



IMPLEMENTING SB 72: MODERNIZING CALIFORNIA'S WATER PLAN

Key Updates Ahead of 2026 Rollout

California's Changing Water Reality

In 2022, Governor Newsom released California's Water Supply Strategy, outlining how the state must adapt to a hotter, drier future. As temperatures rise, more precipitation will be absorbed by dry soils, consumed by plants, or evaporate—meaning less water reaches streams, rivers, and reservoirs, placing new strain on the state's water supply.

In October 2025, the Governor and Legislature gave the Department of Water Resources (DWR) an important opportunity to address this challenge: **Senate Bill 72 (SB 72)**.

What SB 72 Does

SB 72 directs DWR to **modernize the California Water Plan by building a data-driven playbook** for the state's water future. It requires DWR to:

1. Quantify statewide and watershed-level water-supply gaps
2. Identify effective water management actions with economic analyses
3. Set measurable statewide and watershed-level targets, including an interim statewide goal of 9 million acre-feet by 2040*.

Together, these elements create a **consistent, data-driven foundation** for statewide water resilience.

How SB 72 Builds on Watershed-Scale Planning

The 2023 California Water Plan prioritized **watershed-scale resilience** as the basis for long-term planning. DWR has advanced this approach through **Integrated Regional Water Management pilots** and the **San Joaquin Basin Watershed Studies** which evaluate climate-driven supply, groundwater, flood, and ecosystem conditions. **SB 72 expands this approach statewide**, ensuring watershed-level insights inform statewide targets and strategies.

San Joaquin Basin Watershed Studies: A Model for Statewide Planning

The upcoming San Joaquin Basin Watershed Studies integrate climate, hydrologic, groundwater, and ecological information to identify multi-benefit project opportunities. These studies preview the type of regional analysis that will support SB 72 statewide.

**The 9 million acre-feet target reflects the amount of water California is projected to lose by 2040 due to a hotter, drier climate; SB 72 helps identify adaptation strategies to offset these impacts.*

Note: While SB 72 does not provide new funding, DWR is working closely with the Administration and the Department of Finance on options to fund this work.

WHAT'S AHEAD: KEY ELEMENTS OF SB 72 IMPLEMENTATION

Where are we now: DWR is preparing public materials and coordinating with the California Water Commission to align SB 72 with California Water Plan Update 2028 engagement, setting the foundation for broader public participation processes. DWR will:

1. Public Engagement and Transparency (Early 2026)

- Post comprehensive information on SB 72 on the California Water Plan webpage
- Brief the California Water Commission; Commission meetings will serve as public venues for updates throughout implementation
- Form the California Water Plan Update 2028 Update Advisory Committee

2. Advisory Committees and Caucuses (Early 2026)

These groups will help shape watershed-level information, statewide targets, and adaptation strategies.

- A **Public Advisory Committee (PAC)** and **sector-based caucuses** (agricultural, environmental, urban, Tribal, etc.) to support transparency and community perspectives.
- A **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** to provide scientific and technical input on data, modeling, and analytical approaches.

3. Watershed and Regional Engagement (Spring 2026 and Beyond):

DWR will share updated information and host regional forums across Hydrologic Regions. This work will continue into 2027 as new data and modeling become available.

4. Local Project Tracker (Launching in 2026):

DWR will launch a local project tracker to organize and display water projects across the state. This tool will help connect community-level actions to watershed strategies and statewide targets developed under SB 72.

5. Technical Foundations (2026–2027): DWR's technical work will focus on three core areas:

- A. Water Use & Supply Balances:** Developing consistent statewide datasets and transitioning to watershed-based analysis.
- B. Long-Term Water Supply Targets:** Establishing watershed and statewide targets for urban, agricultural, and environmental uses.
- C. Adaptation Strategies & Actions:** Identifying effective strategies and actions to close supply gaps.

Together, these workstreams form the backbone of a modernized, climate-ready California Water Plan.

How to Stay Involved

- Visit the SB 72 section of the California Water Plan webpage
- Join advisory committee/caucus meetings and regional engagement opportunities
- Follow California Water Commission updates
- Connect through ACWA, CMUA, and other statewide events

