

Sweetwater Authority Legislative Policy Guidelines

Purpose Statement

As a publicly-owned water agency serving nearly 200,000 people in a 36 square-mile service area that includes National City, Bonita, and the western and central portions of Chula Vista, Sweetwater Authority's mission is provide its current and future customers with a safe and reliable water supply. The Authority's large percentage and density of urban disadvantaged households is unique in the region, and establishing a presence and voice for this community at the local, state and federal levels is critical in ensuring the Authority's customers can continue to have access to affordable water now and in the future.

The purpose of the Authority's legislative affairs program is to advocate on behalf of the Authority and its customers to ensure and protect access to safe, reliable and affordable water.

The Authority's Legislative Policy Guidelines provides a framework of policy positions adopted by the Authority's Governing Board (Board), and should be used as a guiding document created with the intent to provide clear direction to both Authority staff and legislative advocates. This document aims to streamline the evaluation process of proposed legislation, ensuring a consistent and informed approach when assessing potential impacts on the Authority and its customers.

Legislation that meets, or fails to meet, the principles set forth in these guidelines may be supported or opposed accordingly. The guidelines permit staff and legislative advocates to act in a timely fashion between Board meetings on issues that are clearly within the guidelines. Such actions are then reported to the Board during the next Legislative Affairs and Communications Committee meeting or regular Board meeting.

Beyond state and federal legislative issues, the Authority is also impacted by various state and federal regulatory and administrative bodies developing rules, guidelines and regulations. The Authority's staff will also use these guidelines to provide guidance on emerging and active regulatory and administrative issues that impose a significant impact on Authority operations.

Legislation that does not meet the principles set forth in these guidelines, or that has potentially complicated or varied implications, will not be acted upon by Authority staff or legislative advocates, and will be instead presented to the Legislative Affairs and Communications Committee or Board directly for guidance in advance of any position being taken.

Policy Categories

Sweetwater Authority Legislative Policy Guidelines	1
Purpose Statement	1
Bill Positions Considered by the Sweetwater Authority Governing Board	4
Policy Category: Binational Issues.....	5
Policy Category: Biological and Habitat Preservation.....	6
Policy Category: Drought Response.....	7
Policy Category: Energy	8
Policy Category: Fiscal Policy and Water Rates	10
Fees, Taxes & Charges.....	10
Funding	11
Rates.....	11
Policy Category: Water Bonds	13
Policy Category: Affordability	14
Policy Category: Imported Water Issues.....	15
Bay-Delta.....	15
Metropolitan Water District	16
Colorado River.....	16
State Water Project.....	17
Water Transfers	18
Policy Category: Local Autonomy	19
Policy Category: Local Water Resources.....	20
Surface Water and Alternative Sources.....	20
Desalination	20
Funding	21
Water Recycling & Potable Reuse.....	21
Policy Category: Right of Way and Property.....	23
Policy Category: State Administrative and Regulatory Agencies.....	24
Policy Category: Water Facilities and Operations.....	25
Construction and Asset Management	25
Funding	25
Public Safety Power Shutoffs	26

Water System Operations.....	27
Workforce Development	27
Policy Category: Climate Change	29
Funding	29
Local Planning	29
Policy Category: Integrated Regional Water Management Planning	31
San Diego County IRWM.....	31
Statewide IRWM	31
Funding	31
Policy Category: Land Use and Water Management Planning	33
Local Conditions.....	33
Use of Public Lands	33
Water Supply Planning.....	34
Water Rights	34
Policy Category: Water Quality Issues	35
Contaminants.....	35
Funding	35
Source Water Protection	36
Policy Category: Water Use Efficiency	37

Bill Positions Considered by the Sweetwater Authority Governing Board

The following active bill positions may be recommended for consideration by the Board in providing guidance to Authority staff and legislative advocates. Once adopted by the Board, the bill position will be communicated with the author of the legislation, and may be communicated with other legislators, legislative staff, industry associations and advocates, other water agencies and the public. Advocacy strategies and activities will be in alignment with Authority policies, and work towards an outcome that ultimately protects water affordability and reliability for the Authority's customers.

