failing and At-Risk water systems
 - Affordability metrics
 - Cost Model
- Engagement Units
 - Drinking water solutions for Failing & At-Risk systems
 - Consolidation and Administrators
 - Solutions for isolated rural systems
 - Engagement with counties



Division of Drinking Water – Additional Work

- Visualizations and Engagement Tools
 - SAFER Dashboard
 - Water system partnership tool
 - Water system status tool
- Data Management and Gathering
 - SAFER Clearinghouse
- Point-of-Use/Point-of-Entry Report and Pilot Program
- Coordination with Division of Drinking Water Districts and Local Public Agency Programs
- Drought and Domestic Well Efforts



Division of Drinking Water – Goals



- Increase managerial Consolidations
- Prioritized engagement based on time out of compliance
- Regional engagement and solutions
- Increase efforts related to Technical Managerial and Financial issues

Inform, Educate, and Engage the Public

Rachel Wittenberg
Office of Public Participation



Inform, educate, and engage the public

Build overall awareness of SAFER program.

Engage interested parties and public in SAFER activities.

Provide opportunities for equitable participation in SAFER.

Identify and address areas of SAFER requiring outreach.

Inform and involve interested parties in local decision-making processes.

Collect input from SAFER Advisory Group.

Outreach & Engagement

Goal: Advance drinking water solutions informed by meaningful public participation.

Community Needs

- Adapt to community needs for equitable engagement.
- Provide written translation and oral interpretation services.

Community Outreach

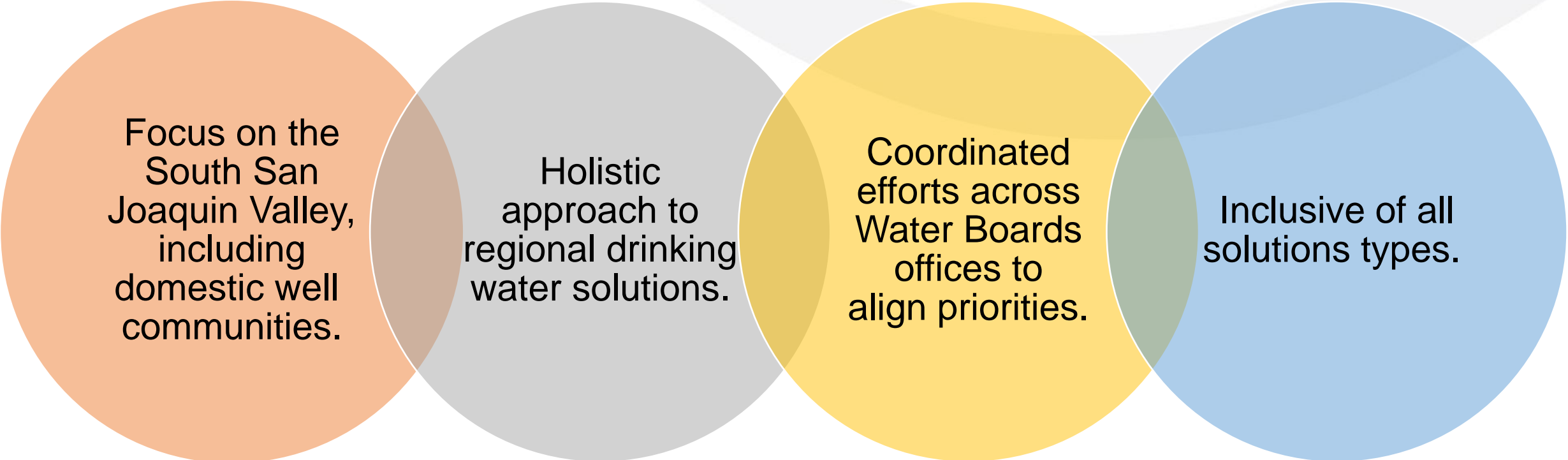
- Implement tailored community outreach approaches.
- Collaborate with community coalitions to maintain dialogue.
- Develop new funding mechanisms to support local engagement.

Strategic Communications

- Implement effective communication strategies.
- Use bilingual social media, radio outreach, and emails.

Regional Solutions

Goal: Support drinking water solutions addressing multi-community needs rather than one community at a time.



Focus on the South San Joaquin Valley, including domestic well communities.

Holistic approach to regional drinking water solutions.

Coordinated efforts across Water Boards offices to align priorities.

Inclusive of all solutions types.

Tribal Drinking Water Solutions

Goal: Collaborate with California Native American Tribes, and state and federal partners to advance safe drinking water for tribal communities.

Proactive Outreach

- Present on SAFER and funding opportunities at tribal-specific events
- Engage with tribes who have drinking water needs

Coordination & Collaboration

- Coordinate tribal drinking water solutions internally
- Coordinate with state and federal partners to responding to funding gaps for tribal projects

