

Regional Water Authority

2012 Legislative and Regulatory Agenda

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY RWA MEMBERS – 12-22-2011

The Regional Water Authority (RWA) and its members support improvements in water supply reliability, water quality, and the environment for all of California. Our highest priority is to sustainably provide high quality water to our customers at affordable rates, both now and in the future to support a vibrant economy. To this end, we will promote and support legislative and regulatory actions that are consistent with, and may oppose such actions that are inconsistent with the following objectives and principles.

Water Rights Protection

- Support and enhance the area-of-origin protections provided in California law and policy.
- Maintain the current water rights priority system and current definitions of reasonable and beneficial use. We oppose any involuntary or uncompensated reallocation of water rights and entitlements.
- Except as we otherwise agree as parties to a negotiated package, assure that no new or modified flow or diversion requirements are placed on upstream water users as a result of the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) and that the current and future water supplies of RWA's members are not diminished as a result of modified operations of state and federal projects.
- Require an open, transparent public process that is supported by sound scientific understanding in setting flow requirements related to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and tributaries.

Regional Self-Sufficiency

- Support locally cost effective actions to improve water supply reliability.
- Support local and regional agreements to balance water supply and environmental needs.
- Support water transfers between willing sellers and buyers.
- Streamline the process for exchanges and transfers of water among water users, particularly within an integrated regional water management planning region.
- Recognize the importance of local and regional actions in the Sacramento River watershed in providing benefits to the Bay-Delta system. Recognize the inherent differences in "net" water use between those users within a watershed and those who import water from another hydrologic region.
- Recognize the current and ongoing self-reliance on local supplies of water users in the Sacramento region.
- Promote increased development of groundwater storage and conjunctive use programs.

Water Use Efficiency

- Ensure that conserved water credit is available to benefit the conserving user.
- Implement the 20x2020 requirements in a manner that is equitable and locally and regionally feasible.

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Financing

- Promote the “beneficiary pays” concept for Delta activities and other actions.
- Streamline state regulatory activities to reduce the burden on fee payers.
- Except as we otherwise agree as parties to a negotiated package, require the direct beneficiaries of the BDCP to pay for facilities and all related mitigation measures. No other water supplier should be required to contribute to the funding of: (1) facilities proposed by BDCP; (2) any related mitigation, restoration or physical improvements; or (3) any related federal or state agency actions.
- Halt the trend toward shifting costs of state agency operations to new or increased regulatory fees. Water suppliers have experienced significant increases in fees over the past two years.
- Do not impose fees on local agencies to fund state agency activities intended to benefit the public generally.
- Limit the potential fees assessed on “Delta stressors” to those impacts that can be adequately demonstrated through sound scientific evidence and appropriately quantified. Ensure that all stressors are addressed to ensure equitable contributions. Do not assess impact fees on activities that are already regulated through one or more regulatory mechanisms or impose multiple state fees on the same local agency activity.
- Use general obligation bond funds to promote projects and programs that provide public benefits at a statewide level.

Local Authority

- Promote local water provider authority to plan for and implement local and regional water supply projects and programs.
- Streamline and/or consolidate state and federal regulatory processes.
- Streamline, consolidate or reduce reporting requirements wherever possible.
- Promote local water provider control of water rates, property tax revenues, and other financing mechanisms.
- Support locally cost effective financial tools to promote projects and programs that provide local, and regional, and statewide benefits.

Water Quality

- Ensure that water quality standards are developed through an appropriate public process with a sound scientific basis.