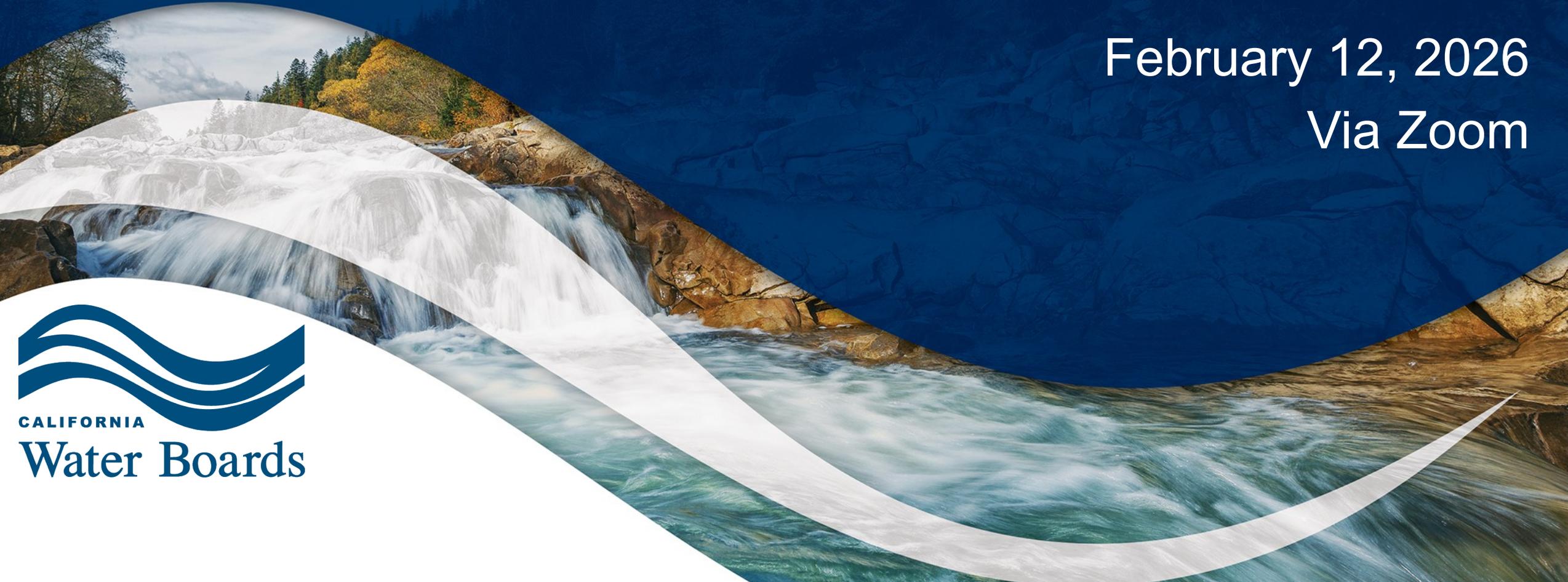


SAFER Advisory Group Onboarding

February 12, 2026

Via Zoom



Ways to Participate

Submit a comment:

- Email safer@waterboards.ca.gov with subject “AGM Public Comment,” or
- Register and share your public comment during the Public Comment section: <https://bit.ly/2026Onboarding>

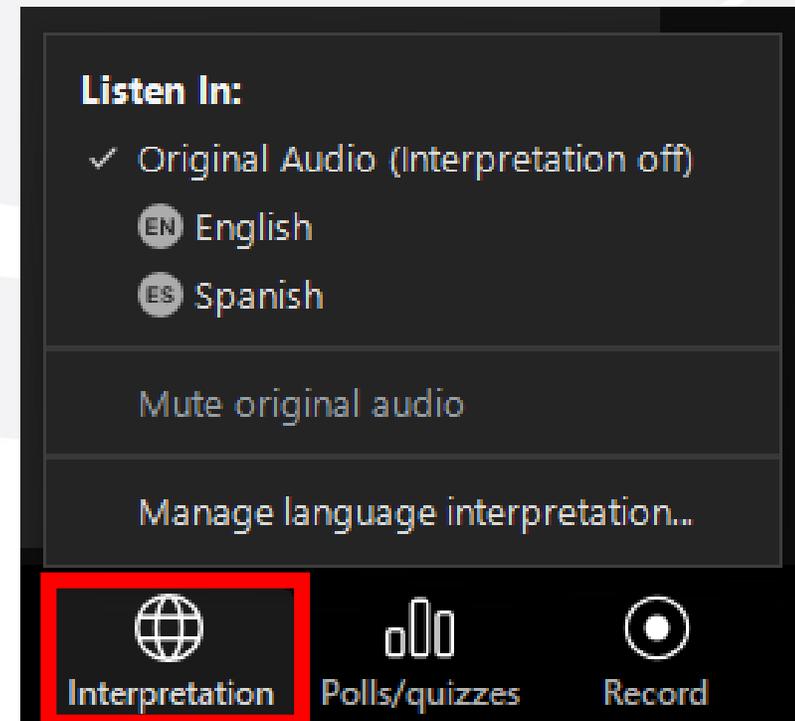
Technical assistance: safer@waterboards.ca.gov



