Meeting Summary

Drought Resilience Interagency & Partners (DRIP) Collaborative

October 2025 Meeting

California Natural Resources Agency, Room 02-221A/B/C
715 P Street, Sacramento
October 17, 2025, 10:00 am-5:00 pm

This meeting summary captures DRIP Collaborative members discussions for each agenda item. For detailed presentations, please refer to the meeting recording and slide deck.

The meeting was live streamed and recorded. The recording can be viewed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWjpgLM2Wb8.

Meeting materials (including the presentation) are available online at: https://www.water.ca.gov/drip.

A list of Drought Resilience Interagency & Partnership (DRIP) Collaborative members (members) is included in Appendix A. The DRIP development team includes:

- Anthony Navasero, CA Department of Water Resources (DWR/Department), Drought Coordinator
- Julie Ekstrom, DWR, Environmental Program Manager in the Water Justice Office
- Zoe Kanavas, DWR
- Kira Haynes, DWR
- Jaden Torres, DWR
- Glen Low, Earth Genome
- Orit Kalman

Meeting Objectives

Objective #1: Provide opportunities for collective learning about efforts to advance drought and water shortage resiliency.
Objective #2: Further the development of proposed 2025 recommendations and DRIP Collaborative inform and complement opportunities.
Objective #3: Discuss the focus of the DRIP Collaborative in 2026.

Meeting Highlights

In this meeting, members approved three recommendations and advanced discussions that will shape DRIP's 2026 focus. In addition to approving recommendations, members reviewed progress on 2025 work, received updates on statewide drought and water supply conditions, and discussed next-year priorities.

- **Members approved three recommendations:**
  - **Eco1. Instream Flows: Best Practices for Landowner Cooperative Solutions** – Proposes to develop a best practices guide to help landowners, Tribes, and local partners to voluntarily implement cooperative solutions that protect instream flows and enhance drought resilience.
  - **Land2A. Aligning Communication and Planning Timelines for Housing and Water** – Calls for a statewide study to map and better align housing and

water planning timelines, helping ensure that water supply considerations are integrated earlier in the housing development process.
    - **Land2B. Assessing Water Supply and Wastewater Capacity with Housing Needs** – Proposes a regional assessment comparing water supply and wastewater capacity with projected housing growth to identify where future development may face drought-related constraints.

- **Members discussed early priorities for 2026,** including:
    - Clarifying roles and responsibilities for dry domestic wells
    - Continuing work on drought indicators and metrics
    - Adjusting workgroup structure to allow for more flexible, informal collaboration and better alignment with related state efforts
    - Maintaining momentum on infrastructure, small systems, and agricultural land repurposing conversations

- **Members heard informational presentations**, including:
    - A statewide hydrology and drought outlook
    - An overview of the Annual Water Supply and Demand Assessment (AWSDA) and what agencies are reporting for dry-year preparedness

- **Members reflected on progress across focus areas**, noting the scale and complexity of drought resilience issues and the value of continued coordination with existing state processes, planning efforts, and regional initiatives.

Welcoming Remarks and Setting Intentions

[0:01:40 – 0:05:17, slides 3-6]

Paul Gosselin, CA Department of Water Resources, convened the meeting by thanking members for their engagement which reflects the importance of collaboration in addressing drought. With climate uncertainty bringing both extreme dry and wet periods, continued preparation and partnership will be essential as the DRIP Collaborative considers its work in 2026.

Orit Kalman, Facilitator, established quorum with a roll call. The list of members present is shown in Appendix A. New participants, Tiffany Tran (California Urban Water Agencies, CUWA), Maria Gallegos Herrera (Rural Community Assistance Corporation, RCAC), Karen Mogus (California State Water Resources Control Board, SWB), Josh Cahill (Yurok Tribe), and Lorena Munos (Community Water Center, CWC) introduced themselves to the group.

Orientation to the Work of the DRIP Collaborative, Progress-to-Date, and Considerations for 2026

[0:05:17 – 0:36:30, slides 7-13]

Glen Low, Earth Genome, opened with a summary of the DRIP Collaborative's progress. Key themes included clarifying the Collaborative's role (inform, complement, or lead) across focus areas such as ecosystem, land use, and water infrastructure; building on previously approved recommendations; considering the complexity of issues; and determining the focus

of the DRIP Collaborative to inform opportunities to strengthen drought resilience, particularly if dry conditions persist in 2026. Emphasizing the importance of responsiveness, collaboration, and value-added engagement, Glen noted that the group's collective guidance will be essential to tackling strategies for effective drought management moving forward.

Paul Gosselin noted that the DRIP Collaborative has an opportunity to build on three years of progress by focusing more deeply on high-priority drought issues in 2026. To support this, workgroups process will aim to promote allow greater flexibility, informal collaboration, and efficient use of resources. While narrowing to three key topics, the DRIP Collaborative should continue tracking other efforts through periodic updates. One major area for deeper attention is the unresolved issue of roles and responsibilities for dry wells, an issue that merits further discussion, analysis, and potential development of white papers to bring back for broader consideration.

DRIP Collaborative Comments and Discussion:

- I really appreciate Paul's comments, and I especially agree with the value of allowing more flexibility in how we convene and discuss topics, which lets us be more dynamic. That's really one of the key strengths of the DRIP Collaborative, bringing people together and having these conversations. I would love to see a continued discussion in 2026 on the agricultural impacts of drought and on improving the resilience of agricultural landscapes. Many participants at this table bring unique perspectives, deep knowledge, and awareness of available resources, which could create opportunities for more complementary and coordinated efforts.

- I've often wished this could be more of a venue for information sharing. At the Department of Food and Agriculture, we're constantly fielding questions, especially in drought years, about rapidly changing situations. It would be extremely helpful to use this group to hear from folks at the local level and learn about state-level resources that are available. I'm concerned about how our ongoing work interacts with other processes happening elsewhere in the state, many of which have statutory requirements and mandates. It could be valuable to share our thoughts with those groups and receive updates from them, helping us stay coordinated. At the same time, we need to recognize that decision-making is also occurring outside this forum, so understanding that context will be important moving forward.

  Follow up: Regarding the idea of providing recommendations or input on other processes underway, are you envisioning that the DRIP Collaborative collectively develop input that we brand as DRIP Collaborative input in those processes?

  Response: I don't have a particular vision, especially since we are coming from different perspectives. One option may be that input takes the form of a summary of the discussion. It's worth talking about though.

  Follow up: Can you elaborate on some of the processes that you have in mind?

  Response: Part of the challenge is that I don't feel fully qualified to speak on all of those processes given the complexity of the water world, and I can't even begin to describe everything that's happening. For example, there's the General Plan guidelines process at LCI, among others. What might be helpful is to request updates on these other processes, since we know they exist and are moving forward on their own trajectories.

Response (Paul Gosselin): This is a really good point. For example, with LCI or the General Plan workgroup areas, there's already been a lot of work, and I see that continuing as part of ongoing engagement. Agencies are already engaging with LCI and reporting out, whether on recharge activities or other topics addressed over the past two years. Additional topics could also be reported by one or more DRIP Collaborative members. These focus areas will continue to evolve over time, and we will find ways to stay engaged and keep reporting back. Some items may be longer-term, and as we address more immediate issues, the longer-term ones may begin to resolve themselves. Ultimately, this is work we're in for the long haul.

