

NORTH STATE WATER ALLIANCE

WATER POLICY STATEMENT

WHO WE ARE:

The North State Water Alliance (NSWA) is a growing coalition of cities, counties, water providers, business, agriculture and community groups in Northern California. Our common geography and interests have brought us together to work closely on water issues. **Our mission is to promote responsible statewide water solutions that protect the economy, environment and quality of life for the north state and for all Californians.**

WHAT'S AT STAKE:

The north state region spans an extraordinary mix of cities and rural communities, forests, mountains, farmlands, wildlife refuges and wetlands. **It also includes the capitol of the ninth largest economy in the world.**

The north state's water resources and water infrastructure (including Shasta, Oroville and Folsom reservoirs) meet north state water needs – for urban and agricultural uses, the environment, power generation and recreation - while also providing for water exports across the Sacramento -San Joaquin Delta to Southern California and Bay Area residents and San Joaquin Valley farmers. The health of north state watersheds is vital to California's long-term economic and environmental future.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

NSWA members invest in and implement water supply, conservation, water efficiency, recycling and re-use, storage, and other significant water management projects and programs that are cost effective and improve our regional self-sufficiency. We support comprehensive statewide water solutions in California that include:

- Increased investment in regional storage and infrastructure
- Water conservation as a way of life
- An operational plan for the state's water systems to fulfill obligations to the north state
- Water rights and supply assurances

OUR WATER POLICY PRIORITIES:

We're calling on the state's water officials to collaborate with the NSWA to develop a comprehensive, statewide water plan that includes:

- An **operational plan** that recognizes and reflects the inherent link between water supplies in Northern California and that of the rest of the state. The state can accomplish this through specific water supply assurances under existing water rights and contracts; a detailed operational plan for the statewide water system; and a governing structure that includes north state stakeholders.
- A commitment by state and federal governments to support **infrastructure improvements** and investments for water supply reliability. The region's water providers are identifying solutions at the local and regional levels to adapt to changing water supplies. As a part of a statewide plan, California and federal water officials must invest in local water infrastructure projects that improve north state water reliability and also provide statewide benefits.
- A **unified regulatory approach** that proactively plans for the effects of climate change on water uses. Climate change will increase the demand for water from Northern California's reservoirs to protect the Delta ecosystem. A comprehensive solution must plan for the effects of climate change on this region and throughout the state while minimizing water supply impacts upstream of the Delta.



NORTH STATE WATER ALLIANCE

COMMITTED TO STATEWIDE WATER SOLUTIONS THAT PROTECT THE ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT, AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA.

The North State: Implementing the California Water Action Plan February 24, 2014

The North State Water Alliance applauds Governor Brown's California Water Action Plan (Action Plan) and his call for comprehensive action throughout the state to address California's water challenges.

Communities and businesses in the north state have been planning and bracing for both droughts and floods for the past several decades. This year low managed storage in reservoirs coupled with minimal precipitation is making it difficult for the north state's water resources managers to serve water for all purposes, including cities and communities, farms, fish, birds and recreational uses.

The Alliance shares the Action Plan's overarching goal to "meet three broad objectives: more reliable water supplies, the restoration of important species and habitat, and a more resilient, sustainably managed water resources system (water supply, water quality, flood protection, and environment) that can better withstand inevitable and unforeseen pressures in the coming decades." (Action Plan at 3.) ***Now is the time for progress to develop the infrastructure and the regulatory and operational certainty to achieve these objectives.*** In the north state, the successful implementation of the WAP will require progress on two parallel tracks:

- For the **Sacramento Valley and watersheds** upstream of the Delta, the Alliance partners will advance local and regional water management (in partnership with state and federal agencies) to achieve regional sustainability for all the beneficial purposes described above; and,
- For the various **Bay-Delta** actions, state policies and operations need to be aligned in a way that will avoid re-directed impacts to the north state.

The Alliance is committed to working with the Brown Administration in implementing the Action Plan as follows:

Advance Regional Sustainability.