Language Interpretation through Zoom

Click the **Interpretation** icon in your meeting controls

- Navigate to Language Channels
- You must select English or Spanish
- If listening in Spanish, click **Mute Original Audio**

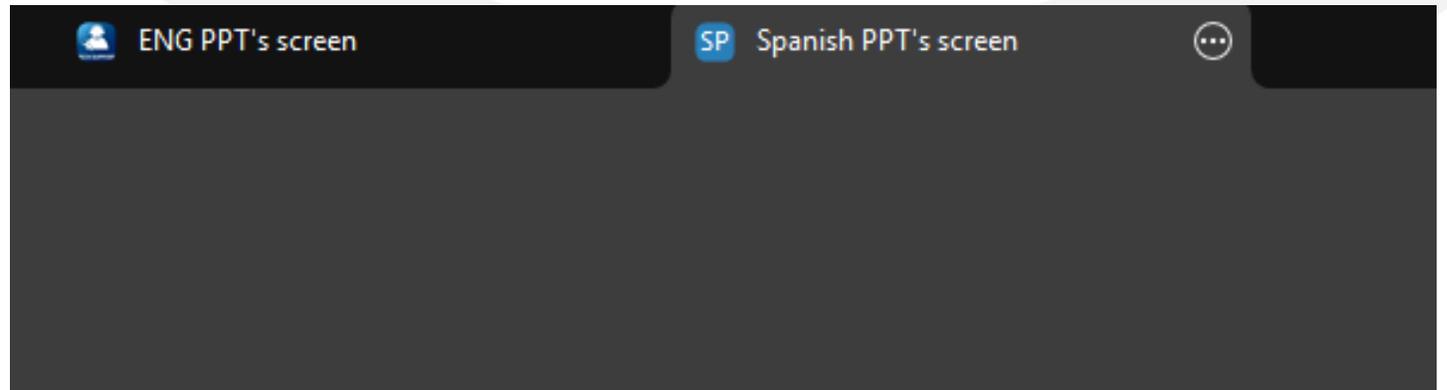


For technical assistance, email: SAFER@waterboards.ca.gov

View Presentation Options

Click on one of the **Tab Options**
at the top of your screen:

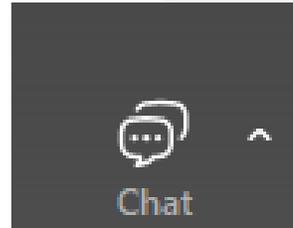
- "Spanish PPT"
- OR
- "ENG PPT"



For technical assistance, email: SAFER@waterboards.ca.gov

Zoom Interactions

Click on **Chat**.



- To send or read a message from participants or staff.
- To communicate with staff a technical issue.

Click on
Raise Hand



- Raise your hand to ask to speak.

Introductions

Alma López

Office of Public Engagement,
Equity, and Tribal Affairs

SAFER Advisory Group Introductions

- Your name
- Community you represent and/or come from
- Newly appointed or continuing Advisory Group member
- Why did you join the Advisory Group and what do you hope to contribute?

Agenda

- I. Water Boards Overview
- II. SAFER Drinking Water Program Overview
- III. SAFER Advisory Group Overview
- IV. Collaboration Session
- V. Public Comment

Meeting Guidelines

- Mute yourself when not speaking
- Join by video
- Take breaks as needed
- Speak slowly
- Raise your hand for comments or questions
- Keep your comments concise and to the point
- For technical support: safer@waterboards.ca.gov



Water Boards Overview

Amelia Nishimura

Office of Public Engagement, Equity,
and Tribal Affairs





Water Boards' Mission

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 the benefit of present and future generations.

