Status of Water Transfers

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Drought Management Team
Water Transfers Initiatives

• **Executive Order B-21-13**  May 2013
  – Expedite Review and Processing of Voluntary Water Transfers

• **Governor’s Emergency Drought Proclamations**
  – January 17 2014  Action 4, 5 and 9
  – April 25, 2014  Actions 2 and 19

• **Coordination Meetings**
  – SWRCB, USBR, CDFW, USFW, NMFS
  – Technical Team
  – Buyers / Sellers
  – Public Listening Session

• **California Water Action Plan**
  – Management Actions in Support of Water Transfers
Ongoing Process Improvements

• DWR Streamlining Process
  – Improving Contracting Procedures for Transfers Dependent on SWP Facilities
  – Facilitating Fast-Tracking of Transfers with Appropriate Supporting Documentation
  – Improving Coordination and Alignment with SWRCB, USBR, CDFA, USFW, NMFS
  – Updating Transfer Information on Web
  – Clearinghouse Approach for Current Transfers
**Public Outreach Tools**

**2014 Department of Water Resources (DWR) Water Transfers Activities**

**MANAGEMENT OF WATER TRANSFERS IN CALIFORNIA AND DWR’S ROLE**

Voluntary water transfer asset in assisting water supply portfolio for areas experiencing water scarcity. The volume of water transfers in the state has grown over the last 20 years, and since 2005, the annual totals have ranged from 1.2 million acre-feet (MAF) to 1.7 MAF (PPIC, 2012). Cross Delta transfers are a small component of the total.

Water transfers are voluntary actions proposed by willing buyers and sellers, and are not initiated by state agencies. DWR is one of several public agencies involved in approval and management of proposed water transfers in California, and DWR’s involvement is due to its management of the State Water Project and export facilities in the Delta. Other includes the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, US Bureau of Reclamation, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, county governments, and local/regional water districts. DWR’s jurisdiction is limited to transfers affecting the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) export facilities of the State Water Project; this represents a small fraction of statewide transfers. For example, for 2013, DWR facilitated about 265 thousand acre-feet of water transfers through State Water Project facilities.

DWR and other involved public agencies must address all legal requirements, ensure that transfers meet beneficial uses, that proposed transfers are a real water supply, and that they continue to serve as a responsible water shortage management tool in the public interest. Approval of transfers must consider water rights, environmental impacts, area of origin impacts, storage and conveyance agreements, and other issues; the complexity of the situation and the extent of necessary inter-agency coordination will dictate the time required to grant an approval. In coordination with other agencies, DWR’s primary role is to approve and facilitate responsible transfers within its area of jurisdiction and coordinate with and provide guidance to buyers and sellers.

**Actions Underway**

DWR is working to streamline and improve its processes and guidance for water transfers. DWR hosted a meeting with representative buyers and sellers in August 2013 where the following specific recommendations were received: (1) improve outreach, (2) refine transfer process schedule, (3) conduct regular coordination with applicants, (4) prepare technical guidance information, (5) simplify process and reduce administrative costs, (6) form work groups, (7) develop fast tracking procedures for proposals, (8) develop template agreements, and (9) rely on existing information and data from transfer proponents for crop-land using and groundwater substitution transfers. DWR is acting on these recommendations, along with additional direction from the Governor’s California Water Action Plan (October 2013 draft), Governor’s Executive Order B-21-13, and the California State Drought Emergency Proclamation declared on January 17, 2014. Because this process has already begun, the proclamation of drought by the Governor reinforces the need for work underway.

The following work is already underway to streamline processes for 2014 water transfers:

- Maintain existing guidance for preparing water transfer proposals; Sellers will continue to use the 2013 guidance material for 2014 proposals. It can be found at [http://www.water.ca.gov/watertransfers/](http://www.water.ca.gov/watertransfers/).
- Facilitate fast-tracking: DWR has established an addendum to DRAFT Technical Information for Preparing Water Transfer Proposals that will facilitate fast-tracking for many transfers in 2014. The addendum can be found at [http://www.water.ca.gov/watertransfers/](http://www.water.ca.gov/watertransfers/).
- Improve contracting procedures: DWR has developed standardized templates and related contracting materials to assist transfer proponents and approving agencies.
- Agency alignment: DWR is working to strengthen alignment of the management of short and long term water transfers with the State Water Board and USBR. Several coordination meetings have already been held since October.