- **SUPPORT:** This position reflects the Authority's unconditional interests to see the legislation become law. Authority staff and legislative advocates will work for passage of the bill in its present form.
- **SUPPORT AND SEEK AMENDMENTS:** This position reflects the similar level of unconditional support for a bill as the SUPPORT position, however this position indicates the Authority would prefer specific amendments to be considered that would improve the measure. Authority staff and legislative advocates will communicate and advocate in support of the legislation even if the requested amendments are not included in the measure.
- **SUPPORT IF AMENDED:** This is an affirmative position that implies conditional support for a measure, but only if it is amended to incorporate specific amendments approved by the Board. Authority staff and legislative advocates will not advocate in support of the legislation unless it is amended as requested.
- **FAVOR:** This position reflects the Authority's interests to see the legislation become law, however it is not a priority issue. Authority staff will communicate in writing the favor position.
- **WATCH/NEUTRAL:** This position reflects the Authority's interest in the subject/content of the bill, but does not necessitate communication on the bill.
- **NOT FAVOR:** This position reflects the Authority's interest to defeat the legislation, however it is not a priority issue.
- **OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED:** This is a position that implies conditional opposition to a measure, unless it is amended to incorporate specific amendments approved the Board. Authority staff and legislative advocates will actively work to defeat the legislation until and unless it is amended as requested. If legislation is amended as requested, Authority staff and legislative advocates will cease working to defeat the legislation, but will not advocate in support of the measure unless further directed by the Board.
- **OPPOSE:** This position reflects the Authority's unconditional interests to defeat the legislation and prevent its passage into law. Authority staff and legislative advocates will work to defeat the measure in its present form and will not pursue amendments to address the measure's shortcomings.

All other bills that are of potential interest or concern to the Authority are monitored by staff and legislative advocates. If any of those measures are amended, they are reevaluated to determine if a formal position should be recommended for Board consideration.

Policy Category: Binational Issues

The Authority generally supports initiatives that fund and encourage cooperative projects that serve the San Diego/Baja California region.

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Promote and provide funding for transboundary groundwater studies and assessments to fully understand and protect the San Diego Formation Basin and the Coastal Plain of San Diego.
2. Promote and provide funding for cross-border water supply and infrastructure development projects to serve the San Diego/Baja California region while protecting local interests.
3. Encourage enhanced cooperation between entities in San Diego and Baja California in development of supply and infrastructure projects that will benefit the entire border region.
4. Encourage state and federal funding to support collaborative binational projects to improve water quality and protect human health and the environment within the region.

Policy Category: Biological and Habitat Preservation

The Authority generally supports biological and habitat preservation through comprehensive approaches that meet both regulatory requirements and ensure the Authority's ability to manage its water supply and operations in an efficient and cost-effective manner. The Authority also believes that water storage and conveyance provide inherent long-term habitat and ecological benefits that should be recognized in the regulatory process.

The Authority generally opposes regulations that reduce or limit the use of existing water rights or supplies, restrict the development of future water supplies, or interfere with the operation, maintenance, or repair of existing water conveyance and storage facilities.

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Support development of comprehensive multi-species habitat conservation plans that anticipate and mitigate project development impacts while preserving representative ecosystems rather than individual species.
2. Exempt operation, maintenance and repair of water system facilities from endangered species and other habitat conservation regulations because they provide beneficial cyclical habitat values to declining species and foster biological diversity in California.
3. Provide environmental regulatory certainty for implementation of existing and proposed long-term water supply programs.
4. Consolidate wetlands regulations to alleviate multi-agency jurisdiction over the same environmental resource.
5. Streamline filing of CEQA notices of determination for multi-county water projects by making those notices available on the CEQAnet website through the Governor's Office of Planning and Research.
6. Incorporate an emergency exemption for "take" of a listed species listed under the state or federal Endangered Species Acts when necessary to mitigate or prevent loss of or damage to life, health, property or essential public services.
7. Encourage species listings, critical habitat designation, and recovery plans developed pursuant to the state or federal Endangered Species Acts to be consistent with existing interstate compacts, tribal treaties, and other state and federal agreements.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Reduce or limit the use of existing water rights or supplies.
2. Restrict the development of future water supplies.
3. Impose endangered species or habitat conservation requirements that restrict the operation, maintenance, or repair of public water supply, conveyance, treatment, or storage facilities.

Policy Category: Drought Response

The Authority has made significant investments in supply, storage and infrastructure to avoid water shortages and/or reduce dependence on expensive imported water supplies, to ensure reliable and affordable water for its customers. The Authority generally supports drought regulations that recognize variations among communities, regions, and counties with respect to their abilities to withstand the impacts and effects drought.