- I appreciate the move towards greater flexibility since at times, I've hesitated to share information, even outside of this forum, simply because I wasn't sure about our role or how many of us were actively involved.

- I support the idea of having more flexibility and being able to focus on the implementation in the next year.

Presentation: Hydrology Report and Drought Outlook

[0:36:30 – 0:58:00, slides 14-38]

Jeannine Jones, Interstate Resources Manager, Executive Branch, DWR, provided an update as California transitions into the new water year, highlighting that California experienced another "abnormally average" year for both precipitation and temperature, with generally average reservoir conditions and improved groundwater storage following the wet 2023 season. Long-term drought challenges continue to persist in the Colorado River Basin and the San Joaquin Valley, with current dryness experienced along the Central Coast. Looking ahead, Jeannine cautioned against relying on long-range forecasts given their limited accuracy and emphasized the continued uncertainty in climate patterns. Negotiations over the Colorado River's interim operating guidelines remain ongoing, with the current shortage framework likely to continue into 2026 and potential reductions in releases from Lake Powell if drought conditions worsen. Jeannine closed with a reminder that California's climate is defined by extremes rather than averages, underscoring the need for preparedness and adaptability in managing water resources.

DRIP Collaborative members questions:

- Regarding the 12-week EDDI categories (Slide 24), you said that there's more precipitation in Southern California as shown here, but nobody should be alarmed. Is this typical of what we would expect to see during this season?

  Response: Yes. Our summers are hot and dry and that is reflected in evaporative demand and evapotranspiration and since this slide was prepared they've had some good rain events that push back the wildfire risk.

- I was interested in the table of all the summary of the annual water supply and demand assessments (slide 35). What does the State/DWR do, are there trigger points or action points or is this mostly just informational to get a gauge?

Response: What this is showing is that the first question is if a shortage is expected and then the second question to address is, can you fix the shortage just by implementing the water supply contingency plan? In this case, the answer is yes, we can fix the shortage, so there is not a problem here. DWR prepares the report and submits it to the State Water Board to review and take action if anything stands out as a problem. But where we see the real problems related to droughts are not with the big systems, it's with the small systems. I Would not expect to see anything significant pop up on this table.

- Related to the comment about precipitation not resulting in reservoir storage in Colorado. Could you give your assessment of why that's the case?

  Response: Let's compare the Colorado River Basin to the Sacramento River since everybody's familiar with the Sacramento River. The Sacramento River basin, California's largest river and water supply source is wetter than the Colorado River in terms of average annual flow, much smaller watershed, but it's also much cooler and wetter watershed. The Colorado River watershed is far larger in terms of size, but most of the precipitation occurs in the upper watershed, close to 90% of it above Lake Powell. The lower watershed below Lake Powell, think about visualizing a map of the Colorado River Basin it's flowing through desert. Even though there's good runoff high in the mountains above Lake Powell, a lot of it is lost to evaporation and evapotranspiration by the time it gets into Powell and anything below Powell: as it flows in the desert there are very high losses in the system. One of the impacts we've been seeing about climate change in the Colorado River Basin is even though the snowpack may be great, it's just less and less of it is making its way into the reservoirs.

Annual Urban Water Supply and Demand Assessment
[0:58:10 – 1:40:18, slides 39-53]

Ryan Bailey, the Water Use Efficiency Branch manager, Division of Regional Assistance, DWR, provided an overview of the Annual Water Supply and Demand Assessment (AWSDA), established under the 2018 “Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life” legislation. This assessment functions as a yearly stress test for urban water suppliers to evaluate how their systems would perform under dry-year conditions.

Fethi BenJemaa, Manager of the Water Shortage Contingency Planning Section, Water Use Efficiency Branch, DWR explained how the AWSDA fits within California’s broader urban water management framework, which includes the Urban Water Management Plans (UWMPs) and Water Shortage Contingency Plans (WSCPs). For 2025, all 464 urban water suppliers submitted assessments, marking 100% compliance. Most projected shortages were in Southern California. Common actions identified in the plans included fixing leaks, restricting outdoor irrigation, and conducting customer outreach, highlighting that local implementation and public participation are key.

DRIP Collaborative Discussion:

- Does the State have any role in validating and ensuring that the data provided by water suppliers is accurate?

  Response: DWR provides guidance to support suppliers in their estimates. It's their own supplies and local decisions. While DWR does not validate, DWR reviews the report to

see if there are discrepancies or potential errors that need to be considered and clarified by the suppliers.

Follow up: What are the opportunities that DWR sees in terms of using the information that the water supply agencies provide?

Response: There are several opportunities. One of them is for the State to be informed of supply conditions at the supplier level for the next year, it's very helpful especially if it identifies those needs. A couple years back in 2022, around the peak of the drought, this exercise helped several suppliers who were in a difficult situation to document conditions and to help the State provide some assistance. One of the instances I recall was that our State Water Project folks looked at these assessments to identify the suppliers who were asking for additional allocations to meet health and safety needs. So, these assessments help the State in making decisions or providing assistance to some of the water suppliers.

- You highlighted that one small water system voluntarily submitted their water contingency plan. Did that small water system have similar conditions to the other urban water systems? Was their plan enough for them to prepare for drought conditions? Do you think that it would be helpful for small water systems to follow similar evaluation process as the urban water management plan - assuming that it'll be a dry year, submitting it to DWR and getting that kind of feedback and support?

  Response: The volunteer water system that submitted their report estimated no shortage. While, last year we had more volunteers that submitted reports with no shortages, it is always good practice for the small water system to engage in planning. The problem with imposing more reporting requirements on them is that they don't have the means, they don't have the TMF to do planning, to do reporting, but for those that can it is recommended that they do planning. If anything, even if they can't address the shortage, at least to inform or to be prepared ahead of time to ask for assistance to deal with such shortage.

- I am wondering if the water suppliers have the same definition of water shortage. Does the water that a system might have in storage or in other contingency plans in place, is that factored in their reporting, whether they have a shortage or not?

  Response: Some suppliers have reserve storage that they consider as not part of supplies when they make the calculation. Those are only when we run into dry conditions and shortages. They introduce those as water shortage response actions. Shortage contingency plans and shortage response actions include several types. Among the top actions are reduction, of course, and supply augmentation, and some of them are shortage response actions. Some agencies have storage that they use as emergency supply to respond to shortages, that's one case. Another case is that a lot of agencies, especially for this exercise, have constrained demand. We know that many, if not most, agencies have ongoing water conservation measures always in place. Some of the agencies, when they do this exercise, try to estimate what are the benefits from those ongoing demand reduction actions or water conservation measures in place. They substitute for those, so their projected supplies or demand would be inflated.

- I appreciate the emphasis and focus on local determination of appropriate actions before state intervention. That has been historically a challenge. I'm from Santa Cruz County.