History of the Water Boards



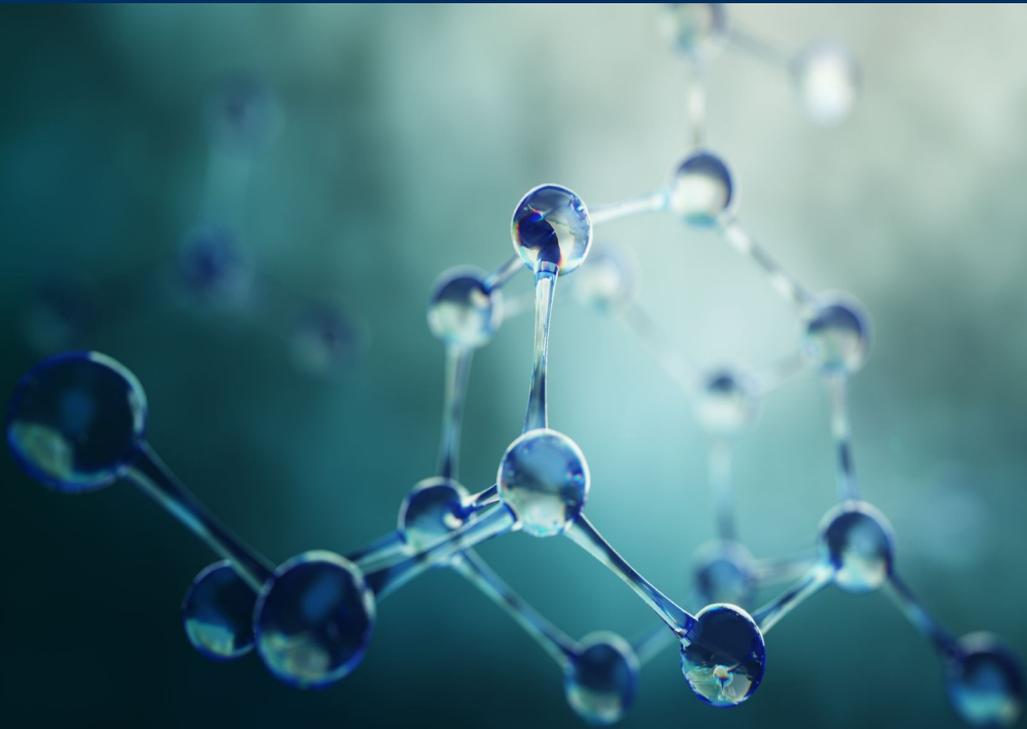
Water Boards Structure



SAFER DRINKING WATER



SAFE AND AFFORDABLE FUNDING FOR EQUITY AND RESILIENCE



A set of tools, funding sources, and regulatory authorities coordinated to assist communities as they work to develop local capacity to ensure reliable access to safe drinking water.

Why is the SAFER drinking water program necessary?

Public Water System:

- 98% of California receive drinking water that meet standards.
- ~400 out of ~3,000 public water systems do not consistently meet drinking water standards.

Domestic wells and state small water systems:

- ~298,715 domestic wells
- ~1,235 state small water systems (SSWS)

At-Risk:

- ~93,028 domestic wells
- ~205 state small water systems (SSWS)

Tribal water systems:

In 2025, 16 out of 128 federally regulated tribal water systems met the criteria for a failing water system.



Drinking Water Needs Assessment Dashboard

Drinking Water Challenges



Water quality



Technical capacity



Water supply



Managerial



Financial



Governance

SAFER DRINKING WATER

SAFE AND AFFORDABLE FUNDING FOR EQUITY AND RESILIENCE

SAFER Drinking Water Program Tools

To support safe, affordable, and reliable drinking water, SAFER uses the following tools:



Comprehensive water system support



Regulatory authorities



Technical assistance



Funding sources



Annual drinking water needs assessment



Community outreach and engagement



SAFER Advisory Group

Needs Assessment and the SAFER Program



NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Identifies Failing & At-Risk water systems. Quantifies interim & long-term needs.



SAFER ADVISORY GROUP

Uses the Needs Assessment to advise State Water Board SAFER Priorities.



SAFER FUND EXPENDITURE PLAN

Needs Assessment & SAFER Advisory Group inform funding priorities for the Fund.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Staff & technical assistance providers engage with Failing & At-Risk communities.



ACHIEVE HUMAN RIGHT TO WATER

SAFER funding & technical assistance used to implement long-term solutions.

Questions and Answers



- Raise your hand to ask questions
- Wait for your turn
- Turn on microphone
- Speak slowly
- Limit your questions to 3 minutes
- Turn off microphone

Public comment or technical assistance? Please email:
safer@waterboards.ca.gov

California Drinking Water Needs Assessment Overview

Dan Wang
Division of Drinking Water



Failing List



Failing Water
System List

Community Water Systems &
Non-community K-12 Schools

The State Water Board assesses water systems that fail to meet the goals of the Human Right to Water.