Advisory Group Meetings



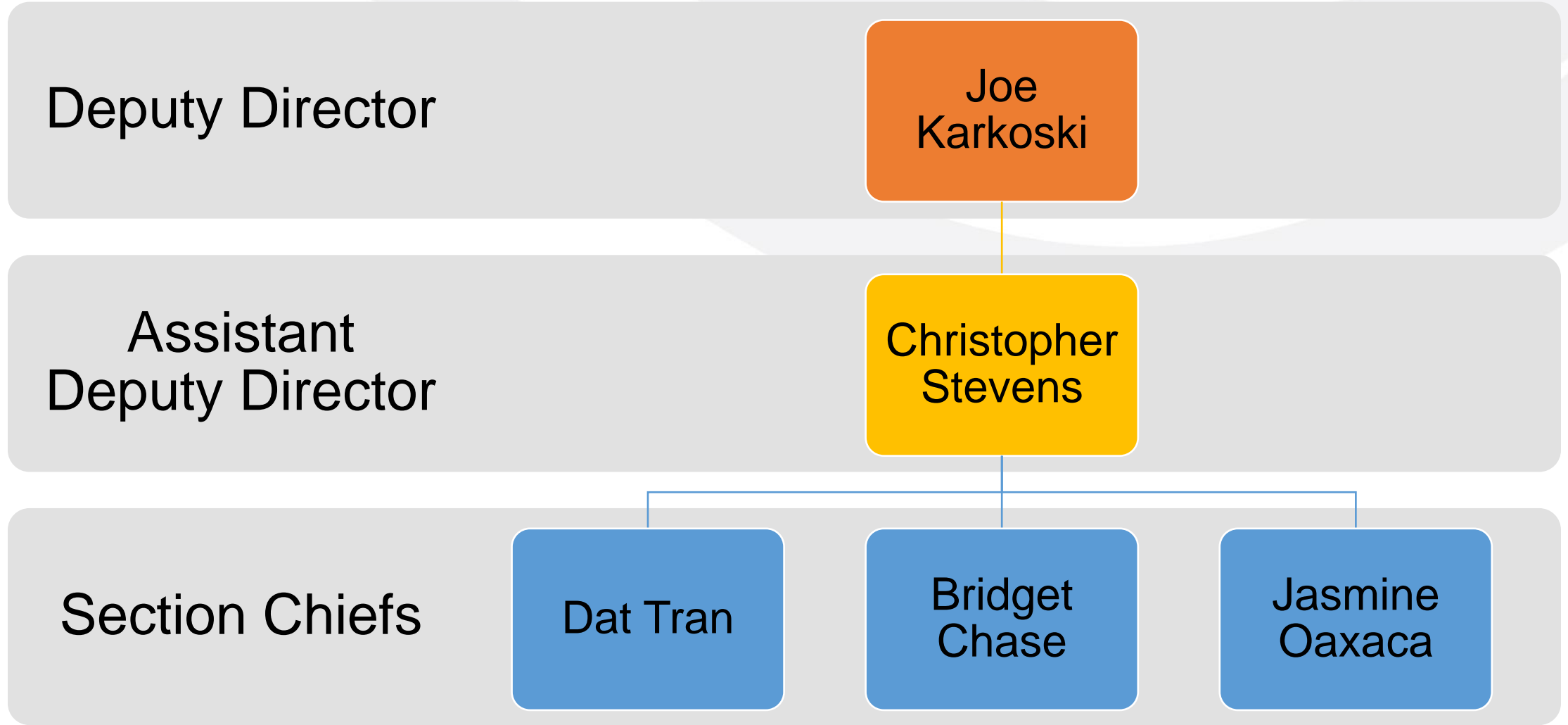
Providing Technical Assistance & Funding

