



A Phased Approach to Building Future California Water Plans From 2028, Into 2033, and Beyond

Introduction

Senate Bill 72 represents the most significant modernization of California water planning in decades. It directs the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to move beyond describing California's water system and establish measurable water supply targets, evaluate strategies to meet those targets, and create a stronger framework for long-term decision-making.

This requires new analytical tools, statewide data, watershed-scale modeling, broad public engagement, and stronger connections between State, regional, and local planning. Because these pieces build upon one another, DWR is implementing SB 72 across the next two California Water Plans (CWP) and beyond.

Building the Foundation

CWP 2028 establishes the foundation for California's new planning framework. It develops baseline conditions, launches new planning tools, begins watershed-scale analysis in the first modeled regions, establishes the interim statewide planning goal to identify 9 million acre-feet (MAF) of additional water supply by 2040, and begins identifying strategies to improve long-term water reliability.

Equally important, CWP 2028 establishes the collaborative process that will guide future work by engaging water managers, Tribes, technical experts, interested parties, and the public throughout California.

Expanding and Refining the Framework

CWP 2033 will build directly on the work completed in 2028. By then, several additional years of technical analysis, watershed modeling, and regional engagement will allow DWR to expand watershed-scale analysis across California, refine long-term water supply targets, evaluate portfolios of regional strategies, and strengthen policy and investment recommendations.

Why This Approach

DWR must first develop consistent baseline conditions, create statewide watershed-scale models, understand future water supply and demand, and engage regions throughout California. Following this sequence results in stronger analysis, more meaningful public participation, and better-informed decisions.

Looking Beyond 2033

CWP is evolving into an ongoing planning framework rather than a report produced every five years. Each CWP will incorporate new data, improve analysis, evaluate progress, and strengthen future planning so California can continue adapting to changing water conditions.

A Phased Approach to Fulfilling SB72

Building Across the Next Two Water Plans

California Water Plan 2028 Implementing the New Framework

Delivering new tools and foundational data to support planning decisions



UNDERSTAND

- Establish baseline conditions
- Begin watershed scale analysis

ESTABLISH

- Identify 9 MAF by 2040
- Begin evaluating strategies and water management recommendations

ENGAGE

- Statewide collaboration and Tribal consultation
- Public engagement and technical input

California Water Plan 2033 Expanding and Refining the Framework

Build on the 2028 Foundation



EXPAND

- Expand watershed scale analysis statewide
- Incorporate new data

REFINE

- Refine long-term water supply targets
- Evaluate regional strategies

IMPROVE

- Strengthen recommendations
- Track progress and update information