



California State Water Resources Control Board

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2025 Strategic Work Plan

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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.

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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 2025

(Note: these are marked * on later pages; [W](#) = linked to California's Water Supply Strategy)

Safe and affordable funding for equity and resilience (SAFER)

PFAS: maximum contaminant level

Fishery-protective flows and other measures

Irrigated lands regulatory program expert panel update

High-priority water quality petitions

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

Statewide Utility Wildfire General Order

Harmful algal blooms (HABs)

Biostimulatory substances, cyanotoxins, and biological integrity

Ocean acidification and hypoxia

[W](#) Water rights drought planning and response efforts

Wildfire support and other emergency management

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[W](#) Urban water use efficiency

[W](#) Sites Reservoir water rights application

[W](#) Develop new water supplies (recycled water, desalination, and stormwater capture)

[W](#) Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)

Site-specific objectives guidance for copper and zinc

Cost of municipal stormwater permit implementation

Update Bay-Delta Plan

[W](#) Delta conveyance

[W](#) Modernize water rights data

Racial equity

Climate Resolution

Additional actions linked to California's Water Supply Strategy

[W](#) Process water rights permits for underground storage

[W](#) Stormwater: capture and use

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

Key:

* = highest-priority actions to work on or complete in 2025

W = linked to Water Supply Strategy

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

1.1 *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 operation and maintenance support. For operation and maintenance support, provide direct support to assist community water systems with appointed Administrators and those with significant affordability burdens. Consider affordability criteria as part of the amendments to the policies for State Revolving Funds (March 2025). [DFA]

1.1.2 * **Safe and affordable funding for equity and resilience (SAFER).** With SAFER program in the midpoint of its initial 10-year appropriation, focus on three goals for the program: (1) People in communities that didn't have safe water now have it; (2) All communities without safe drinking water are on track to get lasting solutions in place as swiftly as possible; and (3) California's most vulnerable communities are transitioning to be resilient and prevent cycles of failures. Focus on providing support to systems that were out of compliance in 2019 (the Senate Bill 200 baseline year), getting all systems into compliance within an average of five years, and meeting consolidation goals by 2030. With Regional Boards, and partners through the Drought Resilience Interagency & Partners Collaborative (a Water Board-Department of Water Resources task force), the SAFER program will also work toward coordinating solutions for private domestic wells and state small water systems. [DDW, DFA, OPEETA, DWQ, OSGM, Comms]

1.1.3 **Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS): investigations.** Continue investigations of industrial sources of PFAS contaminants in public drinking water systems, at a statewide level. Continue 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 planning to test available treatment options and estimate treatment costs, with the goal of developing a treatment-based maximum contaminant level for PFAS. [DDW, DWQ, DFA]

1.1.4 **US EPA sanitary survey compliance.** Improve State Water Board compliance with the US EPA mandated sanitary survey by improving emergency response efficiencies, working to increase water system resiliency, and seeking more emergency response resources; this would enable field staff to spend more time on sanitary surveys and the core regulatory program. [DDW]

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- 1.1.5 **Statewide wastewater needs assessment.** 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. [DWQ, DFA]
- 1.2 *Adopt and enforce standards for contaminants that threaten human health*
- 1.2.1 **Lead and Copper Rule.** Develop conforming regulatory revisions to new Lead and Copper Rule improvements issued October 2024. Accept, review, and approve private-side lead service line surveys. Develop a new data system to track service line surveys and reporting requirements. [DDW]
- 1.2.2 *** PFAS: maximum contaminant level.** Start the process to develop a maximum contaminant level (MCL) for perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA). Modify notification levels to conform with federal PFAS MCLs. Continue disadvantaged community PFAS testing program of public water system wells along with the Board project to identify additional per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances. [DDW]
- 1.3 *Ensure groundwater quality meets or exceeds objectives*
- 1.3.1 **Site cleanup subaccount program.** Prioritize funding of program projects in disadvantaged and environmental justice communities based on the adopted Resolution (2024-0023), which updated the scoring methodology and prioritization for SCAP. Coordinate with Regional Water Boards, the Department of Toxic Substances Control, and local agencies to encumber funds for projects on the approved SCAP priority Lists (New Grant Projects, Previously Funded Grant Projects, and Contract Projects) and to address highest priority cleanup projects in economically disadvantaged and environmental justice communities (i.e., those with high CalEnviroScreen scores). [DFA]
- 1.3.2 **Underground storage tank stalled case initiative.** Continue coordination with the Regional Water Boards Local Oversight Programs and US EPA to identify stalled cleanup efforts at sites associated with leaking underground storage tanks. Approximately 45 percent of the sites supported by the Stalled Case Initiative are within communities with a CalEnviroScreen 4.0 score over 70 percent, which represent our most vulnerable communities with some of the highest pollution burdens in the State. Consistent with the Board's Racial Equity Action Plan, DFA and DWQ will evaluate the stalled cases in need of funding and prioritize sites that are in environmental justice or disadvantaged communities. [DFA, DWQ, OE]

