

Priority Setting for Task Force Topics Shift of Drinking Water Program from CDPH to SWRCB Recommendations by Self-Help Enterprises

There are a number of important topics that have been discussed in the past few months. Many of these important topics/issues can be better addressed by others on the task force. Our primary interface with both CDPH and the State Board has been in pursuing and securing funding for small disadvantaged communities to resolve their water and wastewater issues. We understand the proposed shift is being made, at least partially, to expedite funding to high priority water projects. We also understand there is support to target funding to the most needy disadvantaged communities.

We appreciate the current focus of both agencies on meeting the needs of small disadvantaged communities (DACs). We recommend utilizing the following best aspects of each funding program to target resources to small DACs, particularly severely DACs that have the most need to make solutions as affordable as possible to their residents:

State Board

- Continuous acceptance of applications and/or preapplications with quarterly updates of project list
- Expedited payment process within 30 days
- Utilization of the State Board's policy process for financial assistance programs rather than through much more time consuming regulatory process

CDPH

- Continuation of health based priority classes
- Incentives for consolidations and interconnections
- Pre-planning grants
- Covering necessary project land purchases
- Inclusion of design as last phase of planning projects
- Ability to contract with third party technical assistance providers that may not cover whole state, but serve areas that have concentrations of needs and DACs

We understand that projects need to move forward, but request caution in emphasizing the readiness to proceed ability of a large jurisdiction over the need to assist small DACs in becoming shovel ready.

We further recommend speeding up the payment process to borrowers/grantees by initiating a dialogue with the State Controller's Office with the assistance of the Governor's Office to make payments via electronic fund transfers (EFT)s.

Lastly, in conforming the two SRF programs together, we recommend conforming the best aspects of the two current programs and take into account the suggestions listed above in revising state laws that govern both the Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Fund and the Clean Water State Revolving Fund.