During the 2013 through 2015 drought, our community took great action to reduce water use, and it never rebounded. In 2021 and 2022, when the state was considering 25 percent mandated reductions, we were concerned, if you are using 45 GPCD, you can't cut that down 25 percent without risk of health and safety impacts. It really gets to people being able to use their dishwasher. I appreciate that this allows locals to be more nimble, and the approach seems more flexible with this implementation. I want to say how much I appreciate it and how much it really is critical to locals to be able to make their own decisions.

Follow up: I wanted to reiterate the comment related to local impacts. Large water agencies, especially in Southern California, have been going through large conservation campaigns for 30 years, one question I'd add to Bulletin 161, I am curious about the formatting or any additional efforts to group together or distill any sort of regional trends to what might be happening. Right now it seems to be in alphabetical order, which is helpful for finding agencies, but in terms of understanding drivers, is it a Southern California thing in terms of certain droughts, is it population drivers, or certain reservoir shared water resources that are impacting that next year's local impact, it might be helpful to trace back what do we do from here, if there are any state or policy questions in the future.

Response: Bulletin 161 does include a summary of statewide supply and conditions, which shows the hydrologic conditions and reservoir levels and snowpack and so on. But that doesn't translate into supply conditions for the suppliers. Some of the suppliers are getting their supplies from the State Water Project up north or the Colorado River. Supplies at the supplier level aren't well correlated with hydrologic conditions on the ground. We try to show where the suppliers that are projecting shortages are, we subdivide them into the hydrologic regions.

Response (Jeannine): From a different perspective, it is not just drought that causes shortages. We know small systems in particular struggle with basic TMF, and that's why the Water Board has their program for dealing with those kinds of things. If I were to look at who is really at risk in a drought, I would add another list of the smaller systems that we know struggle, not because of hydrology per se, but because of TMF issues. Those are the ones that really bubble up to the top whenever there is a drought because drought exacerbates those problems.

Accomplishments Related to the 2024 DRIP Collaborative Recommendations

[1:40:18 – 1:56:37, slides 54-60]

Julie Ekstrom, CA Department of Water Resources, Water Justice Office, provided an update on tracking progress for the 2024 DRIP Collaborative recommendations, highlighting related efforts and opportunities for involvement. The update is based on member input, and members are encouraged to continue providing updates by contacting DWR. Below is the progress to date on the six 2024 recommendations:

REC 1. Drought indicators and metrics: The LCI's Vulnerable Communities Platform was just released this week. There may be an opportunity for the DRIP Collaborative to explore this in more depth at a future meeting. The Platform includes drought indicators and provides

opportunities to build on this work. It could be particularly valuable for DRIP Collaborative members who are interested in advancing drought-related efforts within the platform. It is expected to be widely used and represents a significant step forward.

Glen Low reported on a workshop on drought indicators and metrics that was held on August 19th ahead of the two-day California Water Data Summit at UC Davis. The workshop centered on the intersection of three efforts: the California Water Data Consortium's urban water reporting pilots, the NIDIS-funded work led by Alvar and his team, and the work from our drought task force. In addition to presentations, an afternoon breakout session focused on the identification of drought indicators and metrics. As a follow up, the Consortium is going to convene a voluntary workgroup to inform the drafting and publishing of a white paper.

REC 2. Rapid inventory of drought-related tools and resources: LCI - Climate Adaptation Resilience Program (iCARP) is continuing to document drought-related tools and data. This information will be incorporated into the documentation and guidance for the Vulnerable Communities Platform. This work is still in progress.

REC 3. Empowering county drought resilience planning for domestic wells and state small water systems: The UC Agriculture and Natural Resources program, in collaboration with researchers including those at UC Merced, launched a project examining county SB 552 plans and identifying county needs for future implementation. Since SB 552 designates counties as the central hub responsible for convening task forces and developing plans for domestic wells and state smalls, this research will be valuable in informing ongoing support efforts.

DWR and CSAC continue to host monthly webinars for county staff, providing a space for learning and discussion. During these monthly meetings, counties bring up issues that often mirror topics discussed in the DRIP Collaborative meeting.

DWR currently has 56 counties enrolled in the County Drought Resilience Planning Assistance Program, which provides support, through grants or direct assistance, to help counties develop plans and establish task forces. To date, six counties have completed their plans, with several more expected soon, and ten counties have formally adopted their plans.

REC 4. Voluntary community-based well monitoring program: This recommendation aligns well with DWR's broader effort to enhance groundwater monitoring statewide and led to the launch of a pilot on community groundwater monitoring. The pilot provides education, training, and sounder equipment to domestic well owners and small water systems so they can track their groundwater levels. The pilot has launched in Elk Grove, in the Sacramento region, in collaboration with Sacramento County. The pilot also began with a small water system in Yolo County.

REC 5. Roles and responsibilities for domestic wells: Advancing this recommendation will be part of the discussion about the 2026 work of the DRIP Collaborative. Of note, the State Water Board's fund expenditure plan has been updated since July and is expected to be discussed at the November meeting, including plans related to domestic wells for the coming year.

REC 6. Drought definitions and case studies: LCI is continuing this work through the state's Fifth Climate Change Assessment and is still accepting input. DRIP Collaborative members are invited to share past drought experiences for documentation, using the available template.

Focus Areas Review Process

[1:57:37 – 2:03:13, slides 61-65]

Orit Kalman walked through the reporting process for ideas developed in each focus area. At the July meeting, members identified eight ideas and considered their role in advancing them as inform, complement, or lead. Members acknowledged that these ideas are complex, requiring additional research, study, and input from subject matter experts (SMEs). Through workgroups and co-lead efforts, three of these ideas have now evolved into recommendations.

Reducing Ecosystem Impacts of Drought Focus Area

[2:03:13 – 2:37:00, slides 66-77]

Redgie Collins, CalTrout, summarized the workgroup's efforts in exploring proposed ideas under this focus area. The ideas centered on reducing the ecosystem impacts of drought, a topic as broad as the diverse communities we serve. Recognizing that drought affects ecosystems in different ways, the workgroup began with consideration of several initial concepts. The three ideas considered by the workgroup include:

- ECO1. Instream Flows: Best Practices for Landowner Cooperative Solutions
- ECO2. Streamline Grant & Contract Processes
- ECO3. O&M for Habitat Restoration Projects

Redgie's presentation focused on ECO1, which has been developed into a recommendation. In shaping this recommendation, the workgroup discussed water rights, the role of streamflow in supporting ecosystems, and the implications for communities that rely on surface water supplies. Ultimately, the recommendation was developed to focus on the instream flow component recognizing the complexity of navigating water rights and balancing the needs of fish, ecosystems, and people.

Redgie reviewed the recommendation template pointing to the document A Practitioner's Guide to Instream Flow Transactions in California, as an excellent example and resource developed by The Nature Conservancy.

<u>DRIP Collaborative Discussion</u>

- The presentation on the recommendation was very informative, and I appreciate the effort to clarify elements of the existing practitioner's guidelines. I also like that you included a bullet on early engagement. One suggestion I'd offer is to explicitly include Tribes among the parties and partners for lead reviewers and collaborators. Depending on the tribe and the project, they may serve as regulatory authorities, restoration practitioners, or as water users.