Jeff Wetzel

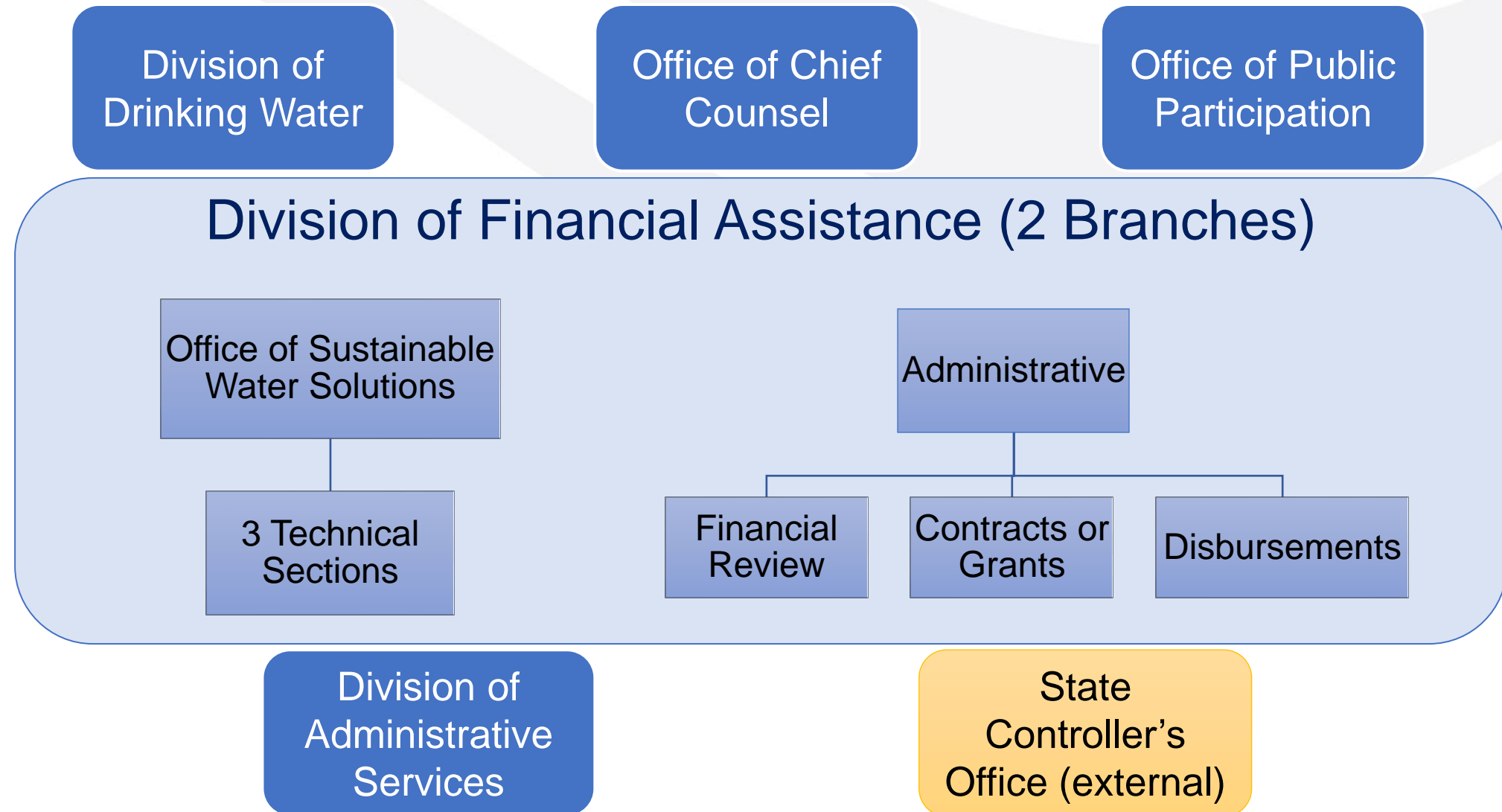
Division of Financial Assistance



Division of Financial Assistance – SAFER Contacts



Funding Across the Water Boards (and other State Agencies)



Division of Financial Assistance: Role within the SAFER Program

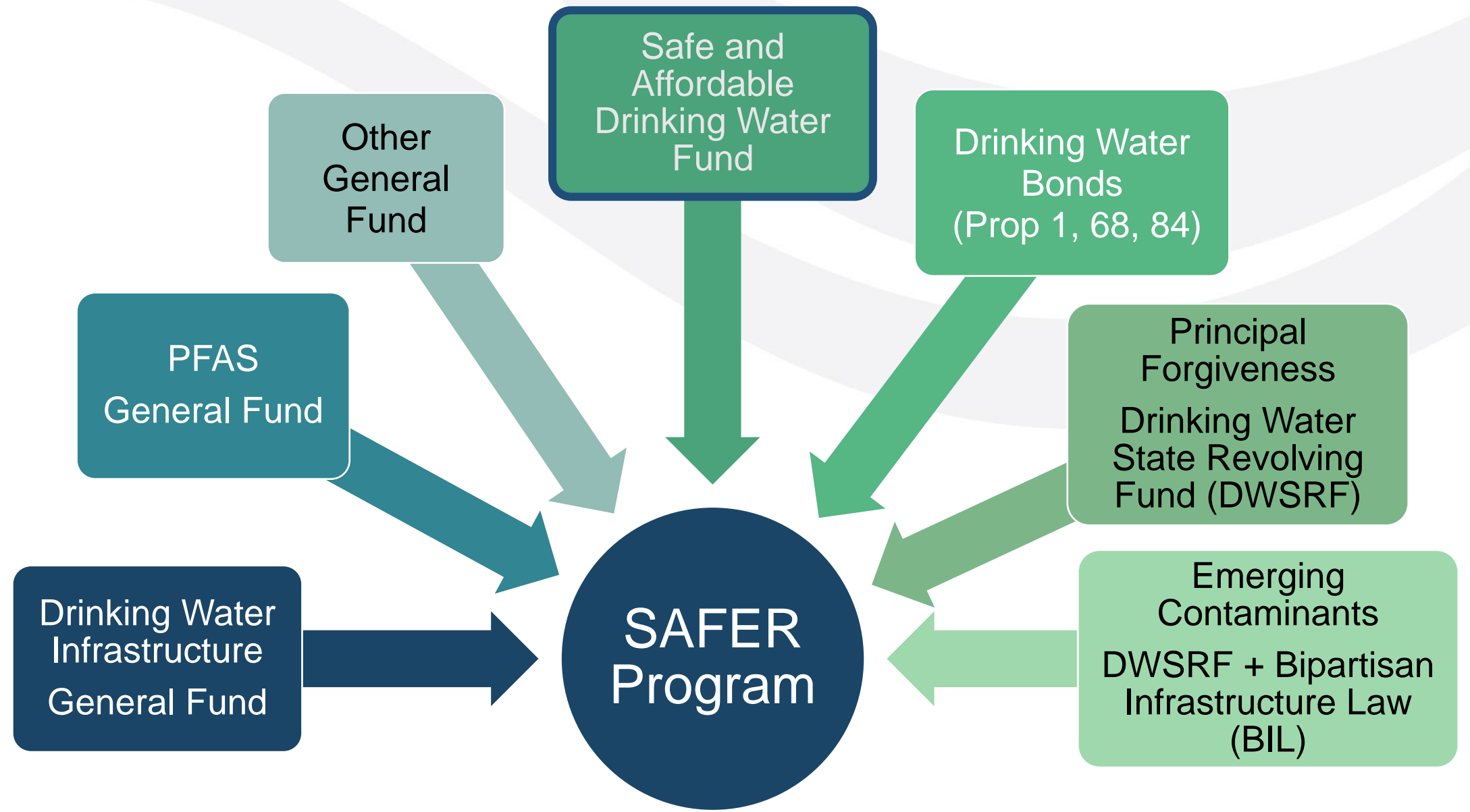
Provide Technical Assistance

- Provide training for technical or managerial staff
- Provide direct operation and maintenance support
- Assist with outreach and engagement at local levels.