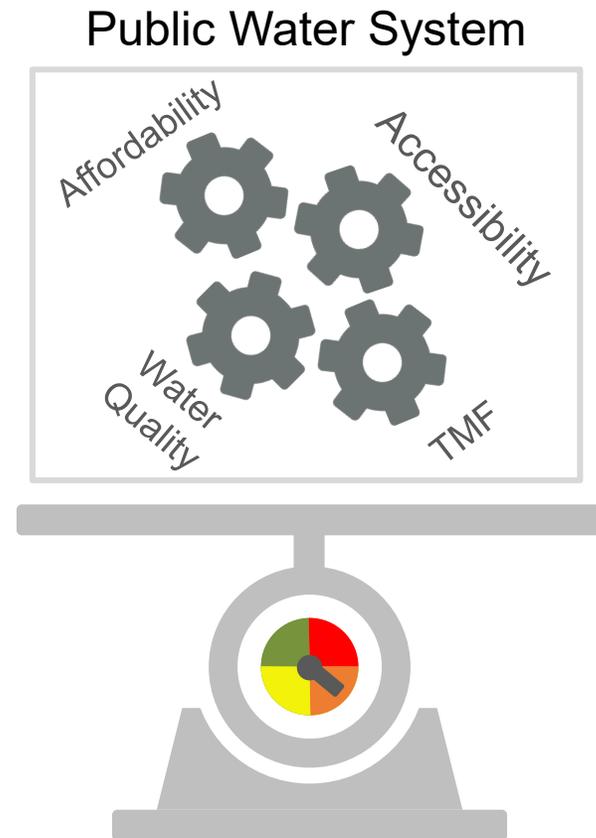
Failing water systems are systems that are **out of compliance** or **consistently fail** to meet drinking water standards.

98% of California receive drinking water that meets standards.

Failing Criteria

Criteria	What It Means	Before April 2021	April 2021 – April 2024	After April 2024
Primary MCL Violation	A health-based contaminant exceeds an MCL, and the system has an <i>open enforcement</i> action.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Secondary MCL Violation	Taste, odor, color, etc. exceeds an MCL, and there is an <i>open enforcement</i> action.	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>E. coli</i> Violation	Detection of, or failure to test for, bacteria, and there is an <i>open enforcement</i> action.	No	Yes	Yes
Treatment Technique Violations	A system fails to follow required treatment techniques and has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •One violation and an <i>open enforcement</i> action; or •Three or more violations within 3 years. 	Partially	Expanded	Yes
Monitoring and Reporting Violations	A system has three or more occurrences of missed or late testing/reporting within the last 3 years, and at least one occurrence where an <i>enforcement action</i> has been open for 15 months or longer.	No	Yes	Yes
Source Capacity & Water Outage Violations	The system is unable to deliver water, has insufficient water pressure or is missing a required planning study, and there is an <i>open enforcement</i> action.	No	No	Yes

Risk Assessment for Public Water Systems



RISK ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY



RISK INDICATORS

Quantifiable measurements of key data used to assess a water system's risk of becoming non-compliant with water quality standards.



RISK INDICATOR THRESHOLDS

Values associated with a risk indicator that designates when a water system is more at-risk of becoming non-compliant with water quality standards.



WEIGHTS / SCORES

Application of weight to each risk indicator and indicator category – some are more critical than others in contributing to overall risk.

Risk Indicators

Category	Indicators
Water Quality	Increasing Presence of Water Quality Trends Toward MCL
	Percentage of Sources Exceeding an MCL
	Past Presence on the Failing List
	Constituents of Emerging Concern
	History of <i>E. coli</i> Presence
	Treatment Technique Violations

Category	Indicators
Accessibility	Absence of Interties
	Number of Sources
	DWR – Drought & Water Shortage Risk Assessment Results
	Critically Overdrafted Groundwater Basin
	Bottled or Hauled Water Reliance
	Source Capacity Violations

Risk Indicators

Category	Indicators
Affordability	Household Socioeconomic Burden
	Percent of Median Household Income (%MHI)
	Extreme Water Bill

Category	Indicators
TMF Capacity	Total Net Annual Income
	Operating Ratio
	Days Cash on Hand
	Monitoring and Reporting Violations
	Significant Deficiencies
	Operator Certification Violations

Risk Assessment for State Small Water Systems & Domestic Wells



Cost Assessment



SB 200 directs the State Water Board to estimate “anticipated funding needs” related to the implementation of interim and/or emergency measures and longer-term solutions for Failing and At-Risk systems.

Results of the Cost Assessment (in 2024 Needs Assessment) are used to inform the prioritization of existing SAFER funding.

The Cost Assessment is NOT intended to inform local decisions.



2021 – 2025 Drinking Water Needs Assessment

CALIFORNIA WATER BOARDS
State Water Resources Control Board

Board Programs Drinking Water Water Quality Water Rights Notices Water Boards Search

SAFER DRINKING WATER
SAFE AND AFFORDABLE FUNDING FOR EQUITY AND RESILIENCE

Home | Drinking Water | Certlic | Drinkingwater | Needs

California Drinking Water Needs Assessment

Needs Assessment Core Components:

- Failing Water System List
- Risk Assessment
- Cost Assessment
- Affordability Assessment

In 2019, to advance the goals of the Human Right to Water "HR2W", California passed Senate Bill 200, which enabled the State Water Board to establish the Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) Program. Foremost among the tools created for SAFER is the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund. The Fund provides up to \$130 million per year through 2030 to enable the State Water Board to develop and implement sustainable solutions for underperforming drinking water systems. The annual Fund Expenditure Plan prioritizes projects for funding, documents past and planned expenditures, and is "based on data and analysis drawn from the drinking water Needs Assessment."

