



Water Boards

State Water Board Announces New Executive Director

Former Federal Official Eileen Sobeck Brings 40 Years of Government Experience

SACRAMENTO -- After a lengthy, competitive, and deliberative process, the State Water Resources Control Board has named Eileen Sobeck as its next Executive Director. She replaces Tom Howard, who retired in May 2017.

After reviewing a wealth of qualified applicants, the State Water Board selected Sobeck due to her substantial managerial and environmental experience. She has nearly 40 years of government service, and more than a decade of executive and management experience leading professional staff in complex organizations.

Sobeck will be new to state government, but has spent her career in federal agencies that touch on many of the same science-based, public resource challenges the State Water Board faces.

Most recently she headed the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries as the Assistant Administrator at the Department of Commerce (2014-2017). Prior to her work at NOAA she was the Department of Interior's Acting Assistant Secretary for Insular Affairs (2012-2014), and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks (2009-2012). Sobeck is a lawyer by training and spent 25 years at the U.S. Department of Justice, ultimately serving as Deputy Assistant Attorney General for Environment and Natural Resources (1999-2009).

While Sobeck has spent her professional career in Washington, D.C., she has many ties to California. She grew up in Davis, is a graduate of Stanford and Stanford Law School, and has strong family connections to California.

Sobeck will join the State Water Board following the Labor Day holiday weekend.

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