



Conveyance Projects Panel Discussion

Introduction

As directed by the Water Resilience Portfolio, the Commission is assessing a State role in financing conveyance projects to meet the needs of a changing climate. The Commission's work will result in a succinct paper describing key issues and mechanisms, including recommendations for state policymakers to consider as they weigh the financing options for water conveyance infrastructure. The paper will describe the essential criteria for resilient water conveyance projects that meet the needs of a changing climate, the potential public benefits of such projects, and the implications of various financing options.

At the October meeting, staff presented the results of the first phase of work on this project, which included staff research and preparation of a background policy brief. The October meeting initiated the second phase of the Commission's work, during which the Commission will gather public input and hear from expert panels to shape its recommendations. Phase two will conclude in the spring of 2021, and will be followed by phases three and four, which include drafting and finalizing the Commission's recommendations.

At this meeting, the Commission will continue phase two of its work by hearing from two expert panels. The first panel will discuss resilient conveyance projects that meet the needs of a changing climate and the second panel will discuss how the Human Right to Water intersects with conveyance projects. These panels will provide the Commission with specific examples of project types so that the Commission can start applying concepts of resilience, public benefits, and financing to actual, on-the-ground projects.

Background

On July 28, 2020, the California Natural Resources Agency, California Environmental Protection Agency, and the California Department of Food and Agriculture issued the final [Water Resilience Portfolio](#) (portfolio) in response to Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-10-19, which calls for a "set of actions to meet California water needs through the 21st century." The portfolio outlines a broad suite of actions designed to move the state toward water resilience. The portfolio calls on the Commission to fulfill Action 19.4: assess a state role in financing conveyance projects that could help meet needs in a changing climate. Action 19.4 is embedded in a section of the portfolio that is focused on building connections, which includes actions designed to help increase physical connections and coordination between and among the decentralized elements of California's water system.

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The Commission's work on conveyance implements Goal One of the Strategic Plan, which calls on the Commission to "serve as a primary public forum for the discussion of improving water management policy to assist regions in achieving climate resiliency ... including those actions of the Water Resilience Portfolio assigned to the Commission."

Meeting Overview

The Commission will consider the information gathered at the October meeting and will hear from panelists on resilient conveyance and the Human Right to Water.

Laura Jensen, the Commission's Assistant Executive Officer, will review information presented at the October meeting and discuss guiding questions with Commissioners.

The first panel of project proponents will discuss conveyance projects being proposed by their organizations. Panelists have been asked to address questions related to conveyance priorities within the state, to discuss how the projects on which they are working augment water resiliency and help meet the needs of a changing climate, to describe the possible public benefits associated with their projects, and to touch on how projects are, or could be, funded.

Panelists include:

- Kelly Rogers, Director of the Colorado River Program, San Diego County Water Authority
- Jennifer Pierre, General Manager, State Water Contractors
- Scott Hamilton, Chairman, Technical Committee for the Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley
- Jay Ziegler, Director of External Affairs and Policy, The Nature Conservancy

The second panel will discuss the Human Right to Water within the context of conveyance projects. Panelists have been invited to reflect on the projects discussed during the first panel and to share their thoughts on how conveyance projects can demonstrate that they have adequately considered the Human Right to Water, how climate change will impact their communities, and how under-represented communities can be better incorporated into the planning, design, and governance of water projects.

Panelists include:

- Ed Pattison, General Manager, Tuolumne Utilities District
- Maria Elena Kennedy, President, Kennedy Communications, Inc.
- Jonathan Nelson, Policy Director, Community Water Center
- Sherri Norris, Executive Director, California Indian Environmental Alliance

This is an informational item.

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