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Ensure the Authority receives the water supply benefits of investments in local water supply sources.
2. Allow local agencies to achieve compliance with emergency or non-emergency drought regulations or objectives through a combination of water conservation measures and development and implementation of local water supply sources that are not derived from the Delta or the Colorado River.
3. Allow for local agencies to account for all water supplies available during droughts and other events when calculating the water supply shortage level.
4. Create a process for development and implementation of emergency drought declarations and regulations that recognizes variations among communities, regions, and counties with respect to their abilities to withstand the impacts and effects of drought.
5. Ensure that any temporary or permanent statutory or regulatory direction for improving water use efficiency to meet statutory or regulatory goals or standards is focused on regional achievement of objectives rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Disincentivize or impede water agencies from making investments to maximize the potential for recycled water, potable reuse, desalination and other drought-resilient local water supplies.
2. Create a "one-size-fits-all" approach to emergency drought declarations and regulations that ignores variations among communities, regions, and counties with respect to their ability to withstand the impacts and effects of drought.

Policy Category: Energy

Treating and delivering water is an energy-intensive operation, and the Authority generally supports initiatives that help lower the cost of electricity and/or incentivize and enable water agencies to generate clean renewable energy.

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Provide opportunities for reduced energy rates for the Authority and other local water agencies.
2. Provide protection to the Authority and other local water agencies from energy rate increases and rate relief to the Authority and water agencies.
3. Provide funding, including state and federal grants, for in-line hydro-electric, solar, wind, battery storage, biogas cogeneration, nanogrids, microgrids, closed-loop pumped storage facilities and other renewable energy generation or storage technology as means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and energy costs.
4. Promote funding for use of renewable energy in the operation of Authority facilities.
5. Prohibit investor-owned utilities from implementing rate changes that undercut the financial viability of renewable energy facilities obligated under long-term Power Purchase Agreements.
6. Provide greater flexibility in the utilization of the Authority's facilities for electrical generation and distribution, and acquisition of electricity and natural gas.
7. Provide the Authority with greater flexibility in the licensing, permitting, interconnection, construction, and operation of its existing and potential in-line hydroelectric, solar, wind, battery, nanogrid, microgrid, closed-loop pumped energy storage projects, and other renewable energy generation or storage technology.
8. Make State Water Project power available for all water projects.
9. Promote the production, purchase, delivery, and use of alternative sources of energy on a wholesale basis.
10. Provide clear statutory, regulatory, or administrative authority for the Authority to wheel acquired or produced power to itself or other entities with which the Authority is under contract for the purchase, treatment, transport, or production of water.
11. Provide timely, efficient, and cost-effective interconnection of energy loads and resources such as solar, in-line hydroelectric, pumped energy storage, and other renewable energy.
12. Recognize the value of solar energy in assisting the state to meet its renewable and zero-carbon emission goals.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Adversely affect the cost of energy needed to operate the Authority's facilities, as well as facilities owned and operated by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, State Water Project, or the San Diego County Water Authority.
2. Impose greenhouse gas reduction obligations on a public water agency for electricity purchase or produced for the sole purpose of operating its system.
3. Adversely affect the ability of the Authority or other water agencies in the county to own, operate, and/or construct work for supplying its open facilities with natural gas and electricity.
4. Impede the Authority's ability to contract for, deliver, and use natural gas or electricity purchased from the United States, the State of California, and any other public agency or private

entity and provide, sell, exchange, or deliver the gas or electricity to itself, and public agency or private entity.

5. Reduce the Authority's ability to always maintain a high operational efficiency.
6. Restrict the Authority's ability to expand or improve infrastructure or facilities.
7. Restrict or cap future energy demands needed for possible expansion of recycled water, potable reuse, and desalination projects.
8. Adversely affect the Authority's ability to expand cogeneration or polygeneration at planned or existing facilities.
9. Inhibit the scientific advancement of energy and water efficient/conserving technologies that may be implemented at the Authority or other agency facilities.
10. Prevent the Authority from enhancing energy reliability and independence for its facilities.
11. Do not count or credit qualified renewable energy projects toward accomplishment and satisfaction of the California Renewables Portfolio Standard objectives.
12. Prohibit the Authority from wheeling – or securing statutory, regulatory, or administrative authority necessary to wheel – acquired or produced power to itself, or other entities with which the Authority is under contract of the purchase, treatment, transport, or production of water.
13. Result in a lengthy, more complicated, or more costly interconnection of energy loads and resources, such as solar, in-line hydroelectric, pumped-energy storage, and other renewable energy generation or storage technologies to the electric distribution and transmission grid.

Policy Category: Fiscal Policy and Water Rates

The Authority recognizes the majority of its service area is classified as moderately to severely disadvantaged, and its customers rely on the Authority to provide safe, reliable water that is affordable. The Authority generally supports initiatives that improve the Authority's ability to obtain cost-effective financing for the construction, operation, and maintenance of public facilities.

