



2020 Strategic Work Plan

State Water Resources
Control Board

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 policy and regulations for the protection of 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, drinking water supplies, and that otherwise protect water resources.

The State Water Board's responsibilities are numerous and diverse. This 2020 strategic work plan highlights actions planned to further current priorities and goals.

This document is organized by thematic priorities, goals, and actions (numbered, for example, as "1.," "1.1.," and "1.1.1. "). An asterisk (*) indicates top priorities to work on or complete in 2020.

Organization names in brackets "[]" indicate the main responsible State Water Board organization. Acronyms for these organizations are defined at the end of the document. The State Water Board's core workload and Regional Water Board actions are not listed here.

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

1.1. Regulated water systems meet drinking water standards and Californians reliant on unregulated water systems ("state smalls" and private wells) know the quality of their water.

- 1.1.1. * Develop and implement the Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) Drinking Water Program Plan, including efforts, such as consolidations, to ensure systems have the needed technical, managerial, and financial capacity. Develop a public engagement plan regarding safe and affordable drinking water. Develop the Needs Analysis on the state of drinking water in California. Develop drinking water performance measures, including a suite of new measures for Human Right to Water and Safe and Affordable Drinking Water initiatives. [DDW, DFA, OPP]
- 1.1.2. Determine extent of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contaminants in public drinking water systems, including through issuance of Investigatory Orders. [DDW, DWQ]
- 1.1.3. * Award Prop 68 Groundwater Treatment and Remediation funds. [DFA]
- 1.1.4. * Prioritize for enforcement water quality violations that impact or threaten drinking water sources, with the highest priority for enforcement and compliance assistance being given to disadvantaged communities or communities with financial hardship. [OE]

1.2. Standards exist for contaminants that threaten human health.

- 1.2.1. * Begin adoption of a Maximum Contaminant Level for hexavalent chromium. [DDW]
- 1.2.2. * Adopt the Revised Total Coliform Rule. [DDW]
- 1.2.3. Develop an economic feasibility approach for future Maximum Contaminant Level regulations. [DDW, ORPP]
- 1.2.4. Develop Lead and Copper Rule conforming revisions. [DDW]
- 1.2.5. Develop Public Health Goal and Maximum Contaminant Level for perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and develop strategy for regulating additional per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) chemicals. [DDW]
- 1.2.6. Initiate development of a strategy for identifying constituents of emerging concern affecting drinking water, developing and revising standards, and the regulatory prioritization process. [DDW]

1.3. Groundwater quality meets or exceeds objectives.

- 1.3.1. * Adopt Statewide General Requirements for Wineries (Winery Order). [DWQ]
- 1.3.2. Adopt amended Compost Order to increase the percent of manure allowed in feed stock. [DWQ]
- 1.3.3. Develop recommendations for the siting, design, and monitoring criteria for stormwater capture and drywell infiltration systems. [DWQ]

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

2.1. River and stream flows support recreation, fish, and wildlife and other beneficial uses.

- 2.1.1. * Eliminate the backlog of priority hydropower projects awaiting Clean Water Act section 401 water quality certifications, including completing the certification for the Lower Klamath Project. [DWR]
- 2.1.2. Establish instream flows for priority watersheds and establish opportunities to implement instream flows through voluntary agreements as an alternative to regulatory requirements. [DWR]