Response: Thank you for that. I also want to acknowledge the Klamath Tribes for their leadership in advancing the conversation on instream flows, especially on the Shasta and Scott. This is an excellent suggestion, and we should make that change.

- I am happy with the recommendation that emerged from all this work. It's great that the first recommendation the DRIP Collaborative is taking forward focuses on the environmental impacts of drought, which is one of our responsibilities as a group. My only hesitation throughout this has been whether it goes far enough. I think a guidebook is critical. For someone who lives along a creek and has access to a stream, this information can feel instantly impenetrable. And I worry that even with a guidebook, and even with strong partnerships and community support from groups like RCDs and others, it still may not be enough to truly move the needle. One outcome I'd like to see is an evaluation of the high barriers that currently prevent landowners from taking relatively simple mitigation actions, things they could likely do with minimal technical assistance, a pump, some pipe, and a bit of effort, and which could make a meaningful difference over time. But right now, the legal barriers alone make it extraordinarily challenging. Over the long term, I would like us to really consider opportunities to simplify where possible as an important goal to help ensure that these solutions can actually be implemented. While we often talk about appropriative rights, for us, riparian rights are a bigger concern. In our area, many of our creeks are impacted more by numerous small users than by a few large appropriative users taking significant amounts of water. We don't see much of that large-user scenario locally. Ensuring that riparian use is considered as well is really important.

- Regarding Safe Harbor Agreements, if included, it will be important to use very clear and specific language, because they can be contentious. We should be explicit about what is meant, and provide guidance, because we've seen what can happen when Safe Harbor Agreements are not implemented properly.

- When we look at droughts, the most immediate impacts tend to be dry wells and ecosystem degradation. This recommendation touches on a key part of that, instream flows and ecosystem impacts, so there is a lot of good work here, and it's worth commending. The shift toward a broader guidebook approach also aligns with how complex this topic is. There isn't an immediate, simple solution, and you've identified many of the issues that need further discussion, especially with the agencies, agricultural interests, and others who need to be part of the conversation. This will continue to be a dynamic issue. We may see regulatory changes related to water rights, and Sustainable Groundwater Management Act guidance on interconnected surface water may also change groundwater extraction practices. Those shifts could affect instream flows and, ultimately, improve drought resilience. If this recommendation moves forward, having an ongoing conversation about these evolving dynamics, and bringing in a broader group as you've suggested, will be very valuable.

- This is a longstanding issue in California, and it's not only about drought, but also a long-term challenge. What I was thinking, in relation to this group, is whether we can look at this through both lenses: the long term need and how conditions change during drought. It would be helpful to explore what additional considerations or actions are needed specifically during drought, compared to what applies over the long term. Is there a distinction between long term environmental needs and drought specific needs? I'm not sure, but I think it could be a valuable topic for us to explore. I think this is an interesting

point, especially when you look at curtailment case studies. For example, in the Shasta Valley, we often see more water in the streams during curtailments and drought-related emergency declarations than in normal water years. That suggests there is analysis to be done and adjustments to consider. And this pattern isn't unique to Shasta, it's true in many places across California. It shows that this isn't just a drought issue; it speaks to a much larger, long-term conversation about identifying instream flow needs and actually meeting those targets, which we have not yet accomplished in California.

- I just want to say thank you, because I will always support voluntary-based approaches. I really appreciate that.
- One quick question: As we know, the California Water Commission released their report, and this is fully consistent with some of their recommendations as well. Is that correct?

  Response: While I'd need to review the documents more closely to be certain, my answer would likely be yes.

- One of the important aspects of instream flow is temperature and taking an integrated approach; combining groundwater work with local efforts from partners and landowners will go a long way. We're actively discussing this in our DWR working group and want everyone to know that we're aware of it.

DRIP Collaborative member voting process:
Readiness vote: All voted yes (17)
Approval vote: All voted yes (17)

2024 Communication Program Recommendation Development

[2:39:15 – 2:46:27, slides 80-83]

Anthony Navasero, DWR, summarized the workgroup discussion on drought and water shortage communications, a topic originating from the 2024 Drought Narrative and Definition focus area. The group explored ideas under the three engagement pathways. Under Inform, ideas included compiling drought communication resources, hosting expert presentations, and building a library of best practices. The Complement pathway focused on improving outreach to diverse communities, supporting translation and communication efforts, and engaging with practitioners developing drought communication plans. The Lead pathway emphasized sharing approaches through presentations from water agencies and counties on their drought communication and resilience plans to promote cross-learning and coordination.

DRIP Collaborative Discussion:

- The presentation referred to water representatives - does that include nonprofits that work with communities more directly?

  Response: Yes, it will be important to hear from NGOs, particularly those that are representing small water agencies of domestic wells and community wells that don't have membership or have the capacity to directly engage.

- I think establishing core principles for communication and clarifying the key messages we want to convey is important. I appreciate the comment that "rivers that run dry don't serve anyone," underscoring that water isn't only for housing or development, but for sustaining life itself. This suggests an opportunity for deeper, more meaningful messaging that goes beyond emergency response.

Water Infrastructure and Planning Focus Area

[2:46:27 – 3:06:42, slides 84-91]

Anthony Navasero, DWR, shared progress on the development of ideas related to the 2025 Water Infrastructure and Planning focus area. Members previously expressed interest in learning and being better informed on this topic. During their meeting, the work group heard two presentations from subject matter experts. Lance Eckhart, Chief Hydrologist for the San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency and former General Manager of the Mojave Water Agency shared his experience leading efforts at both agencies to support small water systems and their respective watersheds. Tim Godwin, Technical and Policy Advisor to the Sustainable Water Management Deputy Director at the Department provided an overview of groundwater recharge since 2023. The workgroup did not have time to deliberate on next steps for developing the ideas under this focus area. For now, the recommendation is to remain in a learning and informing mode before advancing the proposed ideas.

<u>DRIP Collaborative Discussion:</u>

- It's important to recognize that people managing small and very small water systems should not be blamed for their limitations. These systems often face constraints in technical, managerial, and financial capacity, yet most operators have been doing the best they can, sometimes for many years. We need to approach this with understanding and focus on informing ourselves further. There is still much more to learn. For example, at the local level, ideas are emerging on how to adjust rules for smaller systems with limited capacity. In my work with the Los Angeles County Public Works water plan workgroup on small at-risk systems, we've seen discussions about tailoring regulations to better fit the realities of these smaller systems. While we didn't get to the second item in the infrastructure group, it underscores that continued learning and information-sharing are essential.

