



INFORMATION ITEM

Reducing Reliance on the Delta Through Improved Regional Water Self-Reliance

Summary

Council staff will present background information regarding reduced reliance on the Delta which was identified as a State policy by the State Legislature in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Reform Act of 2009 (Water Code section 85000, et seq.; Water Code section 85021) (Delta Reform Act). Secretary Wade Crowfoot will present the Governor's strategy to implement water supply, efficiency, and conservation projects. Several water suppliers will update the Council on ongoing projects and activities to improve regional water self-reliance to reduce dependency on Delta exports by securing and fortifying local and regional water supply sources to best match their water demands.

Background

In 2009, the State Legislature declared that the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) watershed and California's water infrastructure were in crisis, and existing Delta policies were not sustainable. To address this crisis, the legislature relied upon recommendations from the Delta Vision Strategic Plan and adopted the Delta Reform Act.

The Delta Reform Act sets the coequal goals for the Delta of *"providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem"* to *"be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place."* ([Water Code section 85054](#)).

The policy objectives inherent within the coequal goals are, in part, to: manage the Delta's water and environmental resources and the water resources of the State over the long term; promote statewide water conservation, water use efficiency, and sustainable water use; and improve the water conveyance system and expand statewide water storage ([Water Code section 85020](#)).

The Delta Reform Act goes on to state, in relevant part, that:

The policy of the State of California is to reduce reliance on the Delta in meeting California's future water supply needs through a statewide strategy of investing in improved regional supplies, conservation, and water use efficiency. ([Water Code section 85021](#))

To implement this portion of the Delta Reform Act, Delta Plan policy **WR P1** ([23 CCR Section 5003](#)) aims to reduce reliance on the Delta through improved regional water self-reliance by requiring covered actions that would export water from the Delta, transfer water through the Delta, or use water in the Delta to demonstrate how they achieve a measurable reduction in reliance on Delta water – measured as a reduction in the amount of water used, or in the percentage of water used, from the Delta watershed. WR P1 addresses the Delta Reform Act's mandates and goals relating to statewide water conservation, efficiency, and sustainable water use, including the State's policy to reduce reliance on the Delta and related mandate to improve regional self-reliance. Delta Plan recommendations provide guidance on planning efforts, water management, and management decisions to reduce reliance on the Delta and to meet the State's future water supply needs through a statewide strategy supporting investment in improved regional supplies, conservation, and water use efficiency. The Council tracks water suppliers' efforts to reduce reliance on the Delta through Performance Measures 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, and 3.6.

Success in achieving the statewide policy of reduced reliance on the Delta and improving regional self-reliance is demonstrated through reporting in water suppliers' Urban Water Management Plans (UWMP) and Agricultural Water Management Plans (AWMP), which are reviewed by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) for completeness relative to statutory requirements. The information in the UWMPs and AWMPs is instrumental in the statewide planning and management of water resources.

Council staff worked with DWR to develop an example reporting approach that water suppliers can use to consistently quantify reduced reliance on Delta water resources as part of their 2020 UWMPs and AWMPs. DWR is now compiling results from the reporting in these plans to prepare a reduced reliance assessment that Council staff will use to update data tracked through Delta Plan Performance Measures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.4. The reporting implements Delta Plan Recommendations **WR R4** *Expanded Water Supply Reliability Element*, and **WR R5** *Develop Water Supply Reliability Element Guidelines*.

Governor Newsom has provided direction to State agencies to address a California future that is hotter and drier through two documents: the [Water Resilience Portfolio](#) (2020) and the [Water Supply Strategy](#) (2022). The Water Resilience Portfolio outlines a blueprint to improve California's ability to address more extreme droughts, floods, and rising temperatures, while meeting challenges to declining fish populations, over-reliance on groundwater, and the lack of safe drinking water. The Water Supply Strategy addresses a forecasted 10 percent reduction in water supplies by 2040 by outlining implementation actions such as creating storage space for up to 4 million acre-feet of water; recycling and reusing at least 800,000 acre-feet of water per year by 2030; freeing up 500,000 acre-feet of water through more efficient water use and conservation; and developing new sources of water by capturing stormwater and desalinating ocean water and salty groundwater. Many of these proposed strategies and actions such as increasing storage and developing opportunities for recycled water supplies are included in Delta Plan recommendations, [WR R12a through k](#) (<https://bit.ly/3RKqdR3>), also known as the Conveyance, Storage, and Operations Amendment. All statewide strategies and actions will require collaboration, coordination, and implementation with regional and local water suppliers to achieve the coequal goals.

Today's Meeting

Today, staff will summarize background information on reduced reliance, and the Council will hear from several water suppliers regarding their ongoing efforts to reduce reliance on the Delta through improved regional self-reliance. The presentations will address their water planning activities, operations, and management. The presentations will also provide information on new and ongoing

projects designed to improve local and regional water supplies and to meet local and regional water demands now and into a forecasted hotter and dryer future.

California Natural Resources Agency Presentation

Presentation by Wade Crowfoot, Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency, on the Council's role in implementing the Governor's Water Supply Strategy (2022), a strategy of actions to implement water supply, efficiency, and conservation projects to address a forecasted up to 10% reduction of water supply by 2040.

Metropolitan Water District Presentation

Presentation by Adel Hagekhalil, General Manager of Metropolitan Water District (MWD), and Nina Hawk, Policy Manager for Bay-Delta Initiatives (MWD), on the adoption of MWD Bay-Delta Policies and MWD's actions to reduce reliance on the Delta through improved regional self-reliance.

City of Los Angeles Sanitation and Environment Presentation

Presentation by Barbara Romero, Director and General Manager of the City of Los Angeles Sanitation and Environment (LASAN), on LASAN's actions to reduce reliance on the Delta through improved regional self-reliance.

Coachella Valley Water District Presentation

Presentation by Robert Cheng, Assistant General Manager of the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), on CVWD's actions to reduce reliance on the Delta through improved regional self-reliance.

Fiscal Information

Not applicable.

List of Attachments

Attachment 1: Delta Plan Recommendations WR R4 and WR R5

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