

CALIFORNIA WATER BOARDS



**STRATEGIC PLAN
SUMMARY
2008-2012**



STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARDS



Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor
State of California

Linda S. Adams, Secretary
California Environmental Protection Agency

State Water Resources Control Board
www.waterboards.ca.gov

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Message from the State Water Board Chair and State Water Board Executive Director

The Water Boards' *Strategic Plan 2008-2012* sets a new course for the State and Regional Water Boards.

Put simply, the *Strategic Plan* shows us where we want to go, how we want to get there, and how we will measure our progress.

This summary version of the *Strategic Plan* is a snapshot of the objectives and actions that we have established to meet our seven strategic goals. It is not meant to be detailed, but aims to give the reader an overview of our priorities and activities. To see the plan in its entirety, use the link below.

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/hot_topics/strategic_plan/2007update.shtml

Our underlying message is clear: be forward-thinking, use the best science available, and conduct business in an appropriately consistent and transparent manner, while protecting water quality and balancing the competing demands on our water resources.

Tam M. Doduc
State Water Board Chair

Dorothy Rice
Executive Director

Who We Are

The State Water Resources Control Board and the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards have broad responsibilities for ensuring the protection of California's surface and ground water quality, and for balancing competing demands on our water resources. Each Regional Water Board has nine part-time members who represent water supply, irrigated agriculture, industry, and municipal and county government for that region. The State Water Board has five full-time members who, like Regional Board members, fill specialty positions. State and Regional Board members are appointed to four-year terms by the Governor and are confirmed by the Senate.

In recognition that California's water pollution problems are influenced by environmental and social factors that vary regionally, the nine Regional Water Boards are based on watersheds, or hydrologic areas (see map on the last page). The Regional Water Boards serve as the frontline for State and federal water pollution control efforts. Each Regional Water Board conducts activities and makes water quality decisions for the protection of the waters within its region. These activities include developing water quality control plans (basin plans) for their watersheds that establish water quality standards and strategies, issuing waste discharge requirements (permits) based on the basin plans and State Water Board plans and policies, monitoring water quality, determining compliance with requirements, and taking enforcement actions.

The Regional Water Boards and the State Water Board work to ensure the protection of water quality in areas such as stormwater, wastewater treatment, water quality monitoring, wetlands protection, ocean protection, environmental education, environmental justice, contaminated sites cleanup, low-impact development, and enforcement. Where water quality issues cross Regional Water Board boundaries or have significant statewide application, the State Water Board may develop water quality control plans and policies, including standards, and general permits. The State Water Board also approves regional basin plans, reviews petitions of Regional Water Board actions, administers financial assistance programs (such as for water pollution control or cleanup), addresses enforcement, and provides administrative and other functions that support the Water Boards.

Last, the State Water Board is responsible for allocating water rights and adjudicating water right disputes. This joint authority of water allocation and water quality protection enables the Water Boards to comprehensively address protection of California's waters.

Our Vision

A sustainable California made possible by clean water and water availability for both human uses and environmental resource protection.

Our Mission

To preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources, and ensure their proper allocation and efficient use, for the benefit of present and future generations.

Principles and Values

- Protection
 -
- Sustainability
 -
- Integrity
 -
- Professionalism
 -
- Leadership
 -
- Collaboration
 -
- Service
 -
- Education/Outreach

Goals

Goal 1. Implement strategies to fully support the beneficial uses for all 2006-listed water bodies by 2030.

Goal 2. Improve and protect groundwater quality in high-use basins by 2030.

Goal 3. Increase sustainable local water supplies available for meeting existing and future beneficial uses by 1,725,000 acre-feet per year, in excess of 2002 levels, by 2015, and ensure adequate flows for fish and wildlife habitat.

Goal 4. Comprehensively address water quality protection and restoration, and the relationship between water supply and water quality, and describe the connections between water quality, water quantity, and climate change, throughout California's water planning processes.

Goal 5. Improve transparency and accountability by ensuring that Water Board goals and actions are clear and accessible, by demonstrating and explaining results achieved with respect to the goals and resources available, by enhancing and improving accessibility of data and information, and by encouraging the creation of organizations or cooperative agreements that advance this goal, such as establishment of a statewide water data institute.

Goal 6. Enhance consistency across the Water Boards, on an ongoing basis, to ensure our processes are effective, efficient, and predictable, and to promote fair and equitable application of laws, regulations, policies, and procedures.

Goal 7. Ensure that the Water Boards have access to information and expertise, including employees with appropriate knowledge and skills, needed to effectively and efficiently carry out the Water Boards' mission.

Goal 1: Implement strategies to fully support the beneficial uses for all 2006-listed water bodies by 2030.

- **Prepare, adopt, and take steps to carry out Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), designed to meet water quality standards, for all impaired water bodies on the 2006 list.**
 - ✓ Develop standard TMDL plan format, considering pollutant or TMDL groupings, and address all impairment pollutants in priority watersheds.
 - ✓ Where pollutant source control measures and a water body's capacity to receive pollutants is insufficient to meet water quality standards, consider whether it is appropriate to amend water right permits to augment stream flows or to revise standards.
 - ✓ Identify and take steps and strategies to restore water quality through policies and permits, which may eliminate need for a TMDL.