Fees, Taxes & Charges

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Require the federal government and the State of California to reimburse special districts for all mandated costs or regulatory actions.
2. Give special districts the discretion to cease performance of unfunded mandates.
3. Provide fiscal reform to enhance the equity, reliability, and certainty of special district funding.
4. Provide incentives for local agencies to work cooperatively, share costs or resources.
5. Continue to reform workers compensation.
6. Promote competition in insurance underwriting for public agencies.
7. Produce tangible results, such as water supply reliability or water quality improvement.
8. Require the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and San Diego County Water Authority to refund or credit its member agencies revenues collected from them that result in reserve balances greater than the maximum reserve levels established pursuant to state legislation.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Impose mandated costs or regulatory constraints on local governments, including special districts, without providing subventions to reimburse local governments and special districts for such costs.
2. Pre-empt the Authority's ability to impose or change rates, charges, fees, or assessments.
3. Weaken the protections afforded to the Authority under California's Proposition 1A (November 2, 2004).
4. Reallocate special districts reserves to balance the state budget.
5. Reallocate special district revenues or reserves to fund infrastructure improvements or other activities in cities or counties.
6. Establish funding mechanisms that put undue burdens on local agencies or make local agencies *de facto* tax collectors for the state.
7. Impair the Authority's ability to maintain reasonable reserve funds and obtain reasonable rates of return on its reserve accounts.
8. Mandate a specific rate structure for retail water agencies.
9. Impose a water user fee on water agencies or water users that does not provide a commensurate and directly linked benefit in the local area or region from which the water user fee is collected.
10. Impose a water user fee for statewide projects or programs, for which the projects or programs are not clearly defined, the beneficiaries identified, and the reasonable costs identified.
11. Impose a water user fee in order to create a state fund that can be used to finance undefined future projects and programs.
12. Allow the state to retain more than five percent of water user fees for administrative costs.

13. Do not restrict the use of water user fees to only the specific purposes for which they are imposed, without any possibility of diversion to meet other fiscal needs of the state.
14. Impose a “public goods charge” or “water tax” on public water agencies or their ratepayers.
15. Impose a fee on water users to repay the principal and interest on a statewide general obligation bond.
16. Establish regulatory or permit fees that lack a nexus to the costs of oversight,
17. Establish a broad-based user fee that does not support a specific program activity any fee must provide a clear nexus to the benefit the fee would provide.

Funding

The Authority’s policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Require the federal and state governments to provide subvention to reimburse local governments, including special districts, for all mandated costs or regulatory actions.
2. Provide the Authority and other local water agencies with additional forms of cost-effective financing for public facilities.
3. Revitalize the Title XVI federal funding program by converting new authorizations to a competitive grant program with congressional oversight while protecting existing Title XVI authorization for the San Diego region.
4. Provide the Authority, other local water agencies, and water ratepayers with post-COVID financial relief through a variety of means, including but not limited to, direct financial assistance and flexibility in debt management, to assist water ratepayers and water suppliers.
5. Provide competitive grants and priority access to federal and state funding for projects that provide safe drinking water to disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities.
6. Identify disadvantaged communities to include, specifically, urban disadvantaged communities.

The Authority’s policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Impose additional administrative requirements and/or restrict the Authority’s ability to finance public facilities through the issuance of long-term debt.
2. Interfere with the responsibility of a region, operating under an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, for setting priorities and generating projects to be paid from any IRWM accounts and grants.
3. Interfere with the control exercised by the San Diego funding subregion over the use and expenditure of any water user fee revenues that may be dedicated to the region.

Rates

The Authority’s policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Maintain the authority of water agencies to establish water rates locally, consistent with cost-of-service requirements of the law.
2. Maximize the ability of water agencies to design rate structures to meet local water supply goals and that conform to cost-of-service requirements of the law.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Impair the Authority's ability to provide reliable water service at reasonable costs or to charge the same or similar rates for each class of service consistent with cost-of-service requirements of the law.
2. Undermine or weaken cost-of-service rate-making requirements in existing law.
3. Impair the Authority's ability to maintain reasonable reserve funds and obtain and retain reasonable rates of return on its reserve accounts.
4. Mandate a specific rate structure for all retail water agencies.
5. Prescribe mandatory conservation-based rate structures that override the authority of the Governing Board to set rate structures according to the specific needs of the agency.

Policy Category: Water Bonds

The Authority generally supports water bond legislation that provides an equitable share of funding to the San Diego region and gives priority access to water agencies that serve disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities. The Authority also supports bond legislation that ensures the grant application is no unduly burdensome and is open and transparent.