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 flows and other measures.** Continue efforts to develop appropriate science and environmental documentation to evaluate instream flows needs for the Scott and Shasta rivers in the Klamath watershed; for Mill, Deer, and Antelope creeks in the Sacramento River watershed; and 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. [Division of Water Rights]

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- 2.1.2 **Clear Lake Hitch.** Continue efforts to protect the Clear Lake Hitch by evaluating instream flow needs, evaluating regulatory compliance with existing water right requirements, and enforcing on illegal diversions and unlicensed cannabis cultivation, while considering other stressors. Use information collected through the December 2023 emergency regulation to better understand water availability, evaluate the effects of pumping on streamflow, and help identify potential management options. Support local monitoring and data collection efforts led by tribes and community groups. Support 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 **Cannabis enforcement.** In priority watersheds, enforce water quality and water right violations associated with illegal cannabis cultivation. Implement updated Cannabis Program Report priorities, the workplan, metric tracking, and goals. [OE, DWQ, Division of Water Rights]
- 2.1.4 *** Irrigated lands regulatory program expert panel update.** By Summer 2025, establish an expert panel to evaluate data collected per the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program and consider academic research conducted since the 2014 Expert Panel to recommend possible regulatory approaches to protect groundwater quality from nitrogen impacts. Complete Expert Panel meetings and prepare a draft final report by December 2025. [DWQ, OCC]
- 2.1.5 **DDT clean-up funding.** Administer \$5.6 million from a one-time budget appropriation via grants to California Sea Grant to support dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (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. For 2025, focus on amending the grant to extend the research timeframe by one year to June 2026. Researchers will continue with and conclude their studies. Final reports are expected in Spring 2026. [DWQ, DFA]
- 2.1.6 **National pollutant discharge elimination system (NPDES) pesticide application permits.** Release informal draft of a general permit that replaces 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]
- 2.1.7 *** High-priority water quality petitions.** Receive public comment and further develop the Water Quality Order 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]
- 2.1.8 **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]
- 2.1.9 **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 develop the potential scope of that hearing. [Division of Water Rights]