Provide Funding through Multiple Sources

- Develop annual Fund Expenditure Plan
- Expeditiously fund emergency or urgent needs
- Focus on small, disadvantaged communities (DACs)
- Distribute funds consistent with Board priorities

SAFER Program Funding Sources



Advisory Group Engagement - 2024

Fund Expenditure Plan

Evaluating process improvements at all stages of a project

Performance Metrics and Goal Setting

Evaluating Success of the Technical Assistance Program

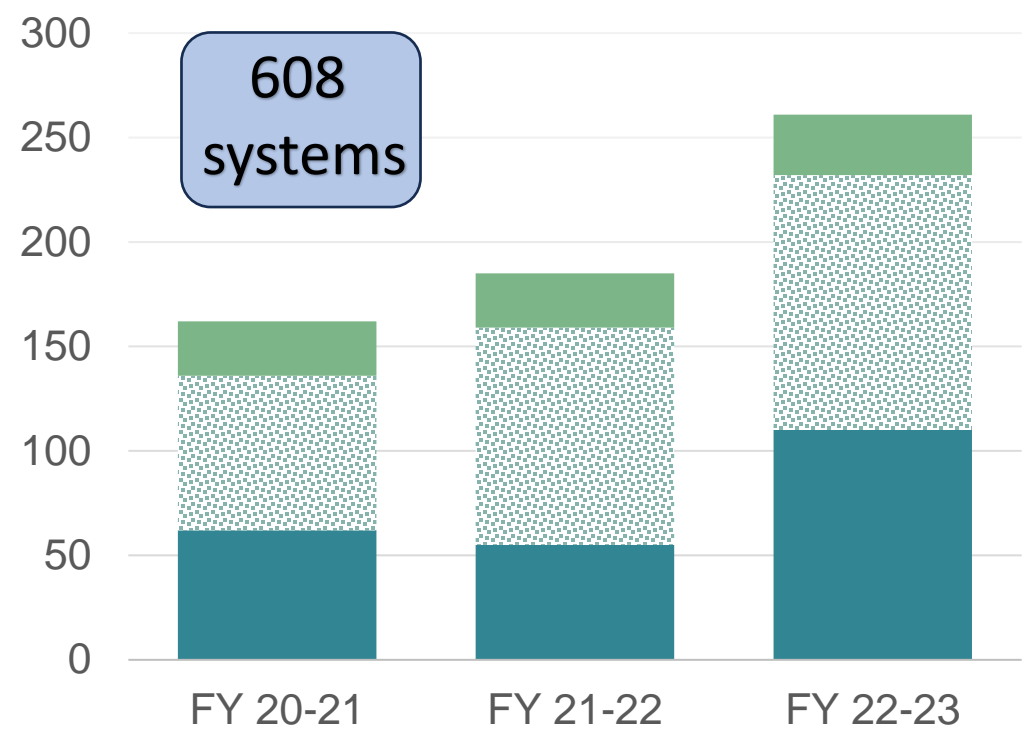
SAFER Accomplishments and Funding Overview