2.2. High quality surface water protects recreation, fish, and wildlife, and other beneficial uses.

- 2.2.1. * Adopt Toxicity Water Quality Objectives. [DWQ]
- 2.2.2. Adopt the Integrated Report timely (every 2 years). [DWQ]
- 2.2.3. Participate in ongoing research on ocean acidification and hypoxia and initiate development of water quality objectives, or some other appropriate regulatory action, and a program of implementation once sufficient scientific information is available. [DWQ]
- 2.2.4. Adopt revised statewide construction storm water general permit. [DWQ]
- 2.2.5. Develop a regulatory approach to implement trash control strategies (including storm water strategies) to address “hot spots” for State Water Board consideration. [DWQ]
- 2.2.6. Adopt guidance for developing site-specific water quality objectives for metals (water effects ratios or modeling). [DWQ]
- 2.2.7. Establish a statewide urban pesticides source control program through coordinated water quality monitoring and collaboration with the Department of Pesticide Regulation. [DWQ]
- 2.2.8. Enforce storm water discharge violations with the highest adverse water quality impacts, followed by violations that threaten the integrity of the regulatory program. [OE]
- 2.2.9. Reduce facilities in significant noncompliance and identify and elevate the enforcement priority of facilities with reoccurring mandatory minimum penalty violations when appropriate. [OE]

- 2.2.10. Maximize enforcement process efficiencies to address any mandatory minimum penalty backlogs. [OE]
- 2.2.11. Manage the statewide harmful algal bloom reporting system and coordinate event response. [OIMA]

2.3. Cannabis cultivation is protective of ecosystems and is regulated safely and effectively.

- 2.3.1. Implement the Cannabis Policy (water quality portions), including outreach to increase program enrollment, issuance of permits through the portal, inspections, and enforcement as necessary. [DWQ]
- 2.3.2. Conduct cannabis small irrigation use registration enrollment enforcement (in coordination with other state and local public agencies) in priority watersheds. [DWR, OE]
- 2.3.3. Implement the Cannabis Policy (water rights portions), including development of in-stream flow data and metrics, to be revisited in the 2020s. [DWR]
- 2.3.4. Enforce water quality violations associated with illegal cannabis cultivation sites in priority watersheds. [OE]

2.4. Aquatic and marine habitats are protected, and where feasible, restored.

- 2.4.1. Adopt a general permit for large habitat restoration projects. [DWQ]
- 2.4.2. Develop implementation guidance for wetland definition and procedures for discharges of dredged or fill material. Develop climate change adaptation and mitigation guidance for these types of projects. [DWQ]
- 2.4.3. Incentivize the use of natural infrastructure, such as wetlands and horizontal levees for shoreline protection. Consistent with the state's coastal resilience principles, develop guidance and permit language for these types of projects. [DWQ]
- 2.4.4. Enhance low impact development requirements through municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permits. [DWQ]
- 2.4.5. Adopt general National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for suction dredge mining. [DWQ]
- 2.4.6. Compel, monitor, and assess progress on the implementation of the Salton Sea Management Program. [DWR]

3. Increase statewide water resiliency by expanding and integrating California's water supply portfolio.

3.1. California's water system functions well in light of climate change.

- 3.1.1. * Identify lessons learned and undertake legal, administrative, and technical improvements needed to administer the water rights system in periods of shortage. Establish a water availability and curtailment method for droughts [DWR, ORPP]
- 3.1.2. Develop approach for managing instream flows in priority drought-vulnerable watersheds in advance of the next drought and consider voluntary agreements. [DWR]

3.2. Local and regional supplies are sustainable.

- 3.2.1. Develop Direct Potable Reuse Regulations by the December 2023 statutory deadline. Research issues related to the protection of public health and direct potable reuse of recycled water and have an outside expert panel review that research and make recommendations for the direct potable reuse regulation. [DDW, DWQ]
- 3.2.2. Implement the Recycled Water Policy. This includes action to require annual reporting of wastewater and recycled water volume; to coordinate with the Biolanalytical Implementation Advisory Group to develop standard operating procedures for bioanalytical screening tools; to coordinate with Water Rights, WaterReuse California and the California Association of Sanitation Agencies to develop wastewater change petition checklist; and to work with Regional Boards to update recycled water permits and enroll permittees into the statewide Water Recycling Requirements as appropriate. [DWQ]
- 3.2.3. Create new urban efficiency and water loss standards for retail water suppliers. These efforts implement the “Make Conservation a Way of Life” laws (Senate Bill 606 and Assembly Bill 1668, 2018) and Senate Bill 555 (2015), and involve adopting monthly urban water use reporting regulations. [ORPP]
- 3.2.4. Implement the Proposition 1 (2014) Water Storage Investment Program. Over the next ten years, Board staff have roles in permitting, petitions, hearings, and water right orders, as well as in developing and enforcing agreements to ensure water quality benefits from certain projects occur. [ORPP, DWR]