For more information on SAFER, visit the [Safe and Affordable Fund for Equity and Resilience \(SAFER\) website](#).

2023 Needs Assessment

Subscribe directly to the SAFER Drinking Water Email List

News & Upcoming Events

- Public Webinar on Proposed Updates to the Cost Assessment Model – Physical Consolidation Analysis**
Date: Friday July 14, 2023
Time: 9:00 am to 11:00 am PDT
Register Here
Public Notice: English | Spanish

Dashboards

SAFER Dashboard

Risk Assessment for State Small Water Systems and Domestic Wells Dashboard

Access the **2021** report here:

<https://bit.ly/3mAz2yK>

Access the **2022** report here:

<https://bit.ly/3uJSUFH>

Access the **2023** report here:

<https://bit.ly/SAFER-NA-Report-23>

Access the **2024** report here:

<https://bit.ly/43FvZeX>

Access the **2025** report here:

<https://bit.ly/3ZMzzSD>

Learn more on **Needs Assessment**

here: <https://bit.ly/SAFER-NA>

Questions and Answers



- Raise your hand to ask questions
- Wait for your turn
- Turn on microphone
- Speak slowly
- Limit your questions to 3 minutes
- Turn off microphone

Public comment or technical assistance? Please email:
safer@waterboards.ca.gov

BREAK



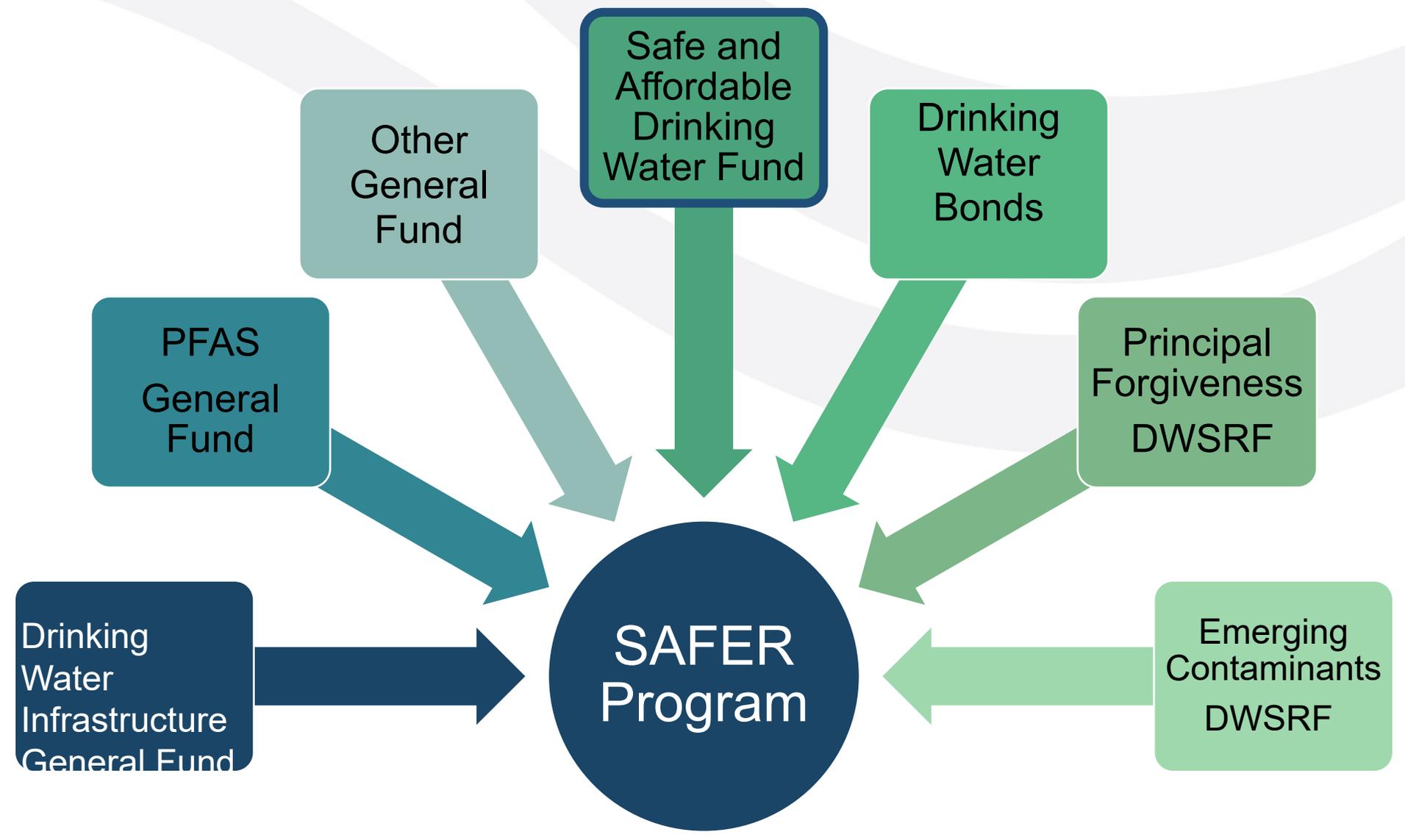
Annual Fund Expenditure Plan Overview

Jeff Wetzel

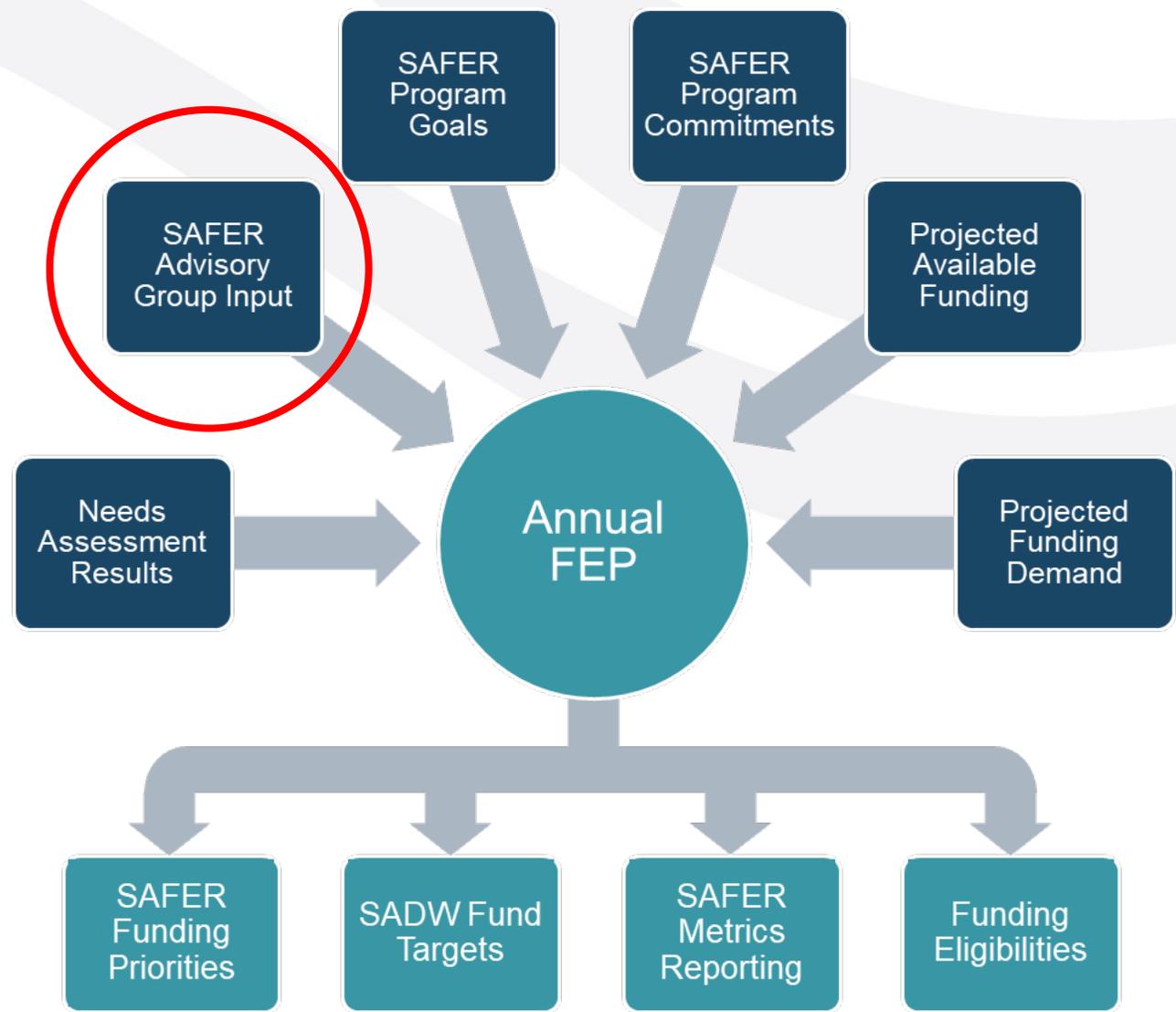
Division of Financial Assistance



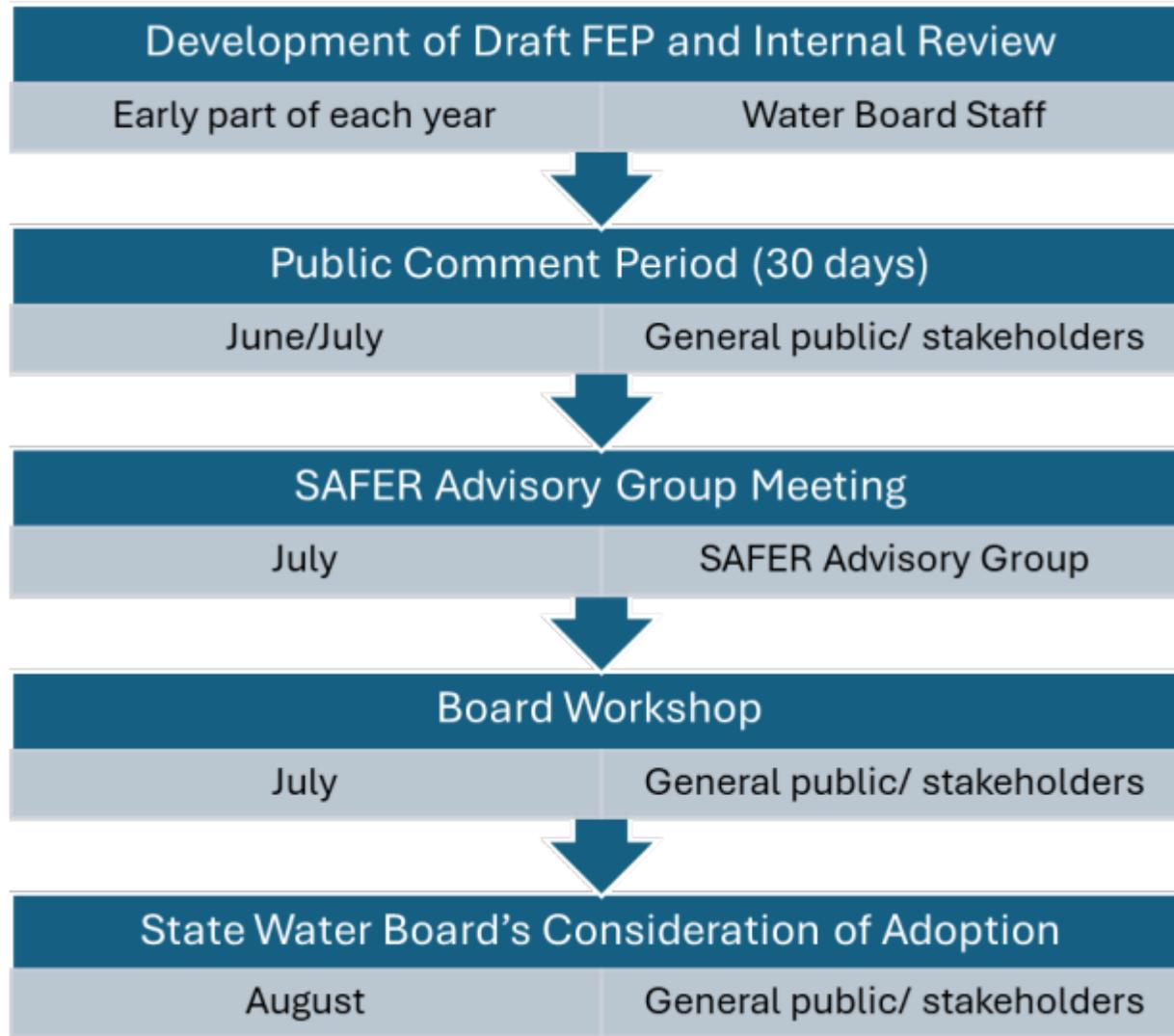
SAFER Program Funding Sources



Fund Expenditure Plan



Fund Expenditure Plan Public Process



Division of Financial Assistance: Role within the SAFER Program

Technical Assistance

- Work with third-party providers to provide engineering, legal, environmental, and other services.
- Provide training for technical or managerial staff.
- Assist with outreach and engagement at local levels.
- Prepare planning and/or construction funding applications.
- Conduct full planning projects and submit associated construction funding applications.

Small Community Drinking Water Planning and Construction Section

- Assist with development of the annual Intended Use Plan.
- Develop comprehensive and fundable lists.
- Fund planning and construction projects under the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) or Expediting Drinking Water Grant (EDWG) Program.

Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Section

- Support Domestic Wells and State Small Water Systems.
- Provide operation and maintenance support.
- Fund Administrators, as needed.
- Fund emergency projects, interim solutions (bottled/hailed water), or construction projects under the Urgent Drinking Water Needs (UDWN) Program.

Questions and Answers



- Raise your hand to ask questions
- Wait for your turn
- Turn on microphone
- Speak slowly
- Limit your questions to 3 minutes
- Turn off microphone

Public comment or technical assistance? Please email:
safer@waterboards.ca.gov

SAFER Advisory Group Overview

Alma López

Office of Public Engagement,
Equity, and Tribal Affairs



Who Implements SAFER?