- I would like to see us continue in the inform phase and maintain these discussions. Understanding the problem statement can be challenging and takes time to develop. We can draw on examples like the LA County Water Plan, which focuses on small water addressing issues that, while situated in the most populous county, reflect both urban and rural challenges. There is a great deal of commonality across the state on these topics. It's important for this group to keep the conversation going, refine the issues, and explore what actions can be taken at different levels. I found both presenters extremely valuable for deepening our understanding, and I want to highlight Mr. Eckhart's insights. His discussion on the Coachella Valley and the Mojave Water Agency illustrated how small water systems were successfully engaged and, importantly, what incentives helped build trust. For my work on this committee and in LA County, this experience is directly applicable in thinking about how to support small systems and what I can bring to my board. In LA County, we face unique challenges: we oversee only one municipal water system and two water agencies, yet the county includes 88 cities and over 200 water

agencies. Everyone within the county is a constituent of the Board of Supervisors, including those managing small water systems. It's critical that the board cares, and in my experience, they do, but the question is how we can help effectively and appropriately. Listening to Mr. Eckhart underscore the importance of partnerships, trust-building, and communication. In LA County, we held work sessions and listening sessions that brought small water system representatives together, sometimes people who didn't even know each other but shared common interests. This reinforces why it's essential for our group to continue this conversation: to develop recommendations that are not only strategic but also practical and actionable at the local level.

Land Use Planning for Drought Resiliency Focus Area

[3:07:00 – 4:05:08, slides 92-110]

Julie Ekstrom reviewed the work accomplished by the workgroup and co-leads to advance the focus area ideas into recommendations. This focus area was developed on the premise that land use planning often overlooks water availability, drought risk, and groundwater constraints, which can lead to development that strains water resources and undermines climate resilience if not carefully addressed in future planning.

The first idea, related to land repurposing, does not yet have a recommendation template for review. Instead, the workgroup discussion focused on expanding the success of the Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program. The workgroup concluded that additional discussion in 2026 would be valuable, particularly to explore connections to LCIs and the Strategic Growth Council's regional capacity support tools.

- Anna Schiller, Environmental Defense Fund, added that it is important to underscore that agricultural land transitions are already occurring. The state's Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program provides support, but the scale of need far exceeds what the program alone can address. Connecting regional planners to resources, best practices, and guidance is critical to equip them to make these difficult decisions. Long-term trends are driving these transitions, alongside short-term shocks like droughts, highlighting the value of proactive, advanced planning for agricultural land use. Continuing this discussion next year will be important. As the DRIP Collaborative works together, we can develop stronger recommendations by leveraging complementary resources and perspectives from multiple groups and agencies addressing this issue from different angles. Broadening the discussion will help ensure that planning approaches are robust and informed.

The third proposed idea for integrating land planning and water is based on the need to better align general plans with water planning and management. Since LCI was already updating its General Plan Guidance and recently launched optional guidance for those interested in including a water element, DWR is collaborating with LCI to provide additional input and feedback.

Recommendation Land2a. Aligning Communication and Planning Timelines for Housing and Water

Sierra Ryan, Santa Cruz County, reviewed the development of REC 2A, which originated from the water and land use nexus recommendation idea that was divided into two recommendations. REC 2A focuses on addressing the current misalignment between land

use and water planning. This recommendation addresses anecdotal experiences highlighting conflicts between the timing of water projects, such as those informed by Groundwater Sustainability Plans and Water Shortage Contingency Plans, and housing development.

DRIP Collaborative Discussion:

- This work is especially timely for California, as housing and water are closely linked and both are high-priority issues. One element I would like to see expanded is the inclusion of developers, the people actually creating the projects. Understanding their drivers, why they choose specific locations, and how they consider water and land use in their process would add valuable perspective.

  Follow up: The comment on including developers is interesting, because what we do not want is to add more roadblocks to housing. We actually want to try to simplify the process for housing and affordability, and every new regulation, every new problem that we add, if we have the water silo experts only thinking about, is going to increase the price for housing, it is going to increase problems. I think that is an important thing to have always in mind, that water is really important. It is also interesting to think that we use a lot of water in California for non-housing issues. We need to think about simplifying the process, instead of trying to add more roadblocks for housing developers.

- This situation is a microcosm of what we are dealing with: the need for additional housing and growth, ongoing drought concerns, and legacy issues from past water shortages. We are talking about roles and responsibilities for dry wells, and legacy leftover issues from previous droughts and with the next droughts. We have to think about where residents are going to be situated, whether they are small community systems or private wells. Are they going to be placed in locations that are not going to be resilient for the next drought. This ties back into land use planning and evaluations on the state's targets for affordable housing. Maybe this topic is part of a larger topic on future housing and residents. We tried to address this a couple years ago during the drought in an executive order, and some impacts where well permitting was made, and ag wells were permitted near domestic wells, and, conversely, residents placed domestic wells in locations that may not be reliable, foothill areas. It is important to consider places where water supplies are not reliable. We have a legacy of problems we need to deal with right now, but this just scratches the surface of the issue about well permitting decisions, particularly for ag wells. This may be the forum to talk about it.

- I'm very glad this group is addressing the nexus between water and housing. This is an opportunity to strategically locate housing in communities where we can build economies of scale and engage partners to help fund and develop better infrastructure, supporting sustainable, thriving communities for the future. In creating these communities, water infrastructure must always be a top priority. While it's important to address legacy issues and avoid repeating past mistakes, we must also consider existing communities and how to strengthen them. Rural communities contribute significantly to both our state and the nation.

- I agree with the comment about legacy problems. We need to address both existing issues and future planning, independently, interchangeably, and in an integrated way.

The goal is to avoid creating new legacy problems that future generations will have to fix. We must take care of what has already occurred while ensuring that we apply the lessons learned to plan effectively and prevent similar issues from arising.

- I really appreciate your focus on affordability in this context. Much of the discussion around climate change impacts centers on housing and energy, but water is often less highlighted. A significant part of what CSAC does is examine affordability across waste, energy, and water, making this perspective especially important.

- Affordability and economy of scale need to be taken into account. At a certain point, communities are going to need to develop alternative water supplies, even to serve the current populations, and then adding more people in some ways will just add more people to spread those costs over and make it more affordable. It does not usually cost significantly more per unit of water that you are making, or investing in, in a big project. There are places where that kind of analysis would be really helpful if integrated into all of this. In my experience, communities tend to oppose housing projects where they see brand new development, and yet their needs have not been met. Something important to remember as well.

DRIP Collaborative member voting process:
- Readiness vote: All voted yes (14)
- Approval vote: All voted yes (14)

Recommendation Land2b. Assessing Water Supply and Wastewater Capacity with Housing Needs
Natalie Kuffel, Land Use & Climate Innovation (LCI), reviewed the development of Recommendation 2B, including its key components and considerations for implementation. Recommendation 2B focuses on data related to housing supply, water supply, and wastewater capacity to assess how these factors align with housing needs, demand, and the allocations determined through the RHNA process.

DRIP Collaborative comments and discussion:
- Coming from the Water Board, more specifically from the water quality and wastewater permitting side, I noticed that while the focus on water supply makes perfect sense, wastewater is mentioned only briefly without much detail. I would encourage you to ensure that wastewater is included more robustly in this process, as it often goes hand in hand with drinking water infrastructure needs. Too often, people “flush it and forget it” and wastewater infrastructure doesn’t get the same attention as drinking water systems.