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- 2.1.10 **2026 and 2028 Integrated Reports.** Hold a hearing on the Draft 2026 Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters and respond to comments. Compile, organize, map, evaluate quality, and begin assessing data for the 2028 Integrated Report. [DWQ]
- 2.1.11 * **Water quality protection gaps left by US Supreme Court Sackett decision.** Develop for public comment waste discharge requirements to supplement 401 water quality certifications for Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permits due to reduced federal jurisdiction. Develop, for public comment, procedures for stream delineation. Develop Stage 2 and 3 planning documents on an updated data system to prepare for project approval in early 2026. 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 continue to provide training on enforcement strategies utilizing existing state enforcement authorities in response to the recent US Supreme Court decision, Sackett v. EPA (2023). Track and report to the Legislature on impacts on workload, permitting, and enforcement process. [DWQ, OE, OCC]
- 2.1.12 **Water Rights Enforcement Policy.** Release a Draft Water Rights Enforcement Policy that establishes a framework for strong, fair, transparent, and efficient enforcement of the state's water rights priority system for public comment. Conduct staff-led workshop(s) to present the Draft Policy, solicit public input, and respond to comments with the goal of bringing a Draft Policy before the State Board for consideration in 2026. [OE, Division of Water Rights]
- 2.1.13 **Salton Sea.** Oversee, monitor, and assess progress on the implementation of the Salton Sea Management Program, recognizing megadrought in the Colorado River basin, potential water shortages and related impacts to the Sea, and federal investments and collaboration within the watershed. [Division of Water Rights]
- 2.1.14 **Healthy watersheds and high-quality waters protection strategy.** Create a data-driven strategy for the protection of healthy watersheds, with an emphasis on their services to improve ecosystem resiliency, and the high-quality waters that derive and deliver many benefits from them (Protection Strategy). For 2025, the project will focus on establishing a Technical Advisory Committee and developing a landscape assessment dashboard to (1) define high quality waters, including both their ecological condition and societal value; (2) develop an assessment framework to identify risks to healthy watersheds and high-quality waters; and (3) provide open-source data and information that can clearly inform protection strategies. [OIMA, DWQ]
- 2.1.15 * **Statewide Utility Wildfire General Order.** Finalize the permit for electric utility wildfire mitigation and for electric operations and maintenance activities with the potential to affect waters of the state. Bring the permit before the board for consideration of adoption in early 2025. [DWQ]
- 2.2 *Reduce and manage nutrient issues such as harmful algal blooms*
- 2.2.1 **Nutrient strategy.** Convene a team to draft a nutrient strategy to prioritize and coordinate related work. [DWQ]

- 2.2.2 * **Harmful algal blooms (HABs)**. Implement statewide HAB strategies, which align the mandates of Assembly Bill 834 (2019) by (1) expanding event response and ambient monitoring through the freshwater HAB program and (2) improving communication to tribes and the public. Establish statewide procedures for event response and ambient monitoring. In coordination with the Delta Stewardship Council’s Delta Science Program, participate in a leadership capacity in the multi-agency Delta Cyanobacterial HAB Monitoring Strategy, which includes expanding HABs monitoring to support the development of HABS predictive models and to test the efficacy of management and mitigation measures. 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]
- 2.2.3 * **Biostimulatory substances, cyanotoxins, and biological integrity**. Develop policy options for a statewide water quality objective and implementation program for nutrients and other biostimulatory substances for streams and rivers and cyanotoxins for inland waters. Formalize and expand the use of biological condition assessment methods, scoring tools, and targets aimed at protecting biological integrity of wadeable streams. For 2025, focus on (1) drafting proposed water quality objectives; (2) hosting a public workshop; and (3) developing the program of implementation. [DWQ]
- 2.2.4 * **Ocean acidification and hypoxia**. Develop an Ocean Plan amendment (amendment) to add a water quality objective and a program of implementation to address ocean acidification, hypoxia, and the effects of anthropogenic sources of nutrients in ocean waters off the Southern California Bight. Develop and, if appropriate, work with the Regional Water Boards to incentivize or require early implementation of technologically feasible wastewater treatment controls for ocean discharges prior to the completion of the amendment. For 2025, focus on (1) evaluating aragonite saturation as the metric to assess acidification objective and drafting proposed water quality objective language; (2) applying model results to consider the processes and anthropogenic discharges that drive acidification; and (3) investigating wastewater treatment technologies as well as incentives and regulatory options. [DWQ]

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 Manage drought and other emergencies

- 3.1.1 * **W Water rights drought planning and response efforts**. Continue implementing the Russian River telemetry pilot project, updating drought response options and tools (including refinement and development of methods and models for curtailments and water unavailability), and implementing watershed specific Supply/Demand assessments. [Division of Water Rights]