- **Manage urban runoff to reduce pollutant loadings, reduce wet weather beach posting by 75 percent by 2020, eliminate dry weather beach closures and postings by 2012, and promote sustainable water supplies.**
 - ✓ Encourage or require low impact development/green infrastructure techniques that promote stormwater reuse.
 - ✓ Establish a Low Impact Development Center in the Central Coast Region and collaborate with stakeholders to address impediments to LID and stormwater reuse.
 - ✓ Update coastal municipal stormwater permits to address beach closures and postings, and develop a statewide monitoring strategy to collect and post municipal, industrial, and construction stormwater data to inform regulatory decisions.

- **Take appropriate enforcement actions and innovative approaches as needed to protect and restore all surface waters.**
 - ✓ Update the State Water Board's Water Quality Enforcement Policy, and reduce the backlog of facilities subject to mandatory minimum penalties.
 - ✓ Pilot enforcement programs and innovative approaches to protect and restore coastal, ocean, and other surface waters by addressing "nurdles," spills, illegal discharges, irrigated agriculture, and other pollutant sources.

Goal 2: Improve and protect groundwater quality in high-use basins by 2030.

- **Start an integrated groundwater protection approach for high-use groundwater basins that regulates activities that impact or could impact beneficial uses, recognizes surface and groundwater interactions, and promotes local management of groundwater resources.**
 - ✓ Prepare and post an online map and water quality information on high-use groundwater basins, and regulate unregulated discharges that cause declining groundwater quality.
 - ✓ Encourage local entities to develop regional strategies to protect high-use groundwater basins, and work to direct funding for Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) development to assist those efforts.
 - ✓ Obtain resources to limit extractions in high-use basins where groundwater quality is declining and no regional protection strategies are in place.

- **Identify strategies to ensure that communities relying on groundwater contaminated by human-caused sources have a reliable drinking water supply.**
 - ✓ Work with other agencies to identify and address improperly destroyed, abandoned, or sealed wells that may contaminate groundwater used by the identified communities.
 - ✓ Take appropriate regulatory or enforcement action to address identified sources of groundwater contamination, and work to expedite funding for IRWMP development for these communities.

- **Ensure viability of high quality groundwater basins.**
 - ✓ Issue new or revised waste discharge requirements (WDRs) to high priority facilities.
 - ✓ Coordinate with the Department of Toxic Substances Control to focus on enforcement actions, investigations, and cleanup of contamination that has or could harm drinking water sources.

Goal 3: Increase sustainable local water supplies available for meeting existing and future beneficial uses by 1,725,000 acre-feet per year, in excess of 2002 levels, by 2015, and ensure adequate water flows for fish and wildlife habitat.

- **Promote best management practices (BMPs) and improve compliance with requirements for water conservation, consistent with the Bay-Delta Strategic Workplan, and other State and regional efforts.**
 - ✓ Work with other agencies and stakeholders to assess and update urban BMPs and efficient water management practices for agriculture, as appropriate.
 - ✓ Work with the Department of Water Resources to ensure that urban water suppliers effectively implement water demand management measures, and take action to limit waste and unreasonable water use where appropriate.
 - ✓ Validate water conservation plans and actions required under water right permits and licenses.

- **Promote recycled water use and stormwater reuse as locally available, sustainable supplies, consistent with implementation of the *California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006*, and other State and regional efforts.**
 - ✓ Where recycling of treated effluent is not maximized at wastewater treatment plants in areas of imported water supply, require that water recycling plans be developed and carried out.
 - ✓ Work with agencies and stakeholders to develop a stormwater reuse target that will be used to update Goal 3.
 - ✓ Revise funding criteria, where allowable, to ensure that Water Board-funded grant and loan projects enhance water reuse, water recycling, and groundwater recharge.

- **Ensure that adequate stream flows are available to protect fish and wildlife habitat while meeting the need to divert water for other uses.**
 - ✓ Work with the Department of Fish and Game and others to list priority streams for developing minimum stream flow objectives, and prepare one to three minimum stream flow proposals for consideration by the State Water Board.
 - ✓ For priority streams where minimum flow objectives are not being met, determine what State Water Board-mandated actions are necessary to protect the public trust.

Goal 4: Comprehensively address water quality protection and restoration, and the relationship between water supply and water quality, and describe the connections between water quality, water quantity, and climate change, throughout California's water planning processes.

- **Prepare, as a part of the *California Water Plan*, a comprehensive California Water Quality Plan to guide the State's water management activities, including protecting and restoring water quality through integrated statewide policies and plans, regional water quality control plans (Basin Plans), and the potential effects of climate change on water quality and supply.**
 - ✓ Create a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Water Resources to coordinate the development of a California Water Quality Plan and its incorporation into the *California Water Plan*.
- **Consistently organize and update Basin Plans to provide a clear structure of key elements and to fully integrate with Statewide policies and plans, such as the *California Ocean Plan*.**
 - ✓ Using statewide stakeholder assessments of State and regional needs for a statewide Basin Plan and Ocean Plan update, as well as stakeholder input on timing (related to the California Water Plan Update cycle), scope, and approach for Basin Plan updates, develop a statewide Basin Plan format and a user's guide and regulatory compendium.
- **Collaborate in third-party-initiated processes to meet Basin Plan amendment needs that address Water Board requirements and stakeholder interests.**
 - ✓ Work with stakeholders to identify and prioritize opportunities that provide resources to address basin planning issues of mutual concern during triennial reviews.