Moving forward, DWR’s strategic approach is to organize its improvements in the five key areas listed below, to support DWR’s leadership in the broader arena of critical water shortage/drought management for California.

- Statewide management of water transfers/outreach: Conduct public outreach and foster transparency to provide the public and all interested parties with detailed information on statewide water transfers.
- Technical, operational, and administrative rules: Continue to improve guidance by addressing internal review and contracting processes, as well as water transfer operations and verification methods.
- Water management assessments: Continue to develop and periodically update detailed technical guidance related to the different types of water transfers.
- Environmental and local ordinance consideration: Consider development of long term environmental documentation for water transfers to address potential cumulative impacts and other issues of concern.
- Operational transfer system: Continue to develop tools and analytical capabilities to address transfer capacity determination, system water management information, and transfer management.

**For additional information, contact**

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Or visit us on the Web at [www.water.ca.gov](http://www.water.ca.gov)

**DWR Water Transfers website:** [http://www.water.ca.gov/watertransfers/](http://www.water.ca.gov/watertransfers/)

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Short Term Improvements
Process Streamlining


Step 1: Technical Information (Plan and Update Draft Technical Information for Water Transfers (DTIWT))
- Buyers/Seller provide feedback to DWR

Step 2: Proposal Development (Evaluate Interest and Prepare Water Transfer and Environmental Document)
- By Feb 1, Submit Environmental Document or Petition for Change to SWRCB
- By Feb 1, submit conditional draft proposal to DWR/USBR

Step 3: Proposal Review and Contracting (Evaluate Proposals and track/report on anticipated conveyance capacity)
- By Mar 15, certify any CEQA documentation or have obtained approval from SWRCB
- By Mar 15, potential groundwater substitution Sellers will update and finalize 2014 proposals including wells participating in the transfers
- By Apr 1, potential crop idling Sellers update and finalize, as applicable, proposals including the fields participating in the transfers

Step 4: Operations and Verification (Transfer Water: Operations, Monitoring, and Reporting)
- Collect, analyze, and submit Monitoring and Reporting information for submittal to DWR/USBR
- Provide transfer water as scheduled and in coordination with SWP and CVP operations

2013
- Summer: DWR/USBR lead effort
- Fall: DWR/USBR discuss need for update or revision of DTIWT

2014
- Summer: By Apr 1, DWR issues approval decision on proposed groundwater substitution transfers including participating wells, executes conveyance agreements with buyers and sellers, and issue 1810 findings
- Summer: By Apr 15, issues approval decision on proposed crop idling transfers including participating fields, execute 2014 conveyance agreements with buyers and sellers, and issue 1810 findings
- Fall: Verify Transfer Water (July-Sept)
- Fall: Provide feedback based on evaluation of monitoring data for future year transfers in 2015

continued to monitor conveyance capacity

DWR and Reclamation will expedite review and approval of proposals meeting the above deadlines but does not preclude proposals submitted after the deadlines. When preparing proposals, please use the schedule along with the guidance provided in the 2014 Draft Technical Information for Preparing Water Transfer Proposals, http://www.water.ca.gov/watertransfers/.
2014 Transfers

• **Groundwater Substitution Transfers:**
  – Expedite Proposals Similar to Approved in 2013
  – Accept Wells Previously Approved by DWR from 2009 - 2013
  – Stream flow Depletion Factor for Remain Unchanged for 2014 Unless Not Appropriate

• **Cropland Idling**
  – Expedited DWR Field Surveys
  – Additional DWR Staff Resources
Long Term Management Improvements

• Statewide Management of Transfers and Outreach
  – Continue to Conduct Public Outreach with Stakeholders to Foster Transparency
  – Continue to Provide Detailed Information to Public

• Technical, Operational, and Administrative
  – Continue to Improve Efficiencies in
    • Internal Review Processes
    • Contracting Processes
    • Water Transfer Operations
    • Verification Methods
Long Term Management Improvements

- **Water Management Assessments**
  - Continue to Develop and Update Technical Guidance for Different Types of Water Transfers

- **Environmental and Local Ordinance Consideration**
  - U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and SLDMWA Developing a Long-Term Environmental Document
  - Local Groundwater Studies and Restrictions
  - Multi-benefit Transfers

- **Operational Transfer System**
  - Continue to Develop Tools and Analytical Capabilities
    - Improved System Water Management Information
    - Improved Determination of Transfer Capacity
    - Improve Transfer Management and Oversight
For Additional Information on Water Transfers

http://www.water.ca.gov/watertransfers/