3.3. Groundwater resources are integrated into overall California water system management.

- 3.3.1. * Implement SGMA, including reviewing groundwater sustainability plans and assuring basin-wide alignment across the state’s 260 new groundwater sustainability agencies. Support local implementation and, where basin managers are unable or unwilling to implement the law, exercise appropriate enforcement. Coordinate with activities under the Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) Drinking Water Program and CV-SALTS. [ORPP]
- 3.3.2. Provide tools and resources to groundwater sustainability agencies to encourage long-term drinking water and water quality planning (i.e., salt and nutrient management planning) when developing and refining Groundwater Sustainability Plans. [DWQ, DDW, ORPP]

3.4. Natural and working lands and soils are managed well and provide water-related benefits.

- 3.4.1. Promote sustainable forest health conditions that protect water quality and aquatic habitat, reduce fire risk, and increase water yields through coordinate forestry planning activities and the development of waste discharge requirements or waivers for private and federal lands forest management activities. [DWQ]
- 3.4.2. Assist Regional Boards as they Implement the Irrigated Lands Program, including the East San Joaquin Precedential Water Quality order. [DWQ]

- 3.4.3. Support newly emerging irrigated lands regulatory programs with enrollment enforcement resources to ensure substantial enrollment in those programs. In Regions with more established irrigated lands regulatory programs, shift irrigated lands enforcement focus from enrollment to substantial compliance with current regulatory requirements. [DWQ, OE]
- 3.4.4. Support the California Department of Food and Agriculture Healthy Soils Initiative to build and enhance healthy soils. The healthy soils initiative includes permit streamlining including compost and irrigated lands as well as biosolids issues. [DWQ]

3.5. Storm water is more fully and effectively used as a resource to provide multiple benefits.

- 3.5.1. Evaluate outcomes from Storm Water Strategy Phase I. Evaluate original and identify new projects for Phase II. Establish Phase II priorities working with the Board and stakeholders and begin implementing Phase II of the Storm Water Strategy. [DWQ]
- 3.5.2. Update the Phase II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit. [DWQ]
- 3.5.3. Refine statewide modeling and tools to quantify storm water capture and infiltration to inform storm water resource plans including size and type of best management practices, asset management and water supply management decisions. [DWQ, DWR]
- 3.5.4. * Solicit and award Proposition 1 (2014) Round 2 Storm Water Grant Program projects. [DFA]

3.6. Management of the Bay-Delta properly balances water supply reliability and a healthy ecosystem.

- 3.6.1. * Implement the San Joaquin/Southern Delta Bay-Delta Plan, including consideration of biological goals and voluntary agreements. [DWR]
- 3.6.2. * Complete the Sacramento/Delta update to the Bay-Delta Plan, including consideration of voluntary agreements. [DWR]
- 3.6.3. Integrate in-Delta hydrodynamic and water quality models (SacWAM, CalSIM3, FlowWest, etc.) to inform Delta management decisions. [DWR]
- 3.6.4. Maintain regulatory compliance with measurement and reporting regulations in the Delta and statewide. [ODW, DWR, OE]
- 3.6.5. Evaluate Open ET as the standard for determining crop evapotranspiration and consumptive water use in the Delta. [ODW]
- 3.6.6. * Clarify, organize and vet Delta water right claims using stakeholder-driven “crowd correction.” [ODW]