Goal 5: Improve transparency and accountability by ensuring that Water Board goals and actions are clear and accessible, by demonstrating and explaining results achieved with respect to the goals and resources available, by enhancing and improving accessibility of data and information, and by encouraging the creation of organizations or cooperative agreements that advance this goal, such as establishment of a statewide water data institute.

- **Improve Water Board systems, programs, functions, and business processes to enhance effective and consistent implementation of plans, policies, laws, and regulations, and to reduce processing time and costs.**
 - ✓ Prepare an inventory of Water Board programs and functions, and develop performance-based plans for effectiveness, efficiency, and clear results.
 - ✓ Improve Water Board processes, beginning with water right application processing and discharge permitting for readily identifying violations.
 - ✓ Develop and start an approach to link Underground Storage Tank reimbursements with measurable environmental progress.
 - ✓ Conduct Water Board organization and program reviews.
- **Enhance Water Board water quality data systems, and accessibility of web-based water body and facility data and information.**
 - ✓ Start CIWQS (database) Review Panel recommendations to improve data for Water Board regulatory programs.
 - ✓ Advance the start of the *Groundwater Quality Monitoring Act of 2001*.
 - ✓ Use online mapping technology to present Water Board data.
- **Develop recommendations for a publicly-accessible, statewide network to display all water quality data used for planning and decision-making.**
 - ✓ Determine scope and content of data network.
- **Create clear public access to web-based information, including a water quality report card that communicates the quality of the State's waters, Water Board performance in protecting those waters, and other issues.**
 - ✓ Considering stakeholder input, develop annual web-based reports on Water Board program effectiveness, beginning with compliance and enforcement.

Goal 6: Enhance consistency across the Water Boards, on an ongoing basis, to ensure our processes are effective, efficient, and predictable, and to promote fair and equitable application of laws, regulations, policies, and procedures.

- **Target consistency improvements in process and policy for Water Board enforcement activities to promote compliance.**
 - ✓ Adopt and begin revisions to the State Water Board's Water Quality Enforcement Policy to ensure consistent enforcement response, assessment of penalties for Class 1 violations, and assessment of liability in excess of economic gain from non-compliance.
 - ✓ Develop uniform hearing procedures for contested enforcement matters and templates for enforcement activities, separate enforcement and permitting staff, and instill processes to review draft WDRs and WDR waivers for enforceability.

- **Target consistency improvements in program delivery identified through past input, and solicit input on consistency issues as they arise.**
 - ✓ Develop guidance for evaluating effectiveness of municipal stormwater permits that will also apply, if feasible, to non-municipal stormwater permits and be used for developing all subsequent stormwater permits, beginning with the Phase II municipal separate storm sewer systems permit to create a baseline for consistency.
 - ✓ Implement public participation policies, procedures, or guidelines to improve Water Board procedures for adopting policies and regulatory actions.
 - ✓ Establish consistency issues as standing item at biannual meetings of State and Regional Water Board members, and establish a pilot program for interagency agreements when more than one Regional Water Board has jurisdiction over a regulated facility.
 - ✓ Initiate triennial review process for the State Water Board's "anti-degradation" policy.

Goal 7: Ensure that the Water Boards have access to information and expertise, including employees with knowledge and skills, needed to effectively and efficiently carry out the Water Boards' mission.

- **Enhance professional development opportunities for employees to increase their knowledge, skills, and expertise.**
 - ✓ Assess training needs, and develop and deliver courses and core curricula to meet those needs.
 - ✓ Develop a rotational program for all classifications to foster inter-program and inter-government collaboration.
- **Expand recruitment efforts of qualified professionals to fill Water Board vacancies.**
 - ✓ Establish a recruitment plan and recruiter training, and create partnerships with relevant State university systems, to attract qualified prospective employees.
- **Ensure information, including scientific research and developing science regarding emerging pollutants, is easily accessible by staff.**
 - ✓ Prepare inventory of Water Board and Water Board-funded research, and establish research agenda to guide funding of future needed research.
 - ✓ Establish an electronic repository for sharing best practices, models, templates, plans, policies, and research.
- **Leverage resources and expertise to enhance existing workforce capacity and field presence.**
 - ✓ Develop partnerships with other agencies with environmental inspection and regulatory enforcement authority.
 - ✓ Develop partnerships of federal, State, and local interests to examine connections between water quality, water quantity, and climate change on the coast from central California to Oregon border.
 - ✓ Establish a mechanism to make regional and subject matter experts available to any Water Board organization, and use staff teams to enhance Water Board effectiveness across regions and programs.

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