

A CLEAN WATER AGENDA FOR THE NEXT GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA



SWIMMABLE, FISHABLE, DRINKABLE WATERS FOR ALL



California's next Governor should be committed to achieving swimmable, fishable, drinkable waters for all communities and ecosystems; to ensure safe and affordable drinking water for all Californians; to protect the health of our coastal, surface, and groundwater resources; to enforce clean water laws so that our beaches and bays are safe to enjoy; and to restore our river flows to sustain native fish, ecosystems, and local economies.



ENFORCE CLEAN WATER LAWS TO HOLD POLLUTERS ACCOUNTABLE.

California has some of the strongest clean water laws in the country. However, these laws are only effective if they are fully and consistently enforced and have penalties that deter violations. This has not been the case to date. The State Water Board's 2013-2014 Annual Performance Report revealed that 99 percent of stormwater violations were handled with informal warnings. With the federal government actively taking measures to defund and deprioritize enforcement, we must improve state-level enforcement of water quality and water supply laws. The next Governor should establish an enforcement strategy with benchmarks that are annually reviewed and regularly disclosed to the public, with a focus on industries that are known to discharge large volumes of toxic chemicals and on sites in communities that have historically borne the brunt of pollution.



Nationwide, watershed protection saves cities billions of dollars per year in avoided treatment costs.

ENSURE SAFE AND AFFORDABLE DRINKING WATER FOR ALL.

California is facing a substantial public health crisis with hundreds of thousands of Californians lacking reliable access to safe, affordable drinking water. To defend the human right to water for all Californians, the next Governor must ensure that both rural and urban communities achieve water self-reliance. We must invest in sustainable local water supplies, repair decaying infrastructure, support water affordability programs for low-income households, and create an ongoing sustainable funding source to address gaps that cannot be met with existing resources. Additionally, we must limit nitrate contamination of drinking water due to agricultural pollution, remediate already contaminated groundwater basins, and invest in water treatment and delivery systems for communities of all sizes.



Water management is a significant industry in California. It directly accounts for 1 percent of the GDP, employs about 53,000 people, and provides over \$14 billion in value annually to the economy.

WATER RELIABILITY FOR A HOTTER, DRIER FUTURE.

Following five years of record-breaking drought, Governor Brown pledged to make conservation a way of life in California. Many communities and businesses throughout the state stepped up to cut water use by transforming outdoor landscaping, changing daily habits and individual consumption, and deploying innovative practices and technologies. However, the inefficient use of water in the urban and agricultural sectors continues to waste millions of gallons of potable water every year. Governor Brown's successor should prioritize work to make deep conservation and efficiency progress in all sectors to ensure that our economy, communities, and ecosystems have the water they need. Conversely, we should use sparingly energy intensive water supply options that undercut our emissions reduction goals and exacerbate hotter, drier conditions. His successor should also work to ensure that California communities are prepared for future droughts with water supply contingency plans. We must deploy new technologies and regulatory drivers to substantially reduce agricultural and municipal water use throughout the state. Our agencies must also utilize legal mechanisms, such as Section 1707 of the California Water Code, to ensure that water conservation translates into ecosystem recovery and water for essential human needs, as described in California's human right to water legislation. California must increasingly rely on improved efficiency and local supply options, such as rainwater harvesting and reuse, because they are cheaper and more reliable than alternatives.



California's current water system, which requires moving large quantities of water over long distances, is highly energy intensive, accounting for almost 20 percent of the state's entire annual electricity use. Efficiency improvements and local supplies typically require far less energy.

ADDRESS POLLUTION THREATS SO CALIFORNIA BEACHES AND BAYS ARE SWIMMABLE.

Polluted sea water poses a significant health risk to the tens of thousands of ocean users in California who can contract a respiratory or gastrointestinal illness from one morning swim or surf session in polluted waters. Our state must do a better job of capturing runoff, before it becomes polluted and hits shorelines, and reusing that water directly or to replenish our aquifers. Our next Governor should support public funding measures and investments in nature-based projects that capture, cleanse, and reuse runoff.



Beach visitors spend over \$10 billion a year in California, an economic engine that requires trash-free, clean water for swimming.

TAKE MEANINGFUL STEPS TO CURTAIL AGRICULTURAL POLLUTION AND WATER USE.

Agriculture is and will remain an important part of California's economy and culture. However, current regulation of agricultural pollution is not on par with the magnitude or severity of the threat it poses to our environment and drinking water supplies. More than 360 thousand tons of nitrates are leaching

into groundwater supplies from California farms every year, resulting in over a quarter million Californians at risk from nitrate contamination in their drinking water. Additionally, the volume of water consumed by the agricultural sector leaves some rivers and streams with insufficient instream flows. We must address the way pollution from farming practices impacts drinking water supplies, consistent with the 'polluter pays' principle. The next Governor should direct the State Water Board to strengthen surface water monitoring and reporting requirements, adopt, implement, and enforce nitrate standards, and collect and disseminate publicly accessible water quality data.



On average, non-farm industries generate much more economic value per drop of water used, with crop and livestock production representing just 3–4 percent of the state's employment and only 2 percent of GDP.

ENFORCE EXISTING LAWS SO CALIFORNIA RIVERS FLOW.

Excessive diversions and extraction of water have left many California rivers and creeks without enough water year-round to sustain the flows or fish that our communities and economy depend upon. California has under-utilized legal tools at its disposal to protect healthy instream flows. Our state urgently needs to develop legally-enforceable flow standards for many rivers and streams consistent with those tools, including the public trust doctrine, clean water laws, endangered species protections, the prevention of the waste and unreasonable use of water, and the forthcoming cannabis regulatory program. Climate change is intensifying hot, dry conditions and extreme weather events, threatening the survival of native salmon species and other essential elements of California's way of life. Governor Brown's successor should accelerate implementation of SGMA and stop over-pumping of groundwater, excessive agricultural withdrawals, and illegal diversions to ensure sufficient and sustainable instream flows.



The annual value of California's tourism economy, much of it tied to our waterways and ocean, is \$106.4 billion.

PROTECT OUR GROUNDWATER SUPPLIES.

California is the last western state to manage groundwater. Our groundwater basins are our savings banks, but too many groundwater basins in California are either seriously overdrafted or contaminated – sometimes both. Additionally, we do not have a full picture of what our groundwater supplies look like, and we cannot manage what we do not measure. California's next Governor should commit to accelerating the timeline associated with SGMA, enforcing its measurement and management criteria, and ensuring small water systems and disadvantaged communities have a meaningful seat at the table within the new Groundwater Sustainability Agencies.



In the San Joaquin Valley, damages from subsidence due to groundwater overdraft from 1955-1972 were estimated to be \$1.3 billion (2013 dollars).



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