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- 3.1.2 **Drinking water drought response program.** To ensure water systems are implementing resiliency measures, continue collecting technical information from systems that may have future drought impacts. Follow-up with water systems that experience an outage, have a water shortage, or anticipate a water shortage. Connect water systems to the resources they need to build drought resilience for future years. Monitor water systems' ability to 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, take actions such as mandatory consolidations or source water investigation orders. Coordinate with the Drought Resiliency Interagency and Partners Collaborative on water shortage resiliency efforts for water systems, domestic wells, and state small water systems. [DDW]
- 3.1.3 * **Wildfire support and other emergency management.** To ensure water quality is protected during wildfire response and recovery activities, and that drinking water systems are supported during their recovery, continue to assist the Cal OES/FEMA Joint Field Office coordination for the Los Angeles County Wildfires. Be prepared to support other emergency management needs this year that may include additional wildfires in other areas of the state, atmospheric rivers and flooding, earthquakes, or other emergency incidents, with the goal of ensuring water quality is protected, and that any impacted drinking water systems are supported. [ORPP, DDW]

3.2 *Increase resilience of local and regional water supplies*

- 3.2.1 * **W Infrastructure funding programs.** By December 31, 2025, develop any required guidelines, or amendment of existing funding guidelines, required for Proposition 4 programs administered by the State Water Board. Implement State Water Board priorities for State funded 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. [DFA]
- 3.2.2 * **W Urban water use efficiency.** Implement the Making Conservation a California Way of Life regulation and resolution adopted in 2024. Provide technical assistance and compliance support, with partners, where appropriate. This includes work on landscape area data, other data, and reporting requirements. Consider affordability and equity when implementing the regulation. Coordinate, for purposes identified in the resolution, with the Department of Water Resources, CalRecycle, CalFIRE, the California Energy Commission, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the California Air Resources Board, and others. Hold periodic information items describing progress made. Include, in one Board Meeting before the end of 2028, a proposed strategy, developed following public engagement, for Board consideration to prioritize compliance and enforcement actions, recognizing the efforts undertaken by that time to make conservation a California way of life. [ORPP]
- 3.2.3 * **W Sites Reservoir water rights application.** Complete the public hearing on the Sites Reservoir water rights application and related petitions. Begin developing a draft decision for consideration by the Board. [AHO, Division of Water Rights]

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- 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 potential 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 Fall 2025. 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 **Constituent of emerging concern (CEC) management strategy.** Develop and implement a statewide 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.** In coordination with the Regional Water Boards, conduct sanitary sewer collection system inspections, focusing on systems serving environmental justice communities. These inspections, compliance assistance, and enforcement efforts will identify deficiencies in systems maintenance, operation, and long-term capital improvements; such deficiencies 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 with applying for funding, to qualifying systems. [OE, DFA]
- 3.3 *Support sustainable management of California's groundwater resources*
- 3.3.1 * **W Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).** Implement the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Make determinations on inadequate basins referred to the State Water Board and implement state intervention where needed. Develop comprehensive staff reports for basins scheduled for probationary hearings that clearly identify plan deficiencies and potential actions to address those deficiencies. Engage with interested parties by conducting workshops, meetings, providing plain-language outreach materials, interpretation, and translation. 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, Central Valley Water Board initiated the Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS), and the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program, where appropriate. [OSGM, OPEETA]
- 3.3.2 **W Process water rights permits 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]

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3.3.3 **Safe Drinking Water Act: underground injection control.** To help bring the state into compliance with the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, support the California Geologic Energy Management Division's review of pending aquifer exemption proposals with overlying beneficial use groundwater. Reviews will include a conduit analysis and remediation of idle and abandoned wells. [DWQ]

3.4 *Use stormwater more fully and effectively to provide multiple benefits*

3.4.1 * **Site-specific objectives guidance for copper and zinc.** Using a metals bioavailability model (e.g., biotic ligand model) that includes receiving water body characteristics and monitoring data, adopt a policy for the development of site-specific water quality objectives for copper and zinc in freshwater. The implementation of more accurate site-specific water quality objectives may reduce the cost of compliance for many municipal stormwater permittees, while protecting beneficial uses. Release the draft policy in early 2025 and bring it before the board for consideration of adoption in late summer 2025. [DWQ]

