

# VISION



FOR OUR WATER FUTURE

Lead on Water



Protect Affordability



**ACTION**

**IS NEEDED  
NOW**



Deliver Critical  
Infrastructure



Modernize Water  
Management

## The Vision

*The Vision For  
Our Water  
Future is a  
framework to  
advance unified  
priorities*



# 1. Lead on Water



- Set a Bold Water Agenda (First 100 Days)
- Appoint Leaders to Deliver Results
- Unify State Agencies



## 2. Protect Affordability



- Secure Sustainable Water Funding
- Accelerate Funding
- Integrate Investments Across Sectors



# 3. Deliver Critical Infrastructure



- Strengthen the State's Water Backbone
  - Modernize and protect infrastructure
  - Improve coordinated operations
- Safeguard Colorado River Water Supplies
- Empower Regional Water Solutions



## 4. Modernize Water Management



- Improve Permitting Performance
  - Integrate permit requirements
  - Enhance regulatory certainty
  - Streamline pathways
- Modernize Water Operations
- Strengthen Water Data & Science

# VISION

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## Setting the Vision

The Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) represents approximately 470 public water agencies that collectively deliver approximately 90 percent of the water used by Californians — in their homes, on their farms, and for their businesses.

Water agencies are being proactive and are on the front lines of the state's most pressing challenges — from droughts, floods, and wildfires to aging infrastructure and the need for more housing. Meaningful progress requires state partnership with local water suppliers to achieve common goals. Bold leadership from the governor is critical to setting a unified direction, accelerating action, and delivering results to prepare California for the future. Action is needed now.

### Why Water Matters

Water is the foundation upon which California is built. This State is the world's fourth-largest economy, the nation's breadbasket, a global technology leader, and home to extraordinary ecosystems. None of it functions without water.

Water is not a single-sector issue. It is the backbone every other sector depends on. It determines where homes can be built, whether farms can produce, how businesses operate and grow, and whether species can survive a changing climate. A safe, reliable, and affordable water supply is one of the most important investments California can make.

## ACTION IS NEEDED NOW

1

Lead on Water

2

Protect Affordability

3

Deliver Critical Infrastructure

4

Modernize Water Management

[www.acwa.com/vision](http://www.acwa.com/vision)

APRIL 2026

## Vision for Our Water Future

VISION  
FOR OUR WATER FUTURE

### 1 LEAD ON WATER

Recognize water as an essential resource and the infrastructure that underpins California's economy, housing growth, food production, environmental health, and community resilience. Sustained executive leadership is needed to improve water supply reliability, accelerate climate resilience, and ensure coordinated action across state government.

- › **Set a Bold Water Agenda (First 100 Days):** Establish a focused statewide water agenda aligned with this Vision for Our Water Future.

### 2 PROTECT AFFORDABILITY

Ensure safe and reliable water remains affordable by strengthening sustained state investment and funding partnerships with local, regional, and federal agencies to address rising infrastructure, climate, and regulatory costs. California's ratepayers fund more than 85% of the system. Without predictable investment, these costs will increasingly fall on households, businesses, and farmers.

- › **Secure Sustainable Water Funding:** Create a reliable sustainable state funding source for water infrastructure that provides predictable, long-term investment. This funding should support critical water infrastructure projects, environmental needs, and California's Human Right to Water while leveraging federal, regional, and local investment.



### 3 DELIVER CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Future-proof California's critical water infrastructure to ensure reliable supplies in the face of climate change, growing economic and community demands, and escalating emergency risks. This requires strengthening the statewide water system, including both built and natural infrastructure, while advancing regional resilience to maximize systemwide reliability.

- › **Strengthen the State's Water Backbone:** Upgrade, repair, and optimize California's essential backbone infrastructure — the California State Water Project and Central Valley Project.

- **Modernize and Protect Infrastructure:** Advance a durable Delta conveyance solution, strengthen Delta levees, safeguard critical infrastructure from subsidence and seismic risk, and upgrade system technologies — including Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations, snowpack measurement, and remote monitoring controls.

### 4 MODERNIZE WATER MANAGEMENT

Improve California's regulatory and operational systems so water projects can move forward reliably and efficiently, infrastructure can be operated more flexibly, and agencies can respond more rapidly to changing conditions. California's regulatory framework should deliver clear, coordinated decisions grounded in the best available science, while maintaining environmental protections, public transparency, and California's existing water rights priority system.

- › **Improve Permitting Performance:** Enhance the clarity, coordination, and efficiency of state permitting processes to accelerate infrastructure and operational improvements; eliminate avoidable costs; and ensure state and local agencies deliver timely, accountable results.

- **Integrate Permit Requirements:** Integrate requirements and processes across regulatory agencies to eliminate redundancy and inconsistency.

- **Enhance Regulatory Certainty:** Establish transparent procedures, clear criteria for permit approval, and accountable timelines for agency decisions — developed in direct partnership with water suppliers.

- **Improve Coordinated Operations:** Integrate operations of the California State Water Project and Central Valley Project to increase system reliability.

### California Thrives With Water

- › **Housing:** California must plan for 2.5 million new homes in the next decade. Every unit requires a reliable water supply.

- › **Agriculture:** California agriculture is 12% of the state's economy, contributing \$60 billion; employing over 400,000 people; and producing more than half of the nation's fruits, nuts, and vegetables. Both surface and groundwater are fundamental to California's agriculture sector.

