

**American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) California
Policy Platform
Water Supply Reliability**

Approved by the Executive Committee on April 9, 2014

Approved by the Board of Directors on April 9, 2014

Issue

- Water defines California. Water is the cornerstone of California's economy, and supply reliability is vital to maintaining our way of life and the environment in which we live.
- Water storage capacity in California is finite, but precipitation and distribution are unreliable. Demand is steadily increasing with the population in California expected to increase by more than 10 million people over the next 20 years.
- Many of California's aquifers have been contaminated by years of poor environmental stewardship, rendering them useless as sources of potable water.
- Interpretations of the effects of climate change forecast less rainfall and smaller California snow packs reducing future water supplies to less than what we have relied upon in the past.
- Decades of water policies in California have focused on conservation, recycling, and redistribution of these finite water resources without interregional cooperation, coordination, or planning. These policies have deferred local water shortage problems, but have done little to develop a statewide water resources management plan.
- Water supply, storage, and conveyance projects result in environmental impacts, which need to be addressed while balancing the need for a reliable source of water for agricultural, human, and other uses.
- Competing political views and deep-rooted differences in public opinion between Northern, Central, and Southern California have stymied collaboration in developing common sense and science-based solutions for a sustainable water supply.
- The majority of the water supply for Northern, Central, and Southern California comes from the Sierra Nevada and passes through the Bay-Delta. The current Bay-Delta and California Aqueduct water distribution system does not allow for the efficient management of the seasonal precipitation, releases, or longer-term variables associated with water supply. The system does not adequately control saltwater intrusion and is a threat to the Bay-Delta ecosystem.
- California is currently unable to respond quickly to a natural or man-made disaster affecting our water supply or Delta ecosystem. Concerns include widespread levee failure due to earthquakes or longer term crises from population growth, drought, or more stringent environmental regulation.

- Water supply and water quality needs are different for agricultural, urban, and environmental uses, and steadfast opposition between these competing interests have resulted in legislative gridlock to the detriment of meaningful progress.

Policy

ACEC California believes that California must take immediate steps to improve the reliability of the water supply for all Californians, while concurrently protecting the environment. ACEC California supports:

- Continued economic growth supported by balanced statewide water resources planning and management for the benefit of all users.
- Continued and expanded water conservation efforts.
- Cleanup of contaminated aquifers to improve local supplies of high quality water.
- Further evaluation and development of water reuse/recycling projects and programs.
- Further evaluation and development of storm water capture projects and programs
- Further evaluation and development of viable desalination projects.
- Development of additional above-ground and below-ground storage sites, both north and south of the Delta.
- Implementation of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) to increase the reliability and security of fresh water supplies, protect against saltwater intrusion, manage water flow through the Bay-Delta, and restore and preserve the Delta ecosystem.
- Repair, reinforcement, and reconstruction of Delta levees and other levees to current standards to account for rising sea levels and protect against seismic or other causes of catastrophic failure.

Rationale

- The economy and quality of life in California depend on safe, reliable sources of clean water.
- California cannot plan for future economic and population growth without defining and implementing a statewide plan for water supply reliability.
- California must be prepared for potential catastrophic impacts on our limited water supply.
- The fragile Delta environment must be protected, while at the same time allowing sustainable solutions for water supply.

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