

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

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Dr. Lisamarie Windham-Myers, Delta Lead Scientist
Delta Science Program, Delta Stewardship Council
715 P Street, Suite 15-300
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Independent Letter Review of the Draft Healthy Rivers and Landscape Science Plan

Dear Dr. Windham-Myers,

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) requests the Delta Science Program's (DSP) assistance with conducting an external, independent panel review of the subject document. The Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program (HRL Program) is a proposal for an alternative Program of Implementation for the Sacramento River, Delta, and Tributary update to the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Water Quality Control Plan (WQCP). The HRL Program is described in the March 29, 2022 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and includes a commitment to a comprehensive Science Program that would evaluate the ecological outcomes of the flow and non-flow commitments described in the MOU. The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) is considering the HRL Program for inclusion in the WQCP update and has yet to come to a decision.

The draft Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Science Plan (HRL Science Plan) describes the hypotheses, metrics, and monitoring networks needed to evaluate the HRL Program actions. The draft HRL Science Plan was drafted by the HRL Science Committee, which is led by DWR and charged with oversight of the HRL Science Program. The group's membership, roles, and approach is described in its [charter document](#). The purpose of an independent review panel will be to inform DWR and the HRL Science Committee of suggested improvements to the Science Plan that would increase its ability to guide science and monitoring activities in individual tributaries and the Delta for the production of consistent datasets that can be analyzed at a system scale, and to meaningfully support reporting of ecological information to the SWRCB as part of the HRL Program implementation.

DWR would like to use the DSP's established independent scientific peer review process to receive feedback from subject matter experts on the HRL Science Plan. DWR would like each subject matter expert to provide a letter by summer of 2025 that presents their recommendations for improvements. DWR will work with the HRL Science Committee to use the reviewer feedback for further improvement of the Science Plan.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please feel free to contact me at Louise.Conrad@water.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Louise Conrad 1/3/2025

Louise Conrad
Lead Scientist
California Department of Water Resources