- › **Economy:** California's \$4 trillion economy spans technology, innovation, manufacturing, trade, and tourism. Every dollar of it depends on a reliable water supply.

- › **Environment:** California's extraordinary ecosystems — its rivers, wetlands, and floodplains — depend on the same water system managed by local water suppliers. A thriving California requires managing water to sustain both communities and ecosystems.

- › **Public Health:** Water suppliers are California's first line of public health defense, delivering safe, clean drinking water to every community in the state.

- › **Climate Resilience:** Climate whiplash — the swing between extreme droughts and extreme floods — is increasing, snowpack is diminishing, and wildfires are growing more severe. Water suppliers are modernizing, but they cannot do it alone.

### Building A Modern System

Securing California's water future requires more than incremental fixes. It demands a fundamental shift in how the State leads, invests, and operates. The Vision for Our Water Future provides an essential framework for ensuring a resilient and reliable water system.

Funded, built, and managed for extreme conditions, our modern water system is resilient, coordinated, and flexible — meeting the needs of California's communities, economy, and environment.

- › **Anchored by Backbone Infrastructure:** The State Water Project and Central Valley Project form the foundation of the statewide water system. These assets capture and manage California's highly variable hydrology and move water where and when it is needed.

- › **Strengthened by Regional Resiliency:** Regional and watershed-based partnerships strengthen local water reliability under changing hydrologic conditions and during emergencies through coordinated planning, interconnected infrastructure, diversified supplies, and shared responsibility.

- › **Delivered Locally:** Water is delivered by local suppliers, even when conveyed through or interconnected with statewide or regional systems. Local agencies set rates and policies — ratepayers fund approximately 85% of California's water system costs — while navigating structural constraints from Proposition 218, regulatory mandates, and permitting complexity.

### Key Elements of A Modern Water System

- › Designed and upgraded for the future
- › Flexible and responsive to changing climate conditions
- › Supported by aligned state permitting, regulatory, and investment frameworks
- › Informed by technology, data, and science
- › Grounded in long-term affordability

A modern water system must be resilient, coordinated, and flexible to meet California's evolving needs.

ACWA  
Association of California Water Agencies

[www.acwa.com/vision](http://www.acwa.com/vision)



# VISION

FOR OUR WATER FUTURE

## CALIFORNIA THRIVES WITH WATER

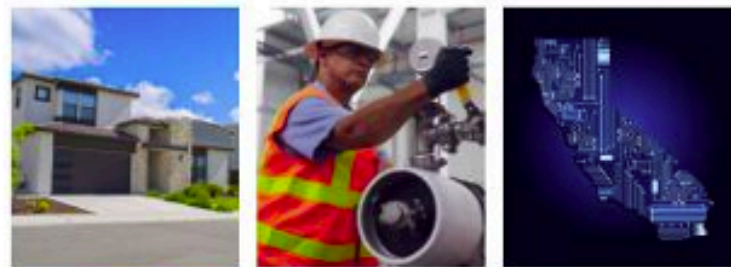
Water is the foundation upon which California is built. As the world's fourth-largest economy, the nation's breadbasket, a global technology leader, and home to extraordinary ecosystems, the prosperity of the Golden State depends on safe, resilient, and affordable water supply — now and into the future.

### WATER IS AN ESSENTIAL RESOURCE

Catastrophic wildfires, prolonged droughts, more intense storms, land subsidence, and aging infrastructure are reshaping California's risk landscape. Meeting these challenges demands that we acknowledge the seriousness of the threat, act with urgency and intention, and work together to advance our shared priorities.

#### IT STARTS WITH A VISION

The Association of California Water Agencies' (ACWA) Vision for Our Water Future seeks to elevate water as a top priority for California's next governor, legislative leadership, and state officials. It provides a clear, focused framework to secure a reliable, affordable, and modern water system that supports California's economy, communities, and environment.



### BOLD LEADERSHIP IS NEEDED NOW

State and local water suppliers are on the front lines of California's water management to sustain communities, agricultural land and economy.

Water managers across the state are already pursuing local, practical and innovative solutions, but long term, meaningful progress requires a strong state partnership to achieve these shared goals. Bold leadership is needed to set a unified direction, accelerate action and deliver results that prepare California for an increasingly uncertain future.



## VISION FOR OUR WATER FUTURE

Securing California's water future requires more than incremental fixes — it demands a fundamental shift in how the state leads, invests, and operates. The Vision for Our Water Future provides an essential framework for our next administration to:

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### KEY ELEMENTS OF A MODERN WATER SYSTEM



Designed and upgraded for the future



Flexible and responsive to changing climate conditions



Supported by aligned state permitting, regulatory, & investment frameworks



Informed by technology, data, & science



Grounded in long-term affordability-term



Vision for Our Water Future is an initiative of the Association of California Water Agencies, representing approximately 470 public water suppliers in the state.

[www.acwa.com/vision](http://www.acwa.com/vision)



# Fact Sheet

# Social Media

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ACWA

A UNIFIED VISION FOR CALIFORNIA'S WATER

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# Call For Action

- ✓ Adopt the Board Resolution
- ✓ Share the News Release
- ✓ Post on Social Media
- ✓ Utilize the Fact Sheet
- ✓ Submit your Case Studies



# Q & A

