



State Water Project Briefing: Energy, Safety, and Operations Update

Introduction

The second State Water Project (SWP) briefing of 2026 will provide an overview on the Department of Water Resources' (DWR) efforts to aggressively reduce greenhouse gas emissions within the SWP, flexing energy operations to help grid reliability; and implementing energy efficiency measures to maximize energy efficiency, meet regulatory requirements, and maintain a stable grid. The briefing will also include an update on the safety metrics, data collection, and the use of this data to identify trends and reduce injuries, illnesses, and unsafe conditions for SWP staff; and an update on current year operations, including the current water year allocation, planning decisions made to date, current hydrology, and considerations for the rest of the year. It will also feature a presentation by the State Water Contractors (SWC), an association formed of 27 of the public water agencies who receive water from the SWP, on their energy agenda.

Background

The SWP, constructed in the middle of the last century, consists of 36 water storage facilities and 700 miles of rivers, pipelines, and canals, and supplies water to 27 million people and irrigates 750,000 acres of farmland. The system includes 21 pumping plants, powered by a system of power-generation and power-recovery plants. The SWP also operates the world's tallest water lift – the Edmonston Pumping Plant – which pumps water more than 1,900 feet up and over the Tehachapi Mountains into Southern California.

In 2022, Senate Bill 1020 was approved and required the state's power portfolio to be 100 percent renewable and carbon neutral by December 2035. The SWP is largest single user of electricity in California and the fourth largest zero emissions hydropower energy producer in the state. The SWP Energy Roadmap, developed by DWR in 2022, identifies short-, mid-, and long-term opportunities and challenges for energy investments and strategies and positions the SWP to support the state's grid reliability through an efficient and effective power portfolio, helping DWR and the 29 State Water Contractors to achieve their water supply reliability and clean energy goals required by SB 1020.

Goal Five of the [Commission's Strategic Plan](#) directs the Commission to receive briefings on the SWP on an annual basis, and to produce a report, as specified by Water Code section 165, that includes findings and, as appropriate, recommendations for DWR and the Legislature. Through these briefings and reports, the Commission aims to improve the public's understanding of

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decision making within the SWP and create accountability by using previous findings and recommendations to guide subsequent briefings.

Meeting Overview

At this meeting, SWP Deputy Director John Yarbrough will provide a high-level overview of the SWP's commitment to enhancing its role in the state's climate action plan and advancing the SWP's industry-leading safety culture. SWP Division of Operations and Maintenance Assistant Division Manager Jorge Quintero will provide an overview of how the SWP is incorporating carbon-free and renewable energy resources into its Power Portfolio. SWP Division of Operations and Maintenance Manager Behzad Soltanzadeh will provide an update on the safety metrics and data collection. SWP Water Operations Manager Tracy Hinojosa will provide an update on current year operations. Additionally, Jonathan Young, Energy Manager for the State Water Contractors, will provide a perspective on the DWRs' clean energy procurement, and the SWC energy priorities.

Following their remarks, the Commission will hear Tribal and public comment on the information presented. Commissioners will then have an opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

This is an informational item.

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