



# Media Release

## **State Water Board releases draft report on expediting permitting for seawater desalination plants**

***Draft siting and streamlining criteria developed as part of state's multipronged Water Supply Strategy***

July 12, 2023

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**SACRAMENTO** – As part of California's all-of-the-above strategy to address an anticipated 10% reduction in its water supply by 2040 due to hotter and drier conditions, the State Water Resources Control Board, in coordination with multiple state agencies, has developed a [Draft Siting and Streamlining Report to Expedite Permitting Seawater Desalination Projects](#). The State Water Board is accepting public comments on the draft report until 12 p.m. on Friday, July 28, 2023.

In August 2022, Gov. Gavin Newsom's [Water Supply Strategy](#) directed agencies to take various actions to bolster the state's water resilience amid intensifying climate impacts, including advancing desalination among other key tools to develop new water supplies, expand storage, promote conservation and more. This draft report identifies siting criteria to help guide the location of future desalination projects where they are cost effective and environmentally appropriate, and it proposes ways to streamline permitting.

"Given the increasing threats to our water supply and the reality that we are experiencing hotter, drier weather, desalination will continue to be an important water source for some communities within our state," said Karen Mogus, deputy director for the Division of Water Quality. "This report was developed to facilitate projects that meet the waste discharge requirements set forth in the [Ocean Plan](#) to ensure that the most advanced technology and protections for the marine environment are utilized. This draft report provides valuable information for those considering pursuing seawater desalination projects to help safeguard local water supplies."

The draft report proposes several ways permitting can be accelerated, such as: engaging with California Native American tribes and interested parties, including affected underserved communities; submitting applications simultaneously to responsible agencies; using subsurface intake designs that exclusively withdraw seawater or improve seawater intrusion conditions; and considering reasonably



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foreseeable coastal hazards that will result from climate change, sea-level rise, or geologic or seismic hazards, among others.

Desalination offers a vital water supply for some communities, but depending on the circumstances it isn't always the best option. That is why the Water Supply Strategy takes an all-of-the-above approach to creating a more resilient California with desalination as one effort alongside conservation, recycled water, increased storage and stormwater capture and use. Together, these alternatives strengthen and diversify the state's water supplies, especially during drought.

The Desalination Interagency Group, headed by the board, includes representatives from the regional water quality control boards, California Natural Resources Agency, Coastal Commission, Department of Water Resources, Ocean Protection Council and Department of Fish and Wildlife, among others.

The group will host an informational webinar on the report on July 21 from 11:00 a.m. to noon, and it will consider all public comments prior to finalizing the report.

More information about seawater desalination and the California Ocean Plan can be found on the board's [website](#).

*The State Water 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 allocation for present and future generations.*