3.4.2 * **Cost of municipal stormwater permit implementation.** Adopt requirements for standardized cost reporting for the implementation of NPDES municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permits to evaluate true costs of implementing stormwater permits across the state. Information and data will be used by State and Regional Water Boards when issuing new permits. Bring before the board for consideration of adoption in early 2025. [DWQ]

3.4.3 **W Stormwater: capture and use.** 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]

3.4.4 **Statewide industrial stormwater general permit.** Release public review draft of the revised statewide NPDES Industrial Stormwater General Permit. [DWQ]

3.4.5 **Municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4): national pollutant discharge elimination system statewide phase II small MS4 permit.** Consider input received on informal draft of the updated statewide Phase II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems Permit and release a formal draft. [DWQ]

3.4.6 **Strategy to optimize resource management of stormwater (STORMS) program evaluation.** Continue evaluating the STORMS program, identifying opportunities to improve the process for 1) receiving meaningful stakeholder input and 2) selecting STORMS projects considering scope, resources, and the 2030 and 2040 stormwater goals identified in the Water Supply Strategy. [DWQ]

3.5 *Manage the Bay-Delta to balance water supply reliability and a healthy ecosystem*

3.5.1 * **Update Bay-Delta Plan.** Implement the San Joaquin/Southern Delta update to the Bay-Delta Plan, including the consideration of voluntary agreements. Complete the Sacramento/Delta update to the Bay-Delta Plan, including consideration of voluntary agreements. Continue to consult with tribal governments during development of Bay-Delta Plan update. [Division of Water Rights]

3.5.2 * **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 conducting the necessary water rights hearing. [Division of Water Rights, Administrative Hearings Office]

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- 3.5.3 **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 relationships, systems, and internal capacity 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 **Language Access Policy and protocol.** The Language Access Policy will provide guidance to Water Boards staff on applicable state and federal language laws and policies. The accompanying guidance document will provide Water Boards staff with a clear understanding of language access requirements, processes, and best practices. These documents will cover topics such as identifying language needs, requesting language services, and the role of bilingual certified employees. The Language Access Policy and Protocol aim to enhance the Water Boards ability to engage with all Californians in the languages they speak Strengthen our ability to engage with the public to improve our decision-making processes. [OPEETA, OCC]
- 4.1.2 **Public engagement training and guidance.** 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. 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. [OPEETA]
- 4.1.3 **External capacity.** Evaluate funding options to support community-driven and tribal-led projects that address environmental clean-up projects. Leverage and promote the CalEPA environmental justice action grants to support community and tribal-led projects. [OPEETA]

4.2 *Strengthen meaningful government-to-government partnerships with California Native American tribes*

- 4.2.1 **Tribal consultation policy and guidance.** Revise the State Water Board’s Tribal Consultation Policy and develop a Tribal Consultation and Engagement Protocol to standardize practices, strengthen tribal partnerships, and improve the Water Boards’ decision-making processes. The development of the Tribal Consultation Policy and Protocol aspire to guide the Water Boards toward truth, healing, and more equitable engagement with California Native American tribes. [OPEETA]
- 4.2.2 **Tribal consultation dashboard.** Develop a public facing dashboard to display open tribal consultation opportunities for all 10 Water Boards. This dashboard will be located on the Water Boards Tribal Affairs website and it will serve as a repository for currently open tribal consultation opportunities with the goal of increasing transparency and facilitating opportunities for further engagement. Tribes with cultural and traditional connection to lands within a project area will still receive direct letters with the notification of the opportunity to consult on a project. [OPEETA]

4.2.3 **Tribal beneficial use designations.** Identify options for accelerating the designations of tribal beneficial uses around the state. Provide guidance, information, and improved communication to support tribal participation in the tribal beneficial use designation process. Consider the formal designation of the Tribal Tradition and Culture beneficial uses as part of the update to the Bay Delta Plan. Support the Lahontan Regional Board as it considers amending its Basin Plan to designate Tribal Tradition and Culture and Tribal Subsistence Fishing as beneficial uses for Mono Lake. [DWQ, OPEETA, Division of Water Rights, OCC]