- Going through the proposal, I can’t help but think about how water and wastewater agencies already track the capacity or maximum capacity of their infrastructure. When developers propose new projects, they typically conduct impact studies to assess those effects. Who is the intended audience for this study? If the focus is at the local level, it seems that much of this capacity information is already known.

  Response: We were envisioning this more for the early planning phases, when housing allocations are being made. The idea is to identify where capacity exists and where it may not, at a higher level, statewide or regional, rather than just locally. This could also help highlight potential mismatches or areas where additional supply may

be needed, allowing that planning process to begin earlier. As mentioned, developing new supply or infrastructure takes time, so the earlier these needs are identified, the less likely we are to face timing mismatches down the line.

- Would you say the proposed pilot is about developing a methodology that others could then use for future analysis?

  Response: Yes, that was the idea. This is an ambitious effort, so it may make sense to start smaller with the pilot to ensure we develop something that is replicable. Once the methodology is proven, If the results are useful for the State Water Plan, that could be the right venue for a larger-scale application, but starting at the pilot level allows us to refine the approach first.

- I want to ensure that when assessing water supply, we consider not only the quantity of water available but also water quality (nitrates and other pollutants) as well as the status of water systems that are at risk or failing. It's important that these factors are fully included in the study.

  Response: Yes, we mentioned SAFER in passing, but that's an important thing to emphasize here.

- The Luskin Center is in process of developing a wastewater needs assessment for the Water Board. They also created the process for our drinking water needs assessment, so they can be a helpful nexus if you are going to be working with them.

- When you talk about a capacity study for water and refer to "new water" or new water developments, that raises an important point. It's also worth considering available water, such as agricultural water that could be accessed through trading agreements or other mechanisms. Of course, there are tradeoffs involved, but there's a significant difference between planning for new water infrastructure, which is costly, complex, and time-consuming, versus reallocating existing water, which in many cases can be faster, easier, and less expensive. This distinction is important when considering potential solutions. It's critical to evaluate whether the solution involves creating new water or redirecting existing sources.

- Just one more consideration. When looking at water and housing capacity, it may be worth considering the impacts of housing density in a region and the types of planned development being studied. This is because there is often a correlation between higher density and lower water use per unit, as well as differences in the mix of people and the water demand that a development could support.

  Response: I think that's an important consideration. Clearly, not all housing is the same, so when assessing whether there is enough water for "housing," it's important to be specific about what that means. In line with the point about definitions and what the study includes, breaking it down by housing type would be a valuable addition.

DRIP Collaborative member voting process:

- Readiness vote: All voted yes (14)
- Approval vote: All voted yes (14)

Closing Out the Year and Looking Ahead to 2026

[4:06:04 – 5:04:53, slides 112-126]

Orit Kalman opened the discussion on developing the 2026 process and topics by acknowledging the DRIP Collaborative's diverse participation over the past three years in addressing complex issues and shaping recommendations. Looking ahead, the DRIP Collaborative will focus on balancing urgent needs with long-term planning, streamlining collaboration by reducing formal workgroup requirements, and broadening participation to support deliverables such as white papers and issue briefs. Guiding principles emphasize regional capacity building, flexibility, and coordination, with near-term priorities including clarifying roles and responsibilities, refining drought indicators and metrics, and advancing current focus areas.

2024 Recommendation - Roles & Responsibilities

Paul Gosselin emphasized the need to revisit the 2024 roles and responsibilities recommendation, with particular focus on dry wells. Input from the DRIP Collaborative will be valuable in exploring solutions, establishing responsibilities, and informing the development of a coordinated approach to support affected communities. Paul invited members to share thoughts on how to develop an effective process to advance this topic.

DRIP Collaborative Discussion:

- I don't know how to make it an effective process, but I'm very much in support of this. As a county, I was one of the people who recommended addressing this issue a couple of years ago. When a well goes dry, it is unclear where funding and water will come from and it takes two years to get a contract in place. It will be great to have more in-depth conversations. Bringing in additional interests, the State Water Board and the SAFER folks to hear about their guidelines would be very helpful. When it comes to domestic wells going dry, there's a lot that can be done on the permitting side. We may want to consider bifurcating this problem into existing wells and how to stop issuing well permits in places where mitigation is needed. In Santa Cruz County's fractured granite areas, we've changed our yield requirements for getting a well permit limiting what can be done if stricter yield requirements cannot be met. We're very worried about being handed the entire bag of all the domestic wells that are running dry and finding out that we are responsible for them. There are good examples from other places as well that we could learn from.

- I support this work as well and want to suggest that the infrastructure challenges for small and vulnerable communities, which are longer term issues, need to be considered as well. It's not just about domestic wells; there are other communities that lack sufficient capacity. The work counties are doing under SB 552 highlights this issue, and I see it as an important part of the discussion moving forward.

  Response (Paul): Both suggestions touch on what the workgroup may be doing. These topics are not one-offs and may require standing committees as they evolve into future considerations for small systems and related issues. This could also involve examining land use considerations. We may frame this as a broader topic that focuses on one facet initially, then branches into other areas that can inform a white paper for the DRIP Collaborative to review and vet. These issues are expected to be dynamic and will evolve over time.

- I wanted to say that the State Water Board wants to lean into this effort acknowledging that this is an important topic.

  Follow up: Another perspective that could be useful from the State Water Board would be the Division of Drinking Water, the group that oversees the primacy agencies, because I know a lot of counties have been giving them back recently and I think that is a bad thing from a water management perspective.

  Response (SWB): I'm speaking on behalf of the Division of Water Quality, the Division of Drinking Water beyond the SAFER Program. We are all in.

- This is a top priority for the Community Water Center. It's an important issue, and it's critical to include both the County perspective and the voices of community organizations that work directly with local residents. Given the complexity of this problem, it's long overdue that we bring together these diverse perspectives to work toward a solution.

2024 Recommendation – Drought Indicators and Metrics

Glen Low reported back on a workshop held on August 19th that focused on user requirements for drought indicators and metrics. A key takeaway from the workshop was that participants, in consideration of their own perspectives and needs, identify different sets of indicators and metrics. While several efforts are underway on this topic, important gaps remain that need to be addressed. Glen provided a short list of potential opportunities to address the gaps related to this recommendation.

- As part of the 2024 recommendation development, we discussed a potential implementation phase, and that seems to be the piece that hasn't really happened yet. I think it would be helpful to clarify how that might move forward. One of the most challenging parts is forming a workgroup and identifying who will actually be part of it, and who will be responsible for developing the list of indicators. I do see an opportunity here

- Are you suggesting a kind of parallel track, where there's a workgroup developing the material and then bringing it back to the DRIP Collaborative for feedback and discussion on its application?

  Response: That's exactly right.

- I think that's perhaps the most important point, to get this substantial work done, we'll need to ensure that it is properly resourced with funding. If we can start this process, hopefully it will create enough momentum for the partners involved to identify an appropriate source of funding and pursue the resources needed to carry the work forward.

- Should we also include the gaps related to loss of federal data in forecasting and drought as an initial foundational issue?

  Response: Yes. I talked to Robyn Grimm, and she is quite keen on having the Consortium play a role, but the purpose and urgency need to be identified since we don't know what will happen in 2026.