Division of Financial Assistance

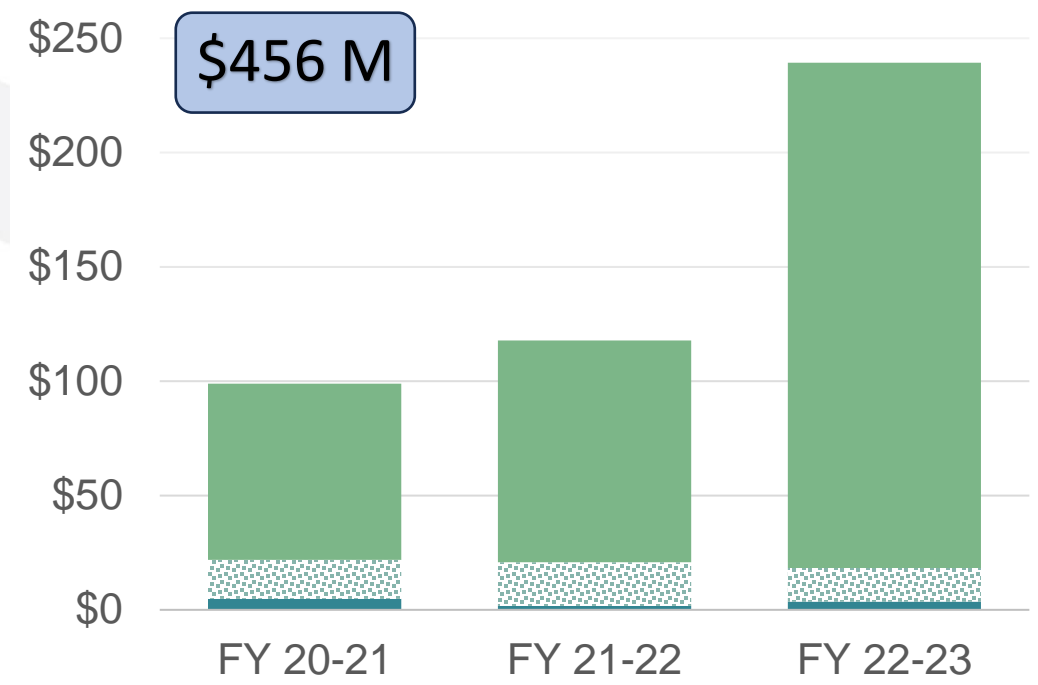


SAFER Program Funding by Solution Type

Number of Systems Funded



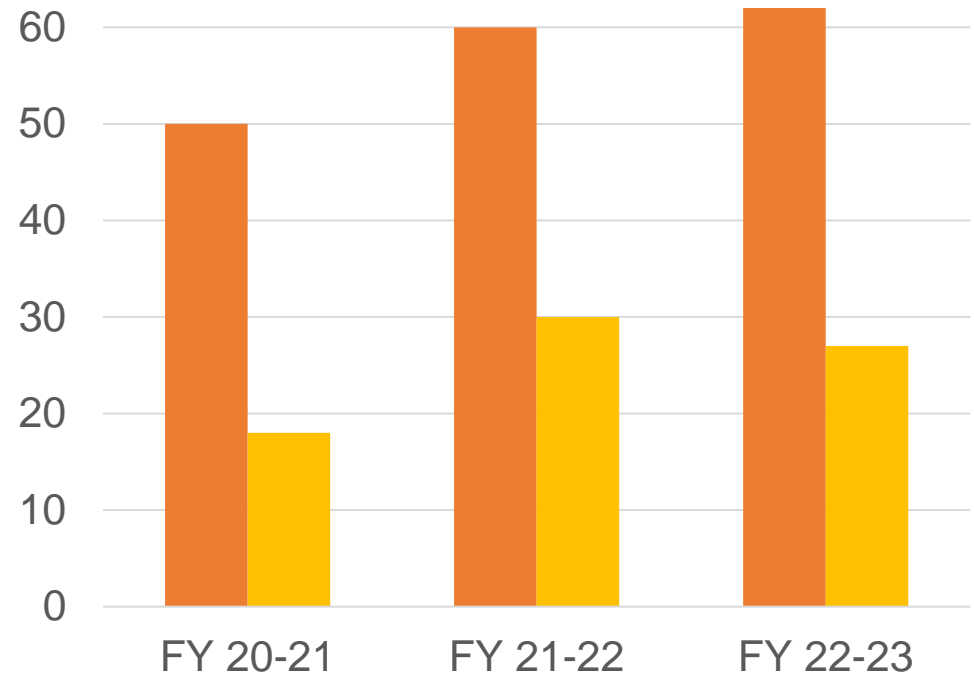
Total Funding Provided (in Millions)



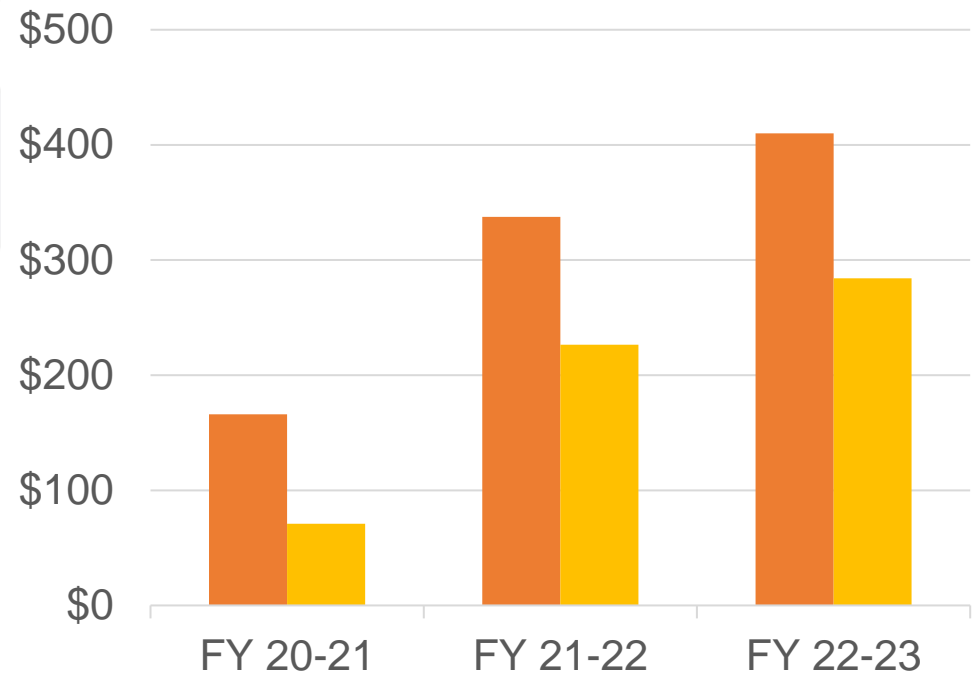
Construction Planning/Technical Assistance Interim