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

4.1. Water Board decisions incorporate effective public participation and the Board has effective partnerships.

- 4.1.1. Hire, onboard, train, and deploy public engagement staff to advance the Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) Drinking Water Program goals through diverse, easy-to-understand, and culturally appropriate communication and engagement strategies. [OPP]
- 4.1.2. Enhance internal capacity to integrate public engagement skills, strategies, and expertise (including language access) into all Water Boards programs by expanding public participation training, resources, and tools for all staff. [OPP]
- 4.1.3. Identify internal and external options for developing and expanding the capacity of local community organizations to participate in the development of management zone implementation plans and related processes related to CV-SALTS. [OPP, DFA]

4.2. Water Board work is tracked and communicated.

- 4.2.1. Evaluate, upgrade and maintain the Water Boards' website and respective organization websites. [DIT]
- 4.2.2. 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. [OE]
- 4.2.3. Align Water Board databases and Regional Water Board enforcement efforts with of U.S. EPA's Integrated Compliance Information System National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (ICIS-NPDES) Data Quality Inventory for California by removing erroneous violations and looking for technological solutions to improve the automated transfer of data between state the and federal systems. [OE]
- 4.2.4. Complete the Water Boards' annual performance-based management report (the performance report), develop strategies for developing and updating metrics, and transition to an open data-driven report and a modern business intelligence interface. As needed, assess external context and impacts to complement our performance efforts. [OIMA, ORPP]

4.3. The Boards have the expertise, resources, and internal organization needed to accomplish their mission effectively and equitably.

- 4.3.1. Develop a modern water rights data management system. [DWR]
- 4.3.2. Develop and implement a water rights enforcement policy. [DWR, OE]
- 4.3.3. Develop the Cannabis Regulatory Tracking System. [DWR, DWQ]
- 4.3.4. * Implement California's new financial management system, Fi\$Cal. The Water Boards went live in Fi\$Cal in July 2018, after several years of planning, but the main conversion didn't begin until February 2019. The system will be considered fully

implemented when the Water Boards complete financial statements for fiscal year 2018-19. [DAS]

- 4.3.5. * Develop and implement a workforce vision and development strategy. This includes a workforce strategic plan (addressing staff recruitment, hiring, retention, program and cross-programmatic training, and leadership and management development), a succession plan, a recruitment office, internship program expansion (track fellows and where/how they are being used), and a strategy to achieve and cultivate a diverse and inclusive workforce and advance opportunities for all. [DAS, ORPP]
- 4.3.6. * Adopt revised and updated Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program regulations. [DDW]
- 4.3.7. Set up the Administrative Hearings Office and hire staff. Develop work plan and hearing procedures. Identify how the new Office can address the Board's core functions and Division of Water Rights and Office of Enforcement backlogs. [AHO]
- 4.3.8. Staff and launch the Emergency Management Program. [ORPP]
- 4.3.9. Develop and implement a Leadership Training Program for Water Boards employees. [ORPP]
- 4.3.10. Build up Board's capacity regarding economics and cost of compliance analysis. [ORPP]
- 4.3.11. Summarize Water Board's activities related to research. [ORPP]
- 4.3.12. Develop a generally applicable procedures manual for inspections. [OE]
- 4.3.13. * Develop and implement a data management strategic plan, per State Board Resolution 2018-0032, which will include elements of data literacy (training and education) and data management tools that help staff perform work and/or inform the public on key interests. [OIMA]
- 4.3.14. Reduce the number of contacts and improve business services and workflows by consolidating statewide contracts for analytical laboratory services and science consulting services. [OIMA]
- 4.3.15. Replace the California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN) and Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) legacy data management systems. [OIMA, DIT]

Acronyms indicating Water Board Divisions and Offices

AHO = Administrative Hearings Office

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

DWR = Division of Water Rights

ODW = Office of the Delta Watermaster

OE = Office of Enforcement

OIMA = Office of Information Management and Analysis

OPP = Office of Public Participation

ORPP = Office of Research, Planning, and Performance