

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.



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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:

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.

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.

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 percent of the system. Without predictable investment, these costs will increasingly fall on households, businesses, and farmers.

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.

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

