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Media Contacts:

Richard Stapler, Natural Resources Agency
richard.stapler@resources.ca.gov

Alex Barnum, Cal/EPA

alex.barnum@calepa.ca.gov

Steve Lyle, Department of Food and Agriculture
steve.lyle@cdfa.ca.gov

California Agencies Release Draft Action Plan for Water, Ask for Input and Dialogue

California Water Action Plan Provides Roadmap for State Efforts

SACRAMENTO – The California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Food and Agriculture today released a detailed draft action plan to help guide state efforts and resources on one of California’s most important resources, water. The California Water Action Plan will focus on the reliability of our water supply, the needed ecosystem restoration to bring our water system back into balance, and the resilience of our infrastructure.

In May, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. directed the agencies to identify key actions for the next one to five years that address urgent needs and provide the foundation for sustainable management of California’s water resources.

Each entity will work with affiliated and interested parties and individuals in the next month to gain additional input and provide guidance on future actions. It is anticipated that a final form of the plan will be released in early December.

“Over a century ago, California leaders began the development of one of the most complex water systems in the world,” said Secretary for Natural Resources John Laird. “Now, with 38 million people and the threat of climate change, we more fully understand the need to strike a balance with the environment. This comprehensive water blueprint for the future will help us find that balance and address long standing water issues in California.”

The challenges facing California are many: uncertain water supplies; water scarcity/drought; declining groundwater basins; poor water quality; declining native fish species and loss of wildlife habitat; flood risks; and, supply disruptions.

“California has not kept pace with some of the significant water challenges that face us, including providing safe drinking water for all our communities. And these challenges will only become more serious with a growing population and a changing climate,” said Cal/EPA Secretary Matt Rodriguez. “This draft plan offers a practical set of actions that will begin to address these urgent challenges and set us on a course of sustainable water management in the coming decades.”

California’s nearly \$45 billion agricultural industry remains one of the state’s largest and most important economic sectors. A reliable supply of water is a key element of this thriving industry.

“There is no issue more important than water for food production and agriculture,” said Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross. “This plan is a critical pathway that will lead to a long-term, sustainable future for water management in the 21st century.”

This report identifies actions that, in the next five years, will move California toward more sustainable water management by providing reliable water supply for our farms and communities, restoring important wildlife habitat and species, and helping the state’s water systems and environment become more resilient.

Some of the actions are new proposals, such as a greater focus on water recycling for potable reuse. Water recycling is a key part of a broader strategy to make regions more self-reliant by developing new or underused water resources. Locally-developed water will relieve pressure on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and other imported sources and make communities more resilient against drought and climate change.

Other actions reflect work that state agencies are already planning or engaged in, such as enhanced conservation measures for urban and agricultural water users, accelerated habitat restoration efforts, and adding water storage capacity.

Together, these actions address the most pressing water issues that California faces while laying the groundwork for a sustainable and resilient future. All of these actions require cooperation and collaboration among many partners.

The plan focuses on ten key actions:

- Make Conservation a California Way of Life
- Increase Local and Regional Self-Reliance
- Achieve Co-Equal Goals for the Delta
- Protect and Restore Important Ecosystems
- Manage and Prepare for Dry Periods
- Expand Water Storage Capacity
- Provide Safe Drinking Water for All Communities
- Improve Flood Protection
- Increase Operational and Regulatory Efficiency
- Identify Sustainable and Integrated Financing Opportunities

From this effort, we also hope to drive participation in the many venues the state of California has for policy development and regulation for water.

Read the water action plan [here](#).

To submit comments and questions about the plan please email wateraction@water.ca.gov

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