The Alliance and its various partners fully embrace the call in the Action Plan to "ensure water security at the local level" and "to integrate disparate or

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individual government efforts into one combined regional commitment where the sum becomes greater than any single piece.” (Action Plan at 6.) Water resources managers will continue to develop and implement “diverse regional water portfolios that will relieve pressure on foundational supplies and make [our] communities more resilient against drought, flood, population growth and climate change,” as well as catastrophic fire. (Action Plan at 4.) The state policy on regional sustainability mandates that “each region that depends on water from the Delta watershed shall improve its regional self-reliance for water through investment in water use efficiency, water recycling, advanced water technologies, local and regional water supply projects, and improved regional coordination of local and regional water supply efforts.” (Water Code §85021.)

More specifically, the Alliance and its partners have demonstrated leadership and are committed to implementing the following in the Action Plan to support regional sustainability:

- Conservation is a way of life in both urban and rural areas;
- Protect and restore important ecosystems, including a fishery action plan with enhanced flows for salmon; implementing the Central Valley Joint Venture plan for the Pacific Flyway; and, managing headwaters from the crests of the Sierra Nevada and Coast Range for multiple benefits and restoring mountain meadows;
- Expand water storage capacity and improve groundwater management, including the Sites off stream storage project, re-operating existing reservoirs for regional sustainability, and sustainable groundwater storage and conjunctive use;
- Provide safe water for all communities, including both urban and rural programs to improve water quality in the region.

We have detailed information available on these various proposed actions.

The Bay-Delta: Avoiding Impacts to the North State

The various operations and proposals by state and federal agencies involving the Bay-Delta pose a grave threat to north state regional sustainability. Specifically, the agencies’ proposals for additional flows into the Delta would directly reduce available water supplies, both surface and groundwater, for the north state. The Brown Administration should not tolerate actions that redirect impacts and stifle upstream efforts to maintain or promote regional water sustainability.

To avoid this conflict, the Alliance strongly urges the Brown Administration to focus on the Action Plan section to Improve and Clarify Coordination of State Bay-Delta Actions. “A coordinated approach to managing the Delta is essential to serve the needs of California’s residents.” (Action Plan at 18.) Here, the north state is committed to the state’s co-equal goals that call for “providing a more reliable water supply for California” for all purposes. (Water Code §85054.) As an example, water suppliers in the north state are working with various conservation partners on a robust sustainability plan for the Sacramento River Basin that protects beneficial uses in the Sacramento Valley. This plan allows the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) process and related actions in the Delta to further develop, while ensuring that these actions will not injure the north state and, with a sound operations plan and regulatory assurances, could possibly benefit the north state. The Alliance provided its perspective on the “BDCP and the Further Need for Statewide Solutions” on December 3, 2013 (attached).

As the most innovative state in the nation, we can find solutions to address the many water challenges before us. The north state is committed to working with the Brown Administration, our regional partners and statewide water interests to be sure plans do not fall short of addressing the fundamental principle of long-term water supply goals in the Action Plan.

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The BDCP and the Further Need for Statewide Water Solutions

December 3, 2013

More than 150 cities, counties, water suppliers, businesses, and community groups in Northern California have unified around our common geography and shared interests with respect to water resources. The local leaders and the *North State Water Alliance (Alliance)*--on behalf of this special region upstream of the Bay-Delta--are committed to statewide water solutions that protect the economy, environment and quality of life in Northern California.

California needs a comprehensive statewide water plan—it must not focus only on new tunnels as part of a narrow Bay-Delta solution. We encourage Governor Brown to further develop an innovative and comprehensive California Water Action Plan that addresses water and related environmental challenges in all parts of the state and meets the Legislature's over-arching goals to meet the water supplies for all of California. As part of this plan, California needs more water, not just improved sharing across regions.

Today, the state and federal agencies are focused on the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). To be successful, the direct beneficiaries of the BDCP and related actions in the Bay-Delta must step forward and be fully responsible for any impacts or obligations (including appropriate mitigation) associated with any flows or funding requirements surrounding the Bay-Delta. More specifically, any proposed Bay-Delta actions must not injure any legal user of water or fish and wildlife habitat upstream of the Delta. The BDCP should also be fully integrated and logically sequenced with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and Delta Stewardship Council's (DSC) Bay-Delta planning and proceedings, as well as federal counterparts. The Bay-Delta and the co-equal goals would also benefit from integrating additional surface and groundwater storage in Northern California, such as Sites reservoir.

