

Sonoma Water State Legislative Platform 2024-2025

Water Supply

Water and Wastewater Infrastructure

Priorities

- Continue to advocate for water resiliency, water supply funding, watershed projects and groundwater funding in the Climate Bond
- Support funding efforts to upgrade and improve aging water, wastewater infrastructure
- Research funding mechanisms and partnerships to increase awareness of aging infrastructure

Groundwater

Recent Accomplishments: Since 2018, secured more than \$21 million in funding (including \$15.2 million in 2023) to support implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act for Sonoma County's three Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs), and in 2021, received \$14 million in Drought Relief funding for the Santa Rosa Plain Drought Relief project (including aquifer storage and recovery).

Priorities:

- Support the ongoing development of the statewide Small-GSA Coalition, to ensure that smaller basins can achieve sustainable management of basins, through both additional funding for basic management tasks and reduced regulatory burdens
- Support legislation that removes regulatory barriers to future groundwater banking projects
- Support legislative and regulatory efforts approved by local GSAs
- Advocate for regulatory policy that does not apply waste discharge requirements to aquifer recharge projects

Water Use Efficiency

Recent Accomplishments: Supported AB 1572 (Friedman), which prohibits the use of potable water to irrigate nonfunctional turf on commercial, municipal, institutional (except for cemeteries), homeowners' association, common interest development, and community service organization properties.

Priorities

- Support legislative efforts to restrict the use of potable water for irrigating nonfunctional turf.
- Support legislative efforts to fund rebate programs that incentivize Californians to replace turf with drought tolerant landscaping.
- Advocate for statewide deployment of state-of-the-art water use efficiency measures
- Monitor legislation and regulatory policy and support bills and actions that improve efficiency of water use statewide and locally
- Promote adoption of advanced programs for water use efficiency including Direct Install Programs and Advance Metering Infrastructure

Recycled Water

Recent Accomplishments: Worked with Water Reuse California to secure request for climate bond to include funding provision for water recycling.

Priorities

- Support legislation that advances the beneficial use of recycled water
- Monitor implementation of current and future water bond funds to ensure funding for recycled water projects
- Work proactively with Watereuse California, North Bay Water Reuse Program and other organizations on policy initiatives to expand opportunities for beneficial reuse of recycled water

Invasive Species

Recent Accomplishments: Have secured ongoing funding to assist with the development and ongoing operations of a mussel inspection program at Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino.

Priorities:

- Work with state agencies to ensure enforcement of existing policies for prevention of infestations
- Protect, and increase if necessary, funding for the statewide mussel prevention grant program

Flood Protection and Stormwater

Flood Protection

Recent Accomplishments: Worked within ACWA's climate resilience bond working group to secure funding in the climate resilience bond for DWR's Coastal Watershed Flood Risk Reduction Program.

Priorities

- Support increased funds for flood protection programs
- Monitor legislation in this area and work to optimize and support beneficial bills
- Review alternative means to replace revenue lost with expiration of the flood zone special taxes and support legislation that could provide replacement funds.

Storm Water

Priorities

- Support legislative efforts to secure funding for storm water pollution prevention initiatives
- Support the Slow it, Spread it, Store it, message in legislative and funding efforts to support local partners

Climate, Adaptation, and Emergency Preparedness

Atmospheric Rivers

Recent Accomplishments: Through Sonoma Water's leadership in building a coalition of water agencies, an Atmospheric River research program has been established within the California Department of Water Resources and Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) has been codified as a component of this program.

In addition, the state budget now includes an ongoing appropriation of \$10 million per year to fund FIRO, with \$1 million of the funding being used for AQPI implementation.

Lastly, funding has been proposed in the climate bond for dam safety and operations, including FIRO implementation.

Priorities

- Support legislation that expands the use of atmospheric river research and data to other disaster preparedness and response efforts
- Support additional funding and equipment for the Advanced Quantitative Precipitation Information program including but not limited to x-band radars and stream gages

Climate Adaptation

Priorities

- Monitor legislative and regulatory climate adaptation rules and regulations that could impact Sonoma Water's systems and infrastructure
- Support funding opportunities, such as water bond and climate bond funding, to secure facilities due to climate adaptation

Disaster Preparedness and Response

Recent Accomplishments: Worked within ACWA's climate resilience bond working group to secure provision in the proposed climate bond for \$100 million to DWR to improve water data management including reactivation and deployment of gages.

Priorities

- Support legislation and advocate for funding for greater disaster preparedness and response efforts as the effects of climate change continue to impact California
- Support legislation and advocate for funding for cameras and technology that senses and gathers data on fire conditions and ignition
- Support funding for greater deployment and utilization of stream gages

Endangered Species

Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund

Priorities

- Support legislative and regulatory efforts to secure funding from the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund to local and regional projects

Funding, Permitting and Regulations

Funding Sources

Recent Accomplishments: Sonoma Water's leadership of the Water Bond Coalition and working with ACWA has secured funding for Integrated Regional Water Management Plans in the most current version of a proposed climate bond.

Priorities:

- Work with the Water Bond Coalition to advocate for increased funding for resiliency programs, climate adaptation, watershed protection, Integrated Regional Water Management Plans, water use efficiency programs, small community wastewater systems, groundwater, recycled water, storm/flood risk reduction projects and watershed improvements.
- Work with the Small-GSA Coalition to advocate for funding to support very-small groundwater sustainability agencies to ensure ongoing compliance with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Action.
- Work with DWR to have the Russian River identified as a pilot for watershed resiliency funding.
- Monitor development of statewide water and climate bonds or water public goods charge initiatives.
- Advocate for fairness in the allocation of future infrastructure funding to ensure that our region receives equitable funding.
- Support funding for Coastal Salmon and groundwater programs.
- Monitor state legislation that could alter the allocations of property tax revenue at the local level or reduce tax revenue for Sonoma Water programs.

Permitting and Regulations

Priorities

- Monitor and support legislative efforts to reform and create efficiencies in permitting processes for watershed restoration and habitat programs at California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Water Conservation Board, Department of Water Resources, and others
- Monitor proceedings at State Water Resources Control Board and potential follow up actions in the legislature regarding new definitions and ensuing regulations of wetlands