SAFER Program Funding by System Status

% of Systems Receiving Assistance

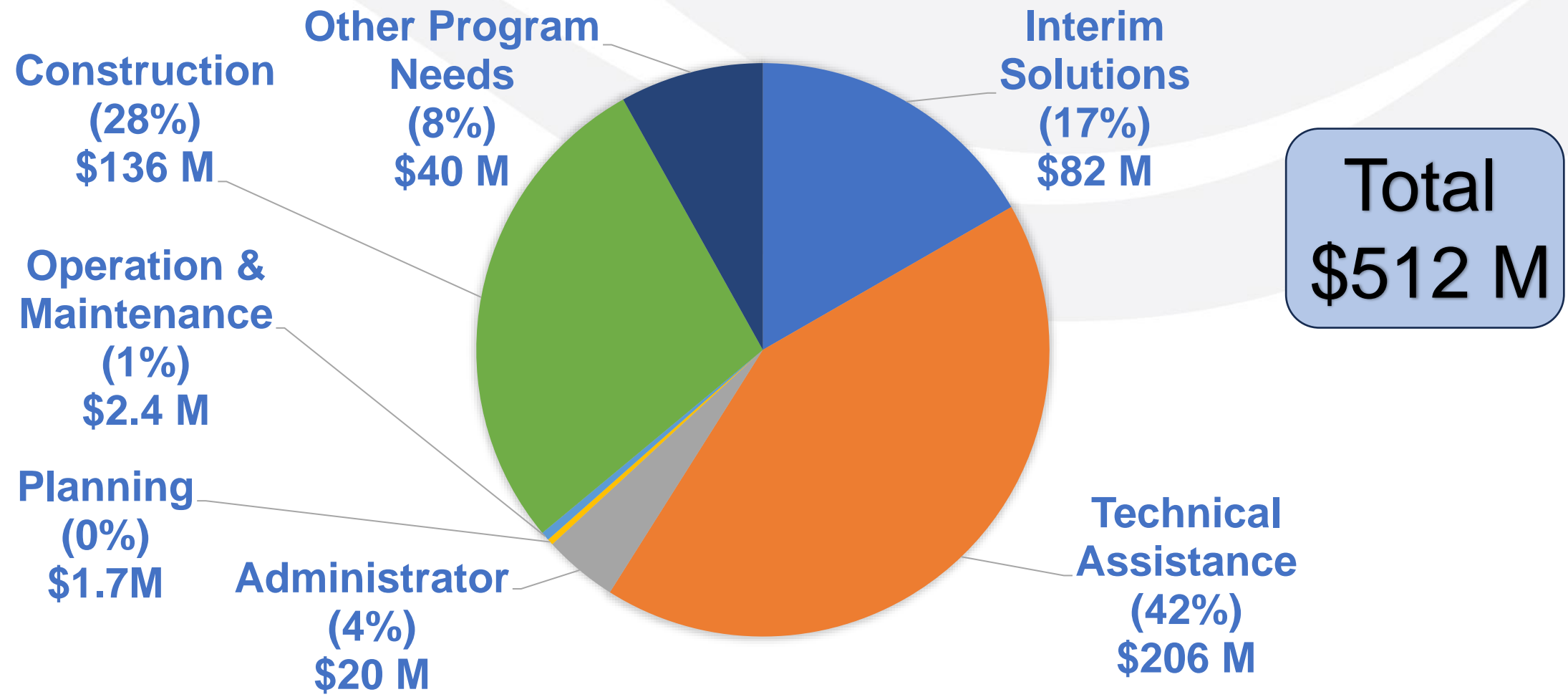


Total Funding Provided (in millions)

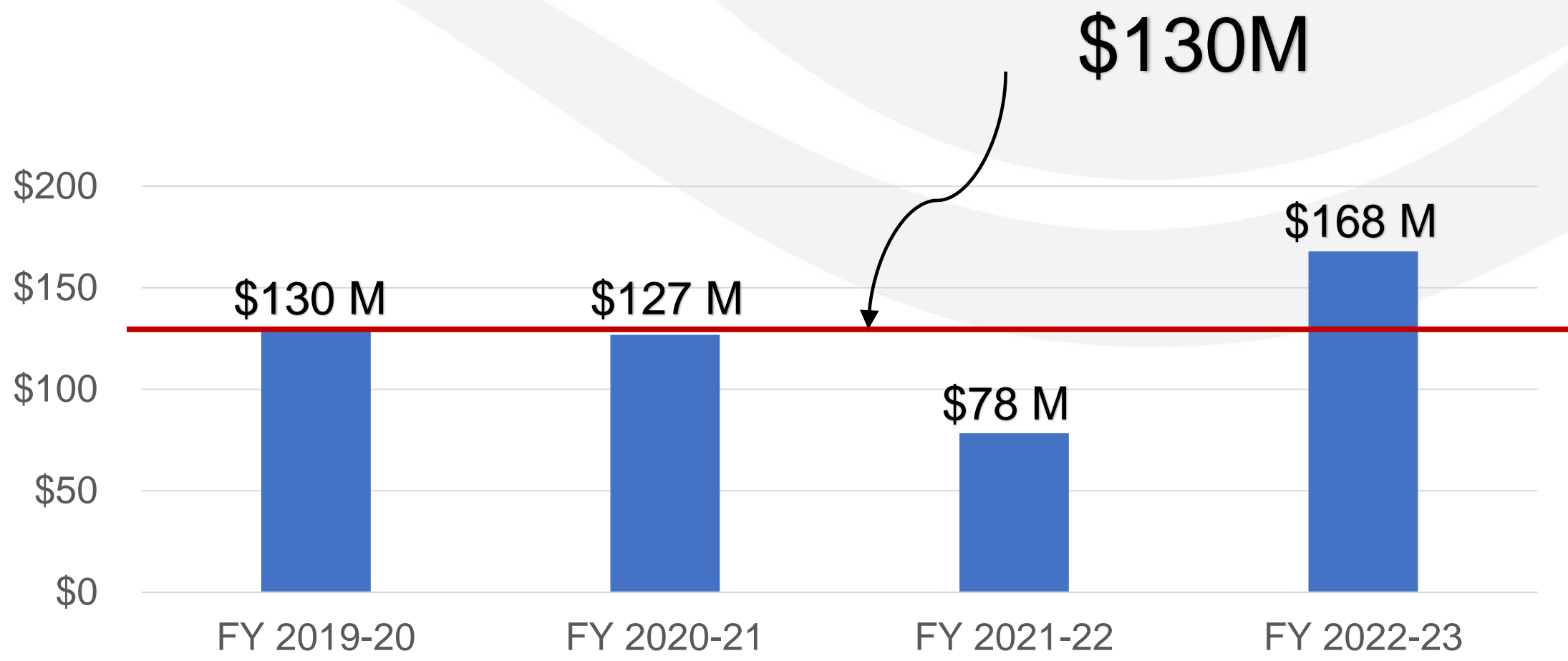


■ Failing ■ At-Risk

Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Funding by Project Type (Fiscal Year 2019-20 – Fiscal Year 2022-23)



Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Funds Committed by Fiscal Year (FY)



Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund Priorities (focus on small DACs and low-income households)



Emergency or urgent funding needs (only where other funds are not available).



Water systems out of compliance with primary drinking water standards or at-risk of failing, including those relying on bottled or hauled water in the past three years.



Accelerate consolidations and promote regional-scale consolidations, including state smalls and domestic wells near water system boundaries.