4.3 *Track and communicate the State Water Board's work*

4.3.1 **Improve engagement with the Legislature.** Enhance the visibility of the State Water Board and Regional Water Board's priorities and initiatives within the Legislature through targeted educational efforts, improved accessibility, and proactive engagement with legislators, at both the State and Federal levels. [OLA]

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

4.3.3 **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 the new enforcement goal of providing inspection reports to the regulated entity within the required 30-45 days of the inspection (note: this approach was piloted in 2024). 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. Incorporate Cannabis Program water quality enforcement and inspection outcomes into the annual targets and performance report. [OE, OIMA]

4.3.4 **Expanded 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 (1) increase awareness of our progress toward organizational goals, (2) equitably empower people to take action, and (3) 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. Expand strategic engagement with local and ethnic media. Use social media to amplify storytelling about the positive impact of the State Water Board's financial assistance on drinking water infrastructure in disadvantaged communities and the state's water resilience. Through press releases, social media posts, and other materials, expand awareness of the pace and breadth of funding for priority projects. [Comms]

4.4 *Manage data effectively*

4.4.1 * **W Modernize water rights data.** Continue actions to update California's water rights data, including digitizing 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; and consider updating regulations to clarify data requirements and efficiently work with the UPWARD system. [Division of Water Rights]

4.4.2 **New systems for water quality data.** Replace a data receiving and storage ecosystem—the California Environmental Data Exchange Network—and prioritize the modernization of the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program. There will be a soft release of the chemistry module in 2025, followed by other high priority data types. [OIMA, DIT]

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4.4.3 **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. For 2025, focus on (1) incorporating a tool into CalWQA that will automatically identify exceedances and impairments; and (2) strengthen connections within CalWQA to make future automation efforts more effective. [DWQ, DIT, OIMA]

4.5 *Support evolution of organizational structures, processes, and culture*

- 4.5.1 * **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. Implement a racial equity curriculum to meet the needs of the organization. Continue to roll out specific equity courses and incorporate equity into new customized courses. Maintain accountability on progress via quarterly Environmental Justice roundtable meetings and annual report to the board. [OPEETA, OIMA]
- **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” provides employees with an opportunity to engage with peers to develop a shared understanding of fundamental racial equity concepts and tools; offers a framework for becoming an organization that eliminates systemic racism, discrimination, and prejudice; and promotes equity and justice for all.
 - **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. In 2025, roll out an Equity Data Handbook and seek feedback on it as programs, staff, and partners use it. Continue to use coaching help (DataMade) to align direct support with priority data efforts.
 - **Integrate racial equity data into core programs’ work.** Develop an equity impact analysis framework to support equity considerations in all Water Boards programs and projects.
- 4.5.2 * **Climate Resolution.** Update the State Water Board’s 2017 Climate Resolution to articulate policy principles and actions the Board will pursue to mitigate and adapt to climate impacts related to management of California water resources. [ORPP]
- 4.5.3 **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]
- 4.5.4 **Invoice tracking system.** Prepare a proposal, including timeline, contract needs (if any), as well as system and IT requirements, for an invoice tracking system to ensure invoices are processed and paid in a timely manner. [DAS]
- 4.5.5 **Workforce strategy.** Continue actions to ensure appropriate staffing, organizational support for staff, and opportunities for staff. [DAS, DIT, OPEETA]

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- **Reduce vacancies.** Reduce vacancy rate to 5 percent or less for State and Regional Water Boards.
 - **Workforce and Succession Plans.** Finalize workforce and succession plans.
 - **Workplace Equity and Inclusion Plan.** Develop an internal plan with recommended actions to foster a welcoming workplace environment, support organizational wellness, and address existing or potential barriers to workplace equity and inclusion.
- 4.5.6 **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]

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Acronyms or short names for State Water Board Divisions and Offices

Comms	=	Communications 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
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
OPEETA	=	Office of Public Engagement, Equity, and Tribal Affairs
ORPP	=	Office of Research, Planning, and Performance
OSGM	=	Office of Sustainable Groundwater Management