Community Groups

Department of Information Technology

Non-profits **Advisory Group** **Office of Public Affairs**

Division of Drinking Water **Funding Partners**

Technical Assistance providers **Water systems**

Department of Financial Assistance

Office of Legislative Affairs **Residents** **Elected Officials**

Legislature **Office of Public Participation** **California tribes**

Office of Communications **Indian Health Services**

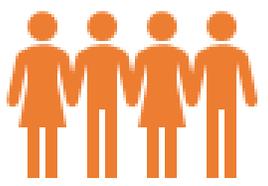
Office of Chief Counsel **Schools**

Domestic well residents

SAFER Advisory Group



Established by Board Resolution No. 2019-0060



Composed of 19 representatives from 7 categories



Advisory Group Members serve 2-year terms



Governed by a charter

SAFER Advisory Group Role

The Advisory Group **advises the Board on:**

-  Annual Needs Assessment
-  Priorities of the Fund Expenditure Plan.
-  Advance California's Human Right to Water
-  Advance the Water Board's commitment to racial equity.

The Advisory Group **does not:**

-  Approve plans, documents or make policy decisions.
-  Evaluate individual applications for funding.
-  Develop consensus recommendations or majority opinions.

How are SAFER Advisory Group recommendations shared with the State Water Board?

State Water Board staff keep Advisory Group meeting notes.

Advisory Group recommendations are discussed at SAFER executive meeting.

Advisory Group comments are included in SAFER program presentations to the State Water Board.

The SAFER executive leadership decides whether Advisory Group recommendations at staff level can be accepted/implemented.

Advisory Group recommendations at policy level are presented to the State Water Board to determine next steps.

Expectations & Responsibilities

Alma López

Office of Public Engagement, Equity,
and Tribal Affairs

SAFER Advisory Group Charter

- Purpose and background of the group
- Member responsibilities
- Meeting procedures and protocol
- Travel reimbursement



What are Advisory Group member responsibilities?

1. Attend all meetings
2. Prepare for each meeting
3. Commit to be fully present for the entire duration of the meeting
4. Notify Board staff if you will be absent (no alternates)
5. Ask questions
6. Share your advice
7. Respond to emails/calls from Board staff
8. Resign if unable to actively participate in the group



Resources

Alma López

Office of Public Engagement, Equity,
and Tribal Affairs

Language Access Services

The SAFER Drinking Water Program commits to providing English and Spanish language services for Advisory Group meetings:

- Translation of written documents
 - Communications
 - Materials packet
- Interpretation services
 - In-person
 - Via Zoom
- Bilingual staff assistance



Legal Considerations

Lauren Marshall
Office of Chief Counsel



Legal Considerations Overview

- Legal Context for SAFER Advisory Group
- Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act
- Ethical Conduct
- Charter for the SAFER Advisory Group



Legal Context

- The Advisory Group is required by law. See Health and Safety Code section 116768.5.
- Advisory bodies are distinct from decision making bodies and limited to an advisory role.
- Group Charter lays out additional rules and protocol.

Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act

- **Advisory group meetings are subject to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act.**
- **Meetings must be publicly noticed and open to the public.**
- **Members must avoid “serial meetings” outside public eye, including email or social gatherings.**
- **Rules for remote or hybrid meetings:**
 - Appear on camera or announce technical issues.
 - Provide notice if you intend to participate in a hybrid meeting from a remote location.

Ethical Conduct

- Review your organization's internal policies and contracts.
- Avoid any conflicts of interest.
- Serve only in an advisory capacity.

Advisory Group Charter

- Copy included in your Handbook and available online.
- Important information on:
 - Appointment and Term of Appointments
 - Compensation and Expenses
 - Member Responsibilities
 - Procedural Rules
 - Meeting Protocol

Questions and Answers



- Raise your hand to ask questions
- Wait for your turn
- Turn on microphone
- Speak slowly
- Limit your questions to 3 minutes
- Turn off microphone

Public comment or technical assistance? Please email:
safer@waterboards.ca.gov

Collaboration Session

Alma López
Office of Public Engagement, Equity,
and Tribal Affairs



SAFER Advisory Group Collaboration Session

- Discuss your experience with the SAFER Drinking Water Program.
- Discuss what barriers might be preventing communities from fully participating in the program.



Public Comments

Alma López
Office of Public Engagement, Equity,
and Tribal Affairs



Public Comments Guidelines



In-person

1. Raise your hand
2. Wait to be called on
3. Speak slowly
4. Limit comments to 3 minutes



Remote

1. Email comment to: safer@waterboards.ca.gov.
2. Follow instructions in the return email to join Zoom.
3. Wait to be called on. Speaking time is limited to 3 minutes
4. For technical or language assistance, email: safer@waterboards.ca.gov.

Closing Remarks and Next Steps

Alma López
Office of Public Engagement, Equity,
and Tribal Affairs

Thank you!

¡Gracias!

safer@waterboards.ca.gov

(916) 445-5615