Expedite planning with technical assistance.



Provide interim and long-term solutions for state smalls and domestic wells through planning efforts.



Offer direct support for operations and maintenance to assist water systems with the most significant affordability burdens.



Ensure equitable distribution of assistance in accordance with the State Water Board's Racial Equity Resolution and Racial Equity Action Plan.

SAFER Accomplishment

Marina Pérez
Office of Public Participation

SAFER Accomplishments

- Over 200 systems returned to **compliance**.
- 7 systems with appointed **Administrators**, 11 more in process.
- **Tracking system** for all failing systems.
- **Point-of-Use/ Point-of-Entry** Report
- **Needs Assessment** reports and visualizations.
- **83+ public meetings** to involve community in drinking water solutions.
- **26 regional partnership meetings**; 4,000 **outreach letters** sent.
- **2,100+ people reached** via public meetings and workshops, public announcements, social media, Gov delivery email lists.
- **400+ documents translated** into Spanish.
- **50+ interpretation** encounters.

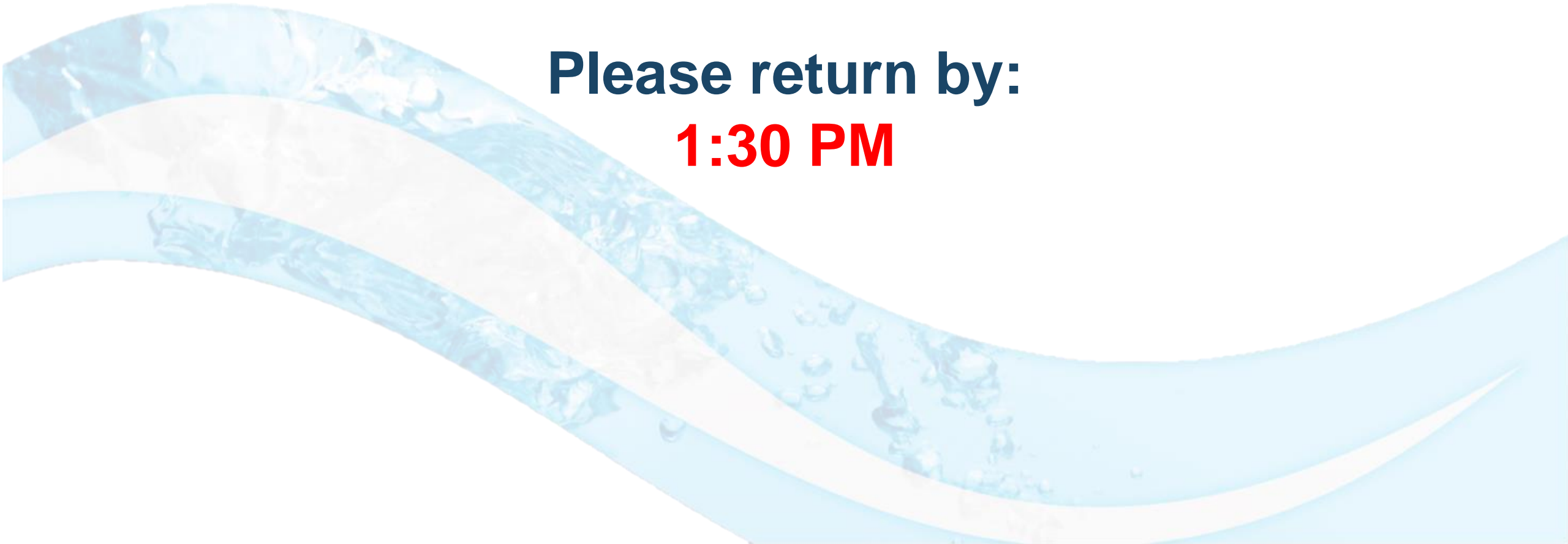


100+ Completed Consolidations Celebration

- 100+ consolidations have given 90,000 Californians reliable access to safe drinking water
- SAFER Program focuses on consolidations of at-risk or failing water systems.

LUNCH

Please return by:
1:30 PM



Collaboration Session

Vanessa Soto
Office of Public Participation

Collaboration Session - Questions

Discussion

- What is your "WHY?"
- Tell us about the community you come from and challenges that exist.
- What strengths are you bringing to the SAFER Advisory Group?



Legal Obligations

Anthony Austin
Office of Chief Counsel

Legal considerations overview

The Advisory Group is subject to:

- Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act
- Must Comply with AB1013
- Comply with applicable ethics and conflicts of interest laws
- Conflict of Interest includes:
 - Political Reform Act
 - State Water Board contracts
 - Incompatible activities



Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act

- **All meetings subject to Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act:**
 - **Publicly notice meetings.**
 - **A quorum of the Advisory Group is 10 members:**
 - If there are not 10 or more Advisory Group members present (quorum), we cannot hold the meeting that was noticed.
 - 10 or more Advisory Group members cannot communicate outside publicly noticed meetings to discuss Advisory Group business, this includes email and phone calls.
 - **Meetings must be open to the public.**
 - Meetings can include a series of phone calls, emails or social media posts between a quorum of the members.

AB 1013

AB 1013 prohibits evaluation of an application by an evaluator that was a representative, voting member, or staff member of the applicant within the 2-year period preceding receipt of the application.

Ethics & Conflict of Interest

Advisory Group must comply with ethics and conflict of interest laws, including:

- Political Reform Act
- State Water Board contracts
- Incompatible activities

Concerned about a potential conflict?

