

**American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) California
Policy Platform
Water Recycling/Reuse**

Approved by the Executive Committee on April 9, 2014

Approved by the Board of Directors on April 9, 2014

Issue

- California's water shortage has reached crisis proportions.
- The population of California is expected to increase by 15.4 million by 2064. Sufficient water sources to serve the anticipated 41 percent increase in California's population and business needs are essential to sustain the long-term growth and economy of the state.
- The use and expansion of water recycling has been hampered in the past due to negative perceptions of the public, regulatory bodies, and state legislators. These perceptions are becoming more positive due to better and expanded education about the treatment and method of use of recycled water.
- Recycled water has been viewed and regulated as wastewater and not as a water resource.
- The expanded use of water recycling is currently constrained due to regulatory restrictions and limited funding.
- To enhance the use of recycled water, the Governor proposed the consolidation of the management of the drinking water program and all other water quality programs, including recycled water, under the State Water Board.
- In 2013 the Governor and State Legislators adopted legislation to investigate the feasibility of developing uniform water recycling criteria for direct potable water reuse.
- Funding for water recycling projects is primarily provided through the State Revolving Fund (SRF) Program and through water bonds which are administered by the State Water Board and/or the Department of Water Resources.
 - A primary source of SRF funding is delivered through federal funds. Each year this funding is based on Congress' budget allocation which is not dependable.
 - Proposition 84 bond funds have provided funding for many water recycling projects, but this source of funds is diminishing.
 - The Safe, Clean and Reliable Drinking Water Supply Act (Water Bond) approved by the legislature for voter consideration in 2010 included \$1.25 billion of funding for water recycling. Proposed

revisions to the Water Bond include reduced funding for recycled water.

Policy

ACEC California believes that water recycling is a key component of a reliable water supply to meet California's growing needs and to protect our water resources. In this effort ACEC California supports:

- Expanded education of regulatory agencies, legislators, and the public that recycled water should be viewed as a water source and not as wastewater.
- Regulations that allow recycled water to be treated to the level suitable for its intended use, thereby avoiding the expense of overtreatment where not appropriate.
- Revision and consolidation of the regulations for recycled water so that it is considered a water source, subject to regulation by the State Water Resources Control Board.
- Expansion of the use of recycled water for the purposes of direct potable reuse and groundwater recharge for indirect potable reuse and salt water barriers.
- Inclusion of significant funding in the Water Bond for water recycling projects.

Rationale

- Expanded water recycling will provide additional reliability and security to the State's water supply.
- Water recycling provides clean, quality water for reuse and potable use.
- Water recycling is an essential and appropriate use of water in California recognizing the arid cyclical climate of the state and the need to provide a diverse and reliable water supply to the entire state.
- Water recycling provides a sound economic benefit by delivering a long-term, dependable, and local reuse of water supplies.
- Water recycling helps protect the environment through the sustainable use of this vital resource.

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