



Six-Year Drought: Presentation of Initial Interviews and Framework

Introduction

At its March 2022 meeting, the California Water Commission approved a workplan in support of Water Resilience Portfolio Action 26.3, which tasks the State with developing strategies to protect communities and fish and wildlife in the event of drought lasting at least six years.

Commission staff has completed Step 1 of the workplan, which included:

- Interviewing California thought leaders on long-term drought;
- Engaging representatives from other countries that have dealt with long-term drought (Australia, Israel, Chile);
- Connecting with staff at State agencies to understand their drought efforts; and
- Reviewing relevant resources on long-term drought.

Based on the information collected, staff has put together a framework for completing the Commission's long-term drought work. At this meeting, staff will share what it learned during step one and present a framework for moving forward.

Background

On July 28, 2020, the California Natural Resources Agency, California Environmental Protection Agency, and the California Department of Food and Agriculture issued the final [Water Resilience Portfolio](#) (portfolio) in response to Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-10-19, which calls for a "set of actions to meet California water needs through the 21st century." The portfolio outlines a broad suite of actions designed to move the state toward water resilience. The portfolio includes Action 26.3: Develop strategies to protect communities and fish and wildlife in the event of drought lasting at least six years. Action 26.3 is assigned to the California Natural Resources Agency and the California Environmental Protection Agency; the State Water Resources Control Board, Department of Water Resources, Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Department of Food and Agriculture represent these agencies. Action 26.3 is embedded in a section of the portfolio that is focused on preparation for a changing climate, which includes actions designed to help regions prepare for inevitable drought.

In a letter dated December 14, 2021, the Secretaries for Natural Resources, Environmental Protection, and Food and Agriculture requested that the Commission assist with this action by educating itself about potential long-term strategies for managing sustained drought and delivering a proposed set of investments and policies that would better position the state to manage severely constrained water supplies for at least six consecutive years. The Commission proposes to accomplish this work by leading a thorough and inclusive public dialog, similar to the Commission's recent efforts to assess a state role in financing climate-resilient conveyance and in supporting locally driven, in-basin groundwater trading programs that protect natural

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resources, small- and medium-sized farms, and disadvantaged communities. The Commission will coordinate with state agencies to develop a framework to advance its work without disrupting immediate drought response efforts. At the end of this process, the Commission will produce a paper that describes a set of strategies to protect communities and fish and wildlife in the event of long-term drought.

The Commission's work on long-term drought will implement Goal One of the Strategic Plan, which calls on the Commission to "serve as a primary public forum for the discussion of improving water management policy to assist regions in achieving climate resiliency ... including those actions of the Water Resilience Portfolio assigned to the Commission."

Meeting Overview

The Commission's Assistant Executive Officer, Laura Jensen, will present information about the interviews with California thought leaders and international water managers that staff has conducted to date. Ms. Jensen will share a framework that describes how the Commission will move forward with its work on long-term drought.

This is an informational item.

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