State Water Board Contracts (Gov. Code section 1090)

- Cannot “participate” in making a government contract if you have a financial interest
- Includes discussions or planning for a contract
- Example: Do not advocate for SAFER funding going toward your employer or an investment which you own

Political Reform Act

- Financial Conflicts of Interest: Material and Foreseeable?
- Five Types of Financial Interests:



Incompatible Activities (Gov. Code section 19990)

- Acts as a general restriction on activities that are not compatible with your membership on the SAFER Advisory Group
- General ethical restriction on using your position for personal gain or advantage
- Example: Do not use your affiliation with the Advisory Group to try to get discounts or perks from a water system

Are you concerned about a potential conflict?

Each SAFER Advisory Group member has an individual obligation to avoid conflicts.

Contact the State Water Board's Office of Public Participation

- Email: SAFER@waterboards.ca.gov
- Phone: (916) 445-5615

The Office of Chief Counsel can also assist SAFER Advisory Group members in complying with the law.

Break

Please return by: **3:35 PM**

SAFER Advisory Group Charter, Role, and Expectations

**Marina Pérez
Office of Public Participation**



Who is the SAFER Advisory Group?

Advisory Group Members
2022-2023

SAFER Advisory Group



Established by
Board Resolution
No. 2019-0060



Composed of 20
representatives from
7 categories



Advisory Group
Members serve 2-
year terms



Governed by
a charter

SAFER Advisory Group Role

The Advisory Group **advises the Board on:**



Priorities of the Fund Expenditure Plan.



Other key SAFER components like the Needs Assessment.

The Advisory Group **does not:**



Approve plans, documents or make policy decisions.



Evaluate individual applications for funding.



Develop consensus recommendations or majority opinions.

How are SAFER Advisory Group recommendations shared with the State Water Board?

State Water Board staff keep Advisory Group meeting notes.

Advisory Group recommendations are discussed at SAFER executive meeting.

Advisory Group comments are included in SAFER program presentations to the State Water Board.

The SAFER executive leadership decides whether Advisory Group recommendations at staff level can be accepted/implemented.

Advisory Group recommendations at policy level are presented to the State Water Board to determine next steps.

Expectations & Responsibilities



SAFER Advisory Group Charter

Guidelines for the Advisory Group.

- Purpose and background of the group
- Advisory Group member responsibilities, terms, compensation and reimbursement
- Meeting procedures and protocol



What are Advisory Group member responsibilities?

1. Attend all meetings
2. Prepare for each meeting
3. Commit to be fully present for the entire duration of the meeting
4. Notify Board staff if you will be absent (no alternates)
5. Ask questions
6. Share your advice
7. Respond to emails/calls from Board staff
8. Resign if unable to actively participate in the group



Expectations Document



Advisory Group Meeting Format & Best Practices



Virtual meetings. How do they work?



Support System



How we communicate

- Email: Water Boards staff and SAFER email Safer@waterboards.ca.gov
- Calls: Check-in and follow-up



Coordination

- Calendar invitations
- Meeting materials
- Tech check calls



Add our phone number and email address to your contact list!

Resources



Let us Know Your Language Needs

- ✓ Indicate your preferred language in advance for:
 - Phone calls
 - Materials
 - Emails
- ✓ Let us know when you are not able to hear the interpreter.
- ✓ Provide feedback on the interpretation service.



Language Access Services

The SAFER Drinking Water Program commits to providing English and Spanish language services for Advisory Group meetings:

- Translation of written documents
 - Communications
 - Materials packet
- Interpretation services
 - In-person
 - Via Zoom
- Bilingual staff assistance



Best Practices: Language Access

- Speak clearly and be concise to ensure accurate interpretation.
- Pause between sentences and slow down when asked.
- Inform us if your headset is not working or have technical issues.



- **When joining by Zoom:**
 - Select either English or Spanish under the interpretation feature
 - Select the presentation you want to display under the “View Options” feature
- **When in-person:**
 - Pick up and test a headset before the meeting
 - Return the headset after the meeting

Resources Binder

Questions?

SAFER Updates and Next Steps

Next steps for the SAFER Team

- ✓ Engage with Technical Assistance Providers to discuss:
 - Range of activities
 - Ensure milestone consistency
 - Strategize effective communication.
- ✓ Continue to prioritize consolidation as the long-term sustainable drinking water solution. Explore alternative solutions where consolidation is not feasible.
- ✓ Conduct targeted discussions with SAFER Advisory Group members about:
 - Technical Assistance providers
 - Administrator program
 - Planning process

*2024 SAFER Timeline

- **February 13:** SAFER Advisory Group meeting #1 - Onboarding Session
- **Spring:** Release of the Needs Assessment
- **April (TBD):** Hexavalent Chromium Maximum Contaminant Level Adoption Board Hearing
- **May 2:** SAFER Advisory Group meeting #2
- **Summer:** Draft FY 2024-25 Fund Expenditure Plan release for public comment
- **Summer:** SAFER Advisory Group Application Process
- **August 8:** SAFER Advisory Group meeting #3
- **Fall:** Board considers adoption of FY 2024-25 Fund Expenditure Plan
- **December 5:** SAFER Advisory Group meeting #4

*Dates subject to change

Public Comments

Public Comments Submittal

1. Email Comment to safer@waterboards.ca.gov.
2. Follow instructions in the return email to join Zoom.
3. Wait to be called on. Speaking time is limited to 3 minutes
4. Technical or language assistance, email safer@waterboards.ca.gov.

Public Comments Guidelines



In-person

1. Raise your hand
2. Wait to be called on
3. Speak slowly
4. Limit comments to 3 minutes



Remote

1. Email comment to: safer@waterboards.ca.gov.
2. Wait to be called on. Speaking time is limited to 3 minutes
3. For technical or language assistance, email: safer@waterboards.ca.gov.

Adjourn

Thank you!

safer@waterboards.ca.gov

916-445-5615