

## Part I: Recommendation Overview

### Recommendation Title

Drought Definition White Paper

### Description

This recommendation is for the State to prepare a white paper that discusses different definitions of drought and their implications for various sectors in California. The purpose of the white paper is to clarify terminology and create a common understanding of what “drought” means in terms of water availability and the resulting impacts and response actions for different types of water users.

This recommendation may be combined with the recommendation to prepare drought case studies for a more holistic view of drought impacts. The white paper could begin with a literature review of drought definitions, including their use cases (e.g., triggers for response), impacts, and potential gaps, and then provide case studies to help put these definitions in context and provide relatable stories.

### Impacts

*Expected outcomes/benefits:*

- Document and clarify existing terminology, including quantitative definitions where applicable, and associated triggers for action.
- Provide a more holistic, integrated view of water availability (e.g., including groundwater and surface water).
- Improve understanding of drought and therefore encourage more timely and appropriate drought response.

*What are the anticipated impacts or consequences of not adopting this recommendation?*

- Continued confusion among different stakeholders and the public when it comes to drought. The term “drought” can elicit certain reactions that may not be aligned with actual water shortage conditions in a given region or community.

### Implementing Parties and Partners

*Who would be the implementing agency or entity (potentially multiple)?*

*Which existing entities (e.g., departments or other agencies, private or nonprofit groups, community-based organizations) will the implementing agency or entity need to partner with for successful implementation of this recommendation?*

*Describe the coordination required by federal, state, local and tribal governments to successfully implement this recommendation.*

[To be discussed with workgroup]

### [Alignment with Other Initiatives](#)

This white paper would complement the recent California Water Commission White Paper, *Potential State Strategies for Protecting Communities and Fish and Wildlife in the Event of Drought* (January 2024).

The CWC white paper focuses on state strategies to mitigate drought impacts; this recommended white paper would focus on creating clarity around drought definitions and triggers for action by different water users. If including case studies, it would help demonstrate the consequences of inaction.

**Other? (To be discussed with workgroup)**

### [Implementation Time Frame](#)

*Approximately how quickly could the proposed recommendation be implemented? Factor time needed to develop, design, permit, construct (if applicable). Select one timeframe:*

Short term (1-2 yrs.)     Medium term (2-4 yrs.)     Long term (4-5+ yrs.)