



Media Release

State Water Board welcomes 11 appointees to Advisory Group on safe drinking water funding

Group helps prioritize annual spending for the state's Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund

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[En Español](#)

SACRAMENTO – Today, the State Water Resources Control Board announced nine new appointments and two re-appointments to its [Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience \(SAFER\) Advisory Group](#), which advises the board on the [Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund's](#) annual spending priorities and ensures that the [board's safe-drinking-water efforts](#) benefit from stakeholder perspectives. The recent appointments round out nine continuing SAFER Advisory Group members who will serve until December 2023.

“Establishing a reliable supply of safe and affordable drinking water in communities without it is a responsibility that water systems, local agencies and communities themselves share with us,” said E. Joaquin Esquivel, chair of the State Water Board. “Advisory Group members directly participate in discussions about our funding plans and share their invaluable perspectives on what is most needed to bring about long-term solutions.”

The Advisory Group, which comprises members with diverse drinking-water backgrounds and experiences, includes representatives of public water systems, local agencies, tribes, non-governmental organizations, and residents served by domestic wells or water systems in disadvantaged communities. The group meets quarterly to provide feedback on key SAFER plans and proposals.

“I am very proud to be joining the advisory group. I see it as democracy in action,” said Sarah Rutherford from the Kaweah Water Foundation. “I’ve seen the group make a big difference for people around the state. Our role is to bridge the divide between those needing clean water and the programs available to help, and make sure that local voices are heard.”

In 2019, California enacted Senate Bill 200, establishing the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund (SADW) to ensure reliable access to safe and affordable drinking water to advance the [Human Right to Water](#). The same year, the board launched the SAFER drinking water program to administer the SADW Fund, as well as several complementary funding sources, providing a total of \$1.3 billion for drinking water



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projects. Each year, the board adopts and publishes a [Fund Expenditure Plan](#) to outline distribution goals for the SADW fund; the plan is developed in consultation with advisory group members.

The Advisory Group maintains 20 appointees who serve staggered two-year terms and are selected through an application process. The reappointed and newly appointed members represent communities from throughout California. Listed by [appointment category](#) and affiliation, they are:

- Tonya Moreno, Resident, Le Grand
- Eufemia Hernandez, Resident, Moss Landing
- Erick Orellana, Non-Governmental Organization, Community Water Center
- Ileana Miranda, Public Water System, San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.
- Kristen Dobbin, Public, UC Berkeley
- Castulo Estrada (Reappointed), Public Water System, Coachella Valley Water District
- Rob Burroughs, Resident, Cottonwood and State Small Water System Operator
- Martha Curiel, Public, Resident of Woodville
- Eva Dominguez, Technical Assistance Provider, Self-Help Enterprises
- Michael Prado, Sr. (Reappointed), Public Water System, Sultana Community Services District
- Sarah Rutherford, Local Agency, Kaweah Water Foundation

The following continuing SAFER Advisory Group Members will serve until December 2023:

- Jennifer Hazard, Non-Governmental Organization, RCAC
- Kassy Chauhan, Public, North Kings Groundwater Sustainability Agency
- Don James, Tribal, Tolowa Dee-Ni' Nation
- Isabel Solorio, Resident, Lanare Community
- Rami Kahlon, Public Water System, California Water Service
- James Sullivan, Resident, Domestic well owner in Mendocino
- Esther Espinoza, Resident, Domestic well owner in Riverdale
- Sergio Carranza, Technical Assistance Provider, Pueblo Unido CDC
- Ethel See Winchell, Resident, Dobbins Community

The State Water Board acknowledges and extends gratitude to the SAFER Advisory Group members who served from 2022-2023 and will no longer be serving in 2023-2024.

The State Water Board's mission is to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper water resource allocation and efficient use for current and future generations.



The SAFER Drinking Water Program includes projects funded by the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund, which is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide initiative that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment-particularly in disadvantaged communities.