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State Water Action Plan Updated to Reflect Two Years of Progress

Efforts to Achieve Sustainable Water Resources Tracked and Detailed

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The Natural Resources Agency, Department of Food and Agriculture and the California Environmental Protection Agency today announced an updated [California Water Action Plan](#) that incorporates two years of significant progress toward sustainable water management and an implementation report that tracks and details that progress.

The Administration's water policy goals and priorities remain unchanged and the California Water Action Plan continues to focus on sustaining supplies of water for people and the environment and resolving the state's most critical water resource problems. The plan sets forth 10 overarching actions that guide the efforts to create more resilient, reliable water systems and to restore damaged and destroyed ecosystems:

1. Make conservation a California way of life;
2. Increase regional self-reliance and integrated water management across all levels of government;
3. Achieve the co-equal goals for the Delta;
4. Protect and restore important ecosystems;
5. Manage and prepare for dry periods;
6. Expand water storage capacity and improve groundwater management;
7. Provide safe water for all communities;
8. Increase flood protection;
9. Increase operational and regulatory efficiency;
10. Identify sustainable and integrated financing opportunities.

"The Water Action Plan lays out an integrated set of strategies recognizing there is no one answer to our water challenges," said Food and Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross. "It serves as a catalyst for collaboration across government at the state, federal, and local levels to help us build resiliency and flexibility to manage droughts, floods and adaptation to climate change."

Directed by Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. and written by the three agencies with stakeholder input, the California Water Action Plan describes the actions needed to cope with extreme weather, natural disasters, climate change, and future population growth. The Action Plan anchors the Governor's 2016-17 budget proposal released last week, including significant increases in funding for flood protection, wetlands restoration, groundwater management, and restoration of the Salton Sea.

“The Governor’s budget, our emergency drought response, our investment of billions of dollars in bond funds, and the day-to-day work of state agencies – all are guided by the Governor’s Water Action Plan,” said California Secretary for Natural Resources John Laird. “We are well-coordinated and making good progress for the sake of all Californians.”

“The comprehensive actions outlined in the Governor’s plan have already influenced the way Californians are responding to the current drought,” said California Secretary for Environmental Protection, Matthew Rodriquez. “The Plan will continue to help us work with the public to develop near term and long term strategies to secure our water for future generations.”

The update released today also shows considerable progress toward reaching the goals set forth in January 2014. Hundreds of water projects are being planned or implemented by all levels of government and by non-governmental organizations, tribes, farmers and local water agencies. State, regional and local agencies have also increasingly pursued a strategy of making regions more self-reliant by reducing water demand and by developing new or underused water resources locally. That progress includes:

- Funding hundreds of efforts under the \$7.5 billion Proposition 1 water bond to boost storage, restoration, recycling, desalination and other water supply and environmental projects.
- Signing \$1 billion emergency drought legislation.
- Signing California’s historic groundwater management laws to balance pumping and recharge in the aquifers that supply nearly half the state’s water.
- Reducing water use by more than 25 percent collectively across urban California, an unprecedented conservation achievement triggered by the Governor’s mandate.
- Allocating \$230 million in Proposition 84 grant for hundreds of projects that help build regional self-reliance, awards that also leverage hundreds of millions of more dollars in local and federal investment. Nearly \$50 million goes toward 140 projects in disadvantaged communities in 26 regions.
- Issuing \$257 million in grants and low-interest loans to finance water recycling projects that will save 600,000 acre feet of water.
- Removing a dam on the Carmel River to restore more natural flows and open 25 miles of steelhead spawning habitat.
- Investing tens of millions of dollars in coastal, Delta, and mountain meadow restoration projects that will sequester carbon while improving wildlife habitat.
- Awarding \$250 million in Proposition 1E funds for urban flood projects, including those to protect Stockton, Sacramento, and Yuba City.
- Accelerating habitat restoration and eliminating fish passage barriers in the Delta, with a goal of 30,000 acres of restoration underway over the next few years.
- Investing more than \$50 million for farm water efficiency improvement projects.
- Strengthening California’s plan to both provide a more reliable water supply for California and to protect the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta ecosystem.
- Enacting outdoor landscaping and indoor appliance standards that will permanently reduce the volume of water used in newly-built California yards, parks, landscaping, homes, and commercial buildings.
- Expanding systems to monitor groundwater levels and subsidence, make well drilling records available to the public, and track water use by water right holders.
- Providing millions of dollars for emergency water deliveries, housing and new infrastructure to support communities with dry wells.

- The State took these actions in the face of an historic drought since 2012. Other immediate drought responses included delivering food and emergency water supplies and providing housing and unemployment assistance; rescuing fish from hundreds of drought-stricken streams and striking voluntary agreements with landowners to sustain streamflow; balancing the needs of cities, farms and native fish in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta; installing an emergency rock barrier in the Delta to physically repel salinity intrusion; and managing the worst epidemic of tree deaths in modern history.

For more information on the California Water Action Plan visit
http://resources.ca.gov/california_water_action_plan/.

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