



California  
DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY



## State Agencies Join Forces with White House Council on Environmental Quality on California Water Data Challenge

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**SACRAMENTO** – California state agencies today teamed up with the White House Council on Environmental Quality to launch the California Water Data Challenge, a competition to develop innovative, data-based tools that help California address its ongoing drought and assure a reliable, sustainable water system for the future.

The [California Water Data Challenge](#) invites individuals and teams to develop apps, websites, data visualizations and other tools that leverage publicly available datasets in novel ways to support creative solutions to California's water challenges, as outlined in the Brown administration's California Water Action Plan. The deadline for entries is Monday, Dec. 5, and awards will be announced on Friday, Dec. 9.

"This challenge allows us to take the data we have today and actually use it to far greater effect—to benefit water quality, ecosystem management, or any aspect of managing water resources," said Felicia Marcus, chair of the State Water Resources Control Board. "We have learned that the creative energy this type of event generates in a short period of time yields phenomenal benefits, so we are grateful to the Council on Environmental Quality for partnering with us on this project."

The [State Water Board](#), as well as the [California Department of Water Resources](#), [California Fish and Wildlife](#), [California Government Operations Agency](#) and the [California Department of Technology](#), are sponsoring the data challenge.

The data challenge is guided by the [California Water Action Plan](#), which serves as a roadmap to put California on a sustainable water management path. Based on the plan's objectives, participants are asked to address how data might be used to help achieve more reliable water

supplies, restore important species and wildlife habitat, and make California's water systems more resilient. The Water Action Plan highlights the need for more accessible data to help achieve these broad goals.

Participants are invited to use publicly available data to create tools that focus on specific challenges outlined in the Water Action Plan, including: uncertain water supplies; water scarcity/drought; declining groundwater supplies; poor water quality; declining native fish species and loss of wildlife habitat; floods; supply disruptions; and population growth and climate change.

"We have an opportunity to invite the tech community to share innovative, data-driven solutions to address California's water challenges," said Mark Cowin, director of the California Department of Water Resources. "California is facing climate change head on with increasingly extreme weather conditions. Water conservation is the new norm. Smart use of data will help all Californians better adapt to our water realities, both today and in the long-term future."

Participants will have access to a wide variety of water-related datasets available through the State of California's [Open Data Portal](#) and the National Water Quality Monitoring Council, which maintains a [data portal housing water quality information](#) from federal agencies. Other water-related datasets can also be obtained from the agencies that collect and maintain water data in California.

Those interested in participating must submit their entries by 5 p.m., Monday, Dec. 5. Judging and announcement of the awards will take place on Dec. 9. For more information on the challenge and how to get involved, visit the California Water Data Challenge website at [waterchallenge.data.ca.gov/](http://waterchallenge.data.ca.gov/). A virtual check-in meeting will be held Nov. 10 for participants to ask questions and share initial concepts. You can learn more about the California Water Data Challenge from the White House Council on Environmental Quality's [announcement](#).

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