As the *Alliance* and its local entities evaluate the BDCP and related environmental documents, we will measure the BDCP against the following four policy pillars to determine whether it will affect the ability for water resources managers to assure sustainable water supplies for the economy and environment within the region--both now and for the next 50 years. The policy

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pillars were articulated by the Legislature in the 2009 Delta Reform Act, which expressly recognized the unique nature of the North State upstream of the Bay-Delta.

- **Regional sustainability:** The state policy on regional sustainability (Water Code §85021) mandates that “each region that depends on water from the Delta watershed shall improve its regional self-reliance for water through investment in water use efficiency, water recycling, advanced water technologies, local and regional water supply projects, and improved regional coordination of local and regional water supply efforts.” Water resources managers continue to implement this state policy. Conversely, the BDCP, SWRCB planning and other Delta actions should not interfere with or stifle upstream efforts to maintain or promote regional water sustainability and self-sufficiency in the North State.
- **No redirected impacts:** The Governor, Secretary of Interior and policy leaders in the BDCP process have emphasized that the BDCP will not redirect any impacts to areas upstream of the Delta. In their July 25, 2012 statement, the Governor and Secretaries confirmed that “State and U.S. governments will make sure implementation of BDCP will not result in adverse effects on the water rights of those in the watershed of the Delta, nor will it impose any obligations on water users upstream of the Delta to supplement flows in and through the Delta.” The North State is neither a party to nor a direct beneficiary of the BDCP, thus there must be no resultant impacts to water supplies or the economy and environment in the North State.
- **Water rights protections:** Water supplies for all beneficial purposes in this region depend upon the exercise of water rights and contracts. As a result, the Legislature expressly recognized that water rights and area of origin protections in the North State watersheds shall not be impaired or diminished as a result of any program or project in the Bay-Delta. (Water Code §85031.) Water right, contract and area-of-origin priorities must be recognized and fully implemented by state and federal agencies to ensure that reliable supplies for all water uses and needs can be exercised in our region. These water rights also provide a solid foundation for the operation of the state and federal water projects, thus helping to advance active water management throughout California.
- **Coequal goals:** The state’s co-equal goals call for “providing a more reliable water supply for California.” (Water Code §85054.) This includes areas in the North State upstream of the Bay-Delta, where water supply entities will provide reliable water supplies for the region. More specifically, this includes more reliable water supplies for all beneficial uses, including cities and rural communities, farm lands and forests, refuges and managed wetlands, recreation and the meandering streams, creeks, canals, and rivers that support fisheries and aquatic habitat.

The *Alliance* was formed around a common passion that the Sacramento Valley and the adjacent Sierra Nevada and Coast Ranges is a truly unique place tied together by its water resources. On the leading edge of balancing ecological, economic and social sustainability, the region is an *exceptional* place to live, work and raise a family. The region joins together a world-renowned mosaic of natural abundance: productive farmlands and forests, wildlife refuges and managed wetlands, the State Capital, other dynamic cities and vibrant rural communities, and meandering streams, creeks, canals, and rivers that support and feed fisheries and natural habitats knitted into the landscape.

With reliable water supplies and *efficient* management of the region’s water resources, the *Alliance* and local leaders will continue to provide what’s *essential* to California’s future success and prosperity. Vibrant cities and rural communities, nourishment and sustenance from the fields, habitats for fish and wildlife, recreation and a special quality of life—the North State is home to all of this, and more.

We look forward to working with state and federal leaders and our various partners in developing a solution to the Bay-Delta that will be integrated with a comprehensive statewide water solution. If you have any questions, please call the North State Water Alliance partners below.

For more information and the list of Alliance participants, please visit the North State Water Alliance (NSWA) website at www.northstatewater.org.



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