- The most important aspect of this effort is the practical application from the user perspective. The key question is: what information will be most useful? As we develop

the prioritized list, it will be important to engage potential users of the indicators and metrics to understand their needs and identify existing gaps.

Response: This issue was raised during the workshop, including questions about who the audience is, what decisions need to be informed, the appropriate spatial and temporal resolution, and how to effectively communicate the information. The list of indicators and metrics needs to be highly practical. The challenge is that, while there could be hundreds of potential indicators, we need to identify just a few, and those few may differ depending on the audience. Balancing breadth and depth is what makes this effort particularly challenging.

Members were asked to weigh in about DRIP Collaborative role in advancing the two 2024 recommendations. When the recommendations were first developed, it was assumed that others would take the next steps. Now, seeing that progress hasn't advanced as much as hoped, and given the urgency, we want to consider how the DRIP Collaborative can help support and move these recommendations forward.

- I think having more and better data is generally a good thing. What's missing for me is clarity around who the audience is, who this effort is really for, and what kinds of decisions it's intended to inform. It seems like this would require a significant coordination effort.

- Revisiting this recommendation feels very tangible, especially with DWR and the State Water Board engaged and ready to receive feedback. The key question is who will ultimately benefit from this effort, given the time and commitment it will require.

- One of the ongoing challenges with drought indicators and data, particularly when using the national drought forecast, is that it doesn't accurately reflect California's diverse conditions. Droughts here are not uniform; the north can be wet while the south is dry. Beyond serving agencies, an important audience is the general public, who often need help understanding why water restrictions may apply in some areas but not others. A consistent statewide approach to drought indicators could help local agencies communicate more clearly and avoid duplicating efforts. The goal is to make California's complex drought conditions more understandable, providing agencies, counties, and local entities with tools and messaging they can use to explain conditions and decisions consistently, ultimately saving time, resources, and effort.

- I see the indicators and metrics recommendation as closely linked to the roles and responsibilities recommendation. Those responsible for responding to drought may not always understand what triggers signal that their community, region, or the state as a whole is entering a drought. Taking a more data-driven approach could help clarify those triggers and support more defined roles and responsibilities. While there may not yet be a clear champion to carry this work forward, it would still be valuable for the DRIP to explore this topic in greater depth and help advance understanding and coordination.

- LCI's vulnerable community platform was launched this week. Given the challenges in defining drought, LCI is interested in continuing this conversation next year. This highlights the importance of considering potential audiences and uses.

- My comment here is more of a challenge with this proposal, which I fully support. The complication I see relates to who is going to implement this and who will fund it. Is it the

DRIP Collaborative, or another entity? When I look at our recommendation from the first year, we have already talked about an implementation plan, but there are no attachments or mechanisms to ensure it actually happens. As a group, we don't have the authority or capacity to mandate implementation, it's just a recommendation. To me, the key questions are: who will do it, and how will it be carried out? It would be ideal to have more capacity to support implementation or mechanisms to attach accountability to the recommendation. This is the challenge I see. I think this work is important for California, as are many of the things we're recommending, but the real question is about implementation.

Follow up: This is a really good point. The DRIP Collaborative is not a governing board and doesn't have the structure or funding to carry out initiatives directly. However, the outcome of this process may lead to DWR picking up different aspects, since they manage California Water Watch and other indicators. Other indicators generated through this process could also be of interest to DWR or other DRIP Collaborative members. Starting this process may create tangible outcomes, rather than leaving it as something amorphous. That's why I see a lot of value here, including for LCI and other participants.

Members weighed in on how 2025 focus area ideas may continue to be developed in 2026.

- Related to the water infrastructure conversation, particularly regarding vulnerable communities, regulatory flexibility, and long-term infrastructure, all these issues connect to the discussion on dry wells. I believe the entire Infrastructure Focus Area conversation should continue into 2026 and beyond.

- A key issue on the minds of water agencies is setting rates and the challenge of affordability. For example, two CUWA members are currently undergoing rate litigation, and the need to fund more drought-resilient infrastructure is growing. These increased needs are particularly pronounced during drought, when encouraging reduced water use can impact revenues. Under the way Proposition 2 is written, agencies aren't allowed to subsidize affordable rates. While this may not be the primary avenue for this conversation, it's an important consideration to include in discussions about water infrastructure.

  Follow up: As a water retailer (LA County), I have a rate increase coming up on December 16th. Proposition 18 has been extremely challenging, particularly for water purveyors. Water and wastewater costs are exponentially higher than CTI and even energy costs, which makes rate structures a significant struggle. Because of this, before presenting my proposed rate structure to the board in December, I am investing in exploring options for subsidies that do not fall on the backs of ratepayers. I could report back on the results of this investigation during a workgroup conversation.

- Building on the earlier comment from DWR and opportunities for input, I'm wondering about other opportunities to contribute to existing efforts, such as LCI's work or DWR's California Water Plan. The DRIP Collaborative could provide real value by supporting these ongoing planning efforts, rather than identifying gaps on our own in the hope that someone else will act on them. If there are agencies that are already tackling major issues and seeking feedback, the DRIP Collaborative could serve as an excellent sounding board, adding value and helping achieve more tangible outcomes given the expertise and brainpower in this room.

- Echoing the opportunity to inform long term planning and data collection, from my view that goes hand in hand with SB 552. We are already seeing how some of our recommendations can go with other legislation and state efforts. So I think looking at that and how that can be utilized for other recommendations and beyond could be a helpful tool.

- I wanted to reiterate my interest in continuing the conversation around land repurposing next year and making sure that we continue to consider agricultural landscapes with this group, recognizing the really acute impacts that ag water users in times of drought, that now is a great time to be thinking about how to lessen the impacts and make it a smoother transition particularly where you do have longer term in addition to short term demand reduction needs. I think there's a lot of areas where we can weigh in and a lot of benefits to be had towards thoughtful land repurposing planning even thinking about vulnerable community wells, taking advantage of stormwater events for groundwater recharge. There's quite a bit of areas that overlap land repurpose that I think members of this group would be interested in continuing the conversation, and definitely providing input on other big ongoing planning efforts because I do think there are many places where a number of the strategies we talk about but land repurposing for sure can be better supported and incorporated in some of those ongoing planning efforts, thinking about the 2020 water plan. I know CDFA has a climate resilience report that they're collecting comments on. That could be a good place for maybe DRIP members to consider weighing in on, but I think that's a really smart use of this venue.

