



State Water Project Briefing: Construction Projects and Modernization Programs

Introduction

This [State Water Project](#) (SWP) briefing will update the Commission on key construction activities undertaken in 2025 to manage and maintain the SWP. The projects are occurring across a large portion of the state and include all major facility types – dams, canals, pipelines, pumping and generating plants. This briefing will also cover the SWP's [Pyramid Dam Modernization Program](#) and [Castaic Dam Modernization Program](#), which identify and proactively address any issues that could impact the delivery of water or the safety of the surrounding communities, and undertake construction activities to ensure the dams continue to function safely.

Background

The SWP, constructed in the middle of the last century, consists of 36 water storage facilities and 700 miles of rivers, pipelines, and canals, and supplies water to 27 million people and irrigates 750,000 acres of farmland. The system includes 21 pumping plants, powered by a system of power-generation and power-recovery plants. The SWP also operates the world's tallest water lift – the Edmonston Pumping Plant – which pumps water more than 1,900 feet up and over the Tehachapi Mountains into Southern California.

The [Department of Water Resources](#) (DWR) manages the SWP to ensure adequate water supplies are available under various hydrologic and legal conditions while maintaining operational flexibility. DWR also develops, plans and implements the operation of the SWP in coordination with environmental and regulatory agencies to meet fish, water, and environmental requirements for the Feather River and Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

Goal Five of the [Commission's Strategic Plan](#) directs the Commission to receive briefings on the SWP on an annual basis, and to produce a report, as specified by Water Code section 165, that includes findings and, as appropriate, recommendations for DWR and the Legislature. Through these briefings and reports, the Commission aims to improve the public's understanding of decision making within the SWP and create accountability by using previous findings and recommendations to guide subsequent briefings.

Meeting Overview

At this meeting, SWP Division of Engineering Manager Dale Brown will give a high-level overview of projects that are currently under construction, projects that were completed in 2025, and provide a more detailed look at the overall workflow through the view of a few specific projects that showcase DWR's commitment to performing construction in a safe,

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reliable, and quality focused way. SWP Manager of Dam Safety Services David Sarkisian will provide an overview of the SWP's Pyramid Dam and Lake and Castaic Dam and Lake Modernization Programs that assess and enhance the safety of the infrastructure.

Following their remarks, the Commission will hear Tribal and public comment on the information presented. Commissioners will then have an opportunity to ask questions and make comments in anticipation of producing findings and recommendations in the Commission's 2025 annual report on the SWP.

This is an informational item.

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