



**NCWA**  
Northern California Water Association

**#SourcingOurSustainableFuture**

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## **2023 Legislative Bond Priorities** **August 2023**

The Northern California Water Association (NCWA) supports a legislative bond that prepares California for weather whiplash and will improve the ecosystem function in the Sacramento Valley in a way that will provide landscape-scale habitat benefits for fish, bird, and wildlife populations while we preserve, sustain, and promote working agricultural landscapes and our communities. Our collective goal is to bring our natural and working landscapes in this region to life through the careful interaction of water, sun, and land. *A functional Sacramento Valley depends on healthy rivers and landscapes from ridgetop to river mouth.* The following are Sacramento Valley priorities for the next decade:

### **Reactivating Floodplains** - \$500 million

Funding is needed for floodplain reactivation and priority projects that address the needs of fish and wildlife as well as water resiliency for California's communities and economy. The [2022 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan Update](#) provides a strategic blueprint for these efforts. The Sacramento Valley is fertile ground to reactivate our floodplains in a way that benefits fish, wildlife, and public safety as a new way forward for holistic water management that incorporates best available science and practical know-how of farm and refuge managers.

### **Sustainable Groundwater Management** - \$400 million

Actively managing the region's groundwater resources by utilizing the region's natural infrastructure, such as recharging our groundwater aquifers, will be important in the Sacramento Valley to achieve groundwater sustainability. We support an allocation of \$400 million to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) for projects related to conjunctive management, groundwater storage, banking, recharge, and other groundwater projects that improve water resilience.



**Sourcing our sustainable future through responsible management of the essential resource that millions of birds,  
hundreds of thousands of fish, thousands of farms and millions of people all rely on—water!**

### **Vital Rivers and Streams - \$400 million**

Our rivers and creeks are the lifeblood for the region—serving drinking water for our communities, vitalizing our economy and ecosystems, providing opportunities for recreation and play, including several Wild and Scenic Rivers. We support an allocation of \$100 million to DWR and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to improve water data management and to implement Section 144 of the Water Code to reactivate existing stream gages and deploy new gages, as well as \$300 million for the Wildlife Conservation Board’s Stream Flow Enhancement Program.

### **Healthy Soils and Farms - \$325 million**

Innovative farm and land management practices contribute to the local economy, the environment, and communities. Building adequate soil organic matter leads to improvements in soil structure, stability, and increased moisture and nutrient holding capacity for plant growth and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. We support funding for:

- The proposed California Ricelands Conservation Easement Program for the acquisition of development rights through wildlife-friendly agricultural conservation easements on ricelands that will protect these important land assets in perpetuity, allowing for continued rice production in a manner that supports biodiversity and the associated habitat benefits ricelands provide for critical species. (\$250 million).
- The healthy soils grant program to promote practices on farms and ranches that improve soil health, accelerate atmospheric carbon removal or soil carbon sequestration, enhance groundwater recharge, and improve habitat. (\$50 million).
- The State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program to promote on farm water use efficiency and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. (\$25 million).

### **Healthy Forests - \$1.5 billion**

The past decade of fires has shown the importance of healthy forests and actively managing our state’s headwaters to increase water supply reliability, reduce flooding risks, improve water quality, reduce impacts from catastrophic wildfires, increase renewable energy supplies, enhance wildlife habitat, and improve response to climate change and extreme weather events. We support an allocation of \$1.5 billion for regional wildfire prevention, including reducing community wildfire risk and restoring the health and resilience of forests.

### **Public Safety - \$850 million**

Dam safety projects would help increase storage capacity and ensure public safety consistent with the [2022 State Plan of Flood Control](#). Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) increase the efficiency of water infrastructure using data from watershed monitoring and weather forecasting to optimize water releases from reservoirs to increase resilience to droughts and floods. We support an allocation of \$850 million to provide state funding for repairs, rehabilitation, enhancements, and other dam safety projects at existing state jurisdictional dams and associated facilities. This includes a second spillway at New Bullard’s Bar Dam (\$240 million) and Union Valley Reservoir and Hell Hole Reservoir release facilities (\$400 million)

### **New Water Supplies - \$750 million**

Sites Reservoir would add flexibility to California’s overtaxed water-delivery system, particularly during dry years, and as an off-stream reservoir would serve multiple benefits throughout California. We support an allocation of \$750 million to the California Water Commission for projects under the Water Storage Investment Program, including Sites.

### **Safe Drinking Water – \$200 million**

Successful implementation of sustainable drinking water solutions for local communities is essential to ensure access to safe, clean, and affordable drinking water for all Californians. We support an allocation of \$200 million for projects that improve water quality or help provide clean, safe, and reliable drinking water.

We are encouraged by the recent Public Policy Institute [statewide survey](#) where water and drought were named the most important environmental issue facing California and which also found that [Californians Like Voting on Environmental Issues](#). We also support [cutting the green tape](#) and the [Governor’s infrastructure package](#) to cut red tape for many of these important efforts.



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