Next Steps and Closing Comments

[5:04:53 – 5:17:54, slides 127-128]

Members were invited to share reflections about the work accomplished in 2025:

- My “aha” or my realization is that the problems are so big individually; they're just too big to tackle in one year or in one proposal or in one idea.
- Thank you so much to everyone. It was really great to be here again, and I think it's always super useful to see the opportunities to enrich each other.
- I just want to thank the development team for putting this together and I'm looking forward to next year. I appreciate that this group is continuing to evolve and adapt and figure out how we can be most effective together. So really excited about the proposals to shift a little bit on how we're working together.
- I've only been to two of the DRIP Collaborative meetings this year and I don't know if I will be here next year, if it'll be someone else as they're filling Catherine Freeman's position. I really appreciate the opportunity to work with you all and discuss these important issues and echoing what was previously said, talking about it at this scale really brings a light to how big all of these things are and it's hard to come up with ways to tackle them and recommendations, but it's really great and inspiring to be with you all and see what great ideas you come up with. Thank you all.
- Thank you for everybody's input and commitment to being here. I am excited that I have the privilege to come back next year and I'm very excited about the opportunities to get some things get done. I too am excited about the new approach we're taking and think that it will allow us to move the ball, so to speak. The opportunity about the parallel timelines I think is great so that nothing's left behind and that we still have that opportunity to go back and see how we are progressing with those things that we talked about in 2024 and continue that movement.
- This is my first DRIP Collaborative meeting, and it's been really great to meet all of you and see face-to-face people I met over Zoom and also to hear everyone's expertise. I really appreciate that and having the opportunity to hopefully come back, I don't know if I will. Hopefully, we'll see or if it'll be somebody else. But I'm really excited to hear the work that DRIP does and the recommendations that we voted on and also the roles and responsibilities that were mentioned. So just really excited to see what the future holds.
- First and foremost, Jeanine Jones presentation here will forever be my favorite. Her reminder that NOAA's projections are what they are will always be refreshing to me. I always look forward to that. Some other takeaways for today, just hearing that 56 counties enrolled in the SB 552 program, that was also refreshing as well. And I hear the epiphany about tackling big topics here but also the fact that we're willing to take them on, that's the reason why I'm here. I'm really encouraged by that. Thank you. I think it's always time well spent.
- I really appreciate everyone's ongoing commitment. I know this is a big-time commitment for everyone. I am really looking forward to the focus on domestic wells next year.
- I really look forward in the coming year to- especially the work on the infrastructure pieces, that may be long-term, but to the extent we can fold those into the roles and responsibilities discussion, maybe we can make a lot of good progress on that as well. -So that will be really central to my work outside of DRIP.

And as someone who has found it very challenging to give sufficient time to this and leaving a couple of workgroups leaderless, which I feel very guilty about, to the extent we can work those into other things that we're doing and I can incorporate my other work into what DRIP is doing, so much the better. So that's my hope for next year.

- This is my first and I think probably possibly my only DRIP meeting, but it has been great to spend the day with you all and hear about the progress you have planned for next year. I think my only feedback would be it was great to have the side conversations with folks. I think one of the draws of being part of the collaborative is to be in the room with everyone else here. So maybe in the future if there were more planned breaks or something to do some internal breakout sessions or networking groups, I feel like that would be great for the people in the room to build those organic relationships. And maybe larger font sizes on the slides would be pretty good. But yeah, I've been really impressed with the work you're doing and looking forward to seeing what you guys come up with next year.
- I really appreciate coming here, I really appreciate that some of the issues that we're talking about here like looking at the state level it's the same issues that I'm working on every day at my desk especially when it comes to this last year has been really focused on small systems and domestic wells. I also really appreciate that, I'm a mid-manager at the second smallest county in the state and I still get to participate in something like this. I really appreciate it and I appreciate getting the opportunity to share my struggles and get input, both as part of this large group and then the side conversations are also really valuable and the relationships we've built. So I'm very much looking forward to next year and continuing what we're working on.
- I really appreciate the collaborative nature of this group. This is my first year in DRIP and it's so unique to get to be part of something like this and make decisions with so many different interested parties who we don't normally get to brainstorm with. And Sierra and I've worked very closely on these recommendations. It sounds like we solved the Housing Water Nexus, so it's great not continuing next year. I don't know if I'll be as involved next year. I was chatting with my colleague who's the brains behind the vulnerable communities platform it might make more sense for him to step back in – he was part of this the year before when that recommendation was first developed. I just wanted to share my appreciation and especially to Julie and Zoe and the team for doing so much work behind the scenes and really making sure that we're supported and taking work off our plate that makes this manageable. So a shoutout to both of them. I appreciate the opportunity to participate in my first DRIP Collaborative meeting. I look forward to engaging in the instream flow conversation next year and I'm interested to see how the other two recommendations turn out.
- I want to thank everyone for coming today and I was totally amazed with all the work that's gone into and the participation. It really shows the importance of this work and I think the outcomes that we're going to handle that have been done over the first couple of years is just going to build and build and build, that we are going to get traction and really address some of these really difficult things. We're going to chip away at it. These things are enormous, but we're going to incrementally knock these things down and start tackling them. And this is the group that's going to do it through a collaborative way. I'm really excited to be here with you all and it was a great day today.
- This was my first DRIP Collaborative meeting, and I just want to say that I really appreciate the opportunity to be here and to collaborate with all of you. I'm someone that was working in the field during the last drought from my communities that were impacted. I'm so grateful that we have this space to be able to be proactive and to try to minimize

the impacts for those communities during the next drought, and I see that we have a really great opportunity not just because of what we're going to be working on but also because of the passage of Prop 4, I think there's a lot of opportunity to strategically use that money to address some these vulnerabilities in these communities.

Next steps and activities to close out the year include:

- The Development Team will summarize the discussions and share with the DRIP Collaborative.
- DWR will prepare an annual report summarizing 2025 DRIP Collaborative process and accomplishments.
- DWR will schedule a virtual meeting in early 2026 to propose a 2026 DRIP Collaborative engagement process.
- DWR will schedule a virtual meeting on water rights.

Appendix A. Meeting Participation

Drought Resilience Interagency Partnership & Collaborative Members

Present

- Alvar Escriva-Bou, University of California, Davis
- Anna Schiller, Environmental Defense Fund
- Caitlin Loventhal, California State Association of Counties
- Carolina Hernandez, Los Angeles County Public Works
- Emily Rooney, Agricultural Council of California
- Jason Colombini, Jay Colombini Ranch, Inc.
- Joshua Cahill, Yurok Tribe
- Karen Mogus (for Joaquin Esquivel), State Water Resources Control Board
- Laura Ramos, California Water Institute at Fresno State
- Lorena Muñoz, Community Water Center
- Maria Gallegos Herrera, Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC)
- Natalie Kuffel, Governor's Office of Land use and Climate Innovation
- Redgie Collins, California Trout Inc.
- Paul Gosselin, California Department of Water Resources
- Sierra Ryan, Santa Cruz County
- Tami McVay, Self Help Enterprises
- Tiffany Tran (for Katie Ruby), California Urban Water Agencies (CUWA)
- Tim Worley, California Association of Mutual Water Companies
- Virginia Jameson, California Department of Food and Agriculture

Absent

- [Vacant], Buena Vista Ranchera of the Me-Wuk Indians
- Anna Naimark, California Environmental Protection Agency
- Brent Hastey, Plumas Lake Self Storage, Owner
- Emiko Burchill, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Nate Ortiz (for Christina Curry), California Office of Emergency Services
- Samantha Arthur, California Natural Resources Agency
- Suzanne Pecci, Domestic Well Advisory Group, South American Subbasin