The Authority's policy principles support water bond legislation or an initiative that:

1. Provides an equitable share of funding to San Diego County, with priority access to funding made available to water agencies that serve disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities.
2. Focuses on statewide priorities, including climate action goals, that promote and improve greater regional and local self-sufficiency and water storage.
3. Provides funding for water infrastructure that resolves conflicts in the state's water system and provides long-term benefits to water supply, water supply reliability, water quality, and ecosystem restoration.
4. Includes within IRWM funding money that a region may use over time to develop and refine its plan and to develop institutional structures necessary to establish and implement the plan.
5. Gives consideration to funding priorities established by local and regional entities through their IRWM planning process.
6. Ensure that the application process for funding is not unnecessarily burdensome and costly, with an emphasis on streamlining the process.
7. Limit state overhead to no more than five percent of bond funding amounts.
8. Places as much emphasis and provides at least as much funding for surface storage as for groundwater storage.
9. Funds emergency and carryover storage projects.
10. Consolidates administration of all voter-approved water-related bond funding in one place, preserves existing expertise within the state bureaucracy to manage bond funding processes, and provides consistent application and evaluation of bond funding applications.

The Authority's policy principles oppose water bond legislation or an initiative that:

1. Does not provide an equitable share of funding to San Diego County.
2. Does not provide funding for infrastructure that resolves statewide or regional conflicts over water supplies.
3. Does not provide funding that results in net increases in real water supply and water supply reliability.
4. Commits a significant portion of its funding to projects that do no result in net increases in real water supply or water supply reliability.

Policy Category: Affordability

Water rate affordability is imperative to equitable access to safe, reliable water. With the majority of the Authority's service area categorized as disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities, the Authority is keenly aware of the challenges of ensuring water service is affordable for customers. A large percentage of the Authority's customers simply cannot afford higher water rates.

The Authority generally supports the creation of a low-income water rate assistance program and required funding.

The Authority's policy principles support rate assistance legislation or an initiative that meets the following affordability components:

1. Abides by the Human Right to Water (AB 685, 2012) as set forth in Section 106.3 of the California Water Code which reads that "every human being has the right to safe, affordable and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking and sanitary purposes." The State Water Resource Control Board also has a resolution supporting this program.
2. Meets the required standards under Proposition 218 in the California Constitution regarding proportionality of water rates and the cost-of-service provisions.
3. Relies on data-driven analysis of water affordability, including considerations such as census data and economically disadvantaged communities. As such, the Authority supports the continued implementation of AB 2334 (2012) that requires the Department of Water Resources to provide this analysis and place it in California's Water Plan.
4. Supports the creation of a low-income water rate assistance program that targets providing financial assistance to low-income ratepayers using existing resources within either the state General Fund or cap-and-trade dollars.
5. Doesn't burden water districts with excessive or overly prescriptive state mandates including the collection of water taxes or water rate and boundary data, and qualification of customers for low-income assistance programs.
6. Supports the expansion of the low-income household water assistance program (LIHWAP) or other similar programs using existing resources from the federal government, within the state General Fund or cap-and-trade dollars, or other state financial resources.

The Authority's policy principles oppose rate assistance legislation or an initiative that:

1. Is not targeted appropriately: Any low-income water rate assistance program must be limited in scope to those individuals. Seeking to do too much in one initiative may limit effectiveness.
2. Does not have a funding source: Any low-income water rate assistance program needs to identify specific sources of sustainable funding and does not include a water tax or water surcharge.
3. Does not reinvent the wheel: Any low-income water rate assistance program should be built upon and use the resources of an existing benefit distribution organization or system, such as CalFresh, rather than requiring water agencies to add the operating expense of creating and administering a new method.

Policy Category: Imported Water Issues

Statewide water sources like the Bay-Delta and the Colorado River, and the issues concerning supply and allocations, have an impact on water reliability and affordability throughout the state and San Diego region. The Authority generally supports the San Diego County Water Authority's positions on broader imported water supply issues, and advocates for initiatives that ensure fair and equitable water reliability and affordability.

Bay-Delta

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Require the Delta Stewardship Council or Department of Water Resources to provide periodic analyses of the cost of proposed Delta improvement to the Legislature and the public.
2. Provide conveyance and storage facilities that are cost-effective for the San Diego region's ratepayers, improve the reliability and quality of the San Diego region's water supplies, and protect the Bay-Delta's ecosystem.
3. Continue to support the co-equal goals of water supply reliability and environmental restoration embodied in the 2009 Delta bill package.
4. Improve the ability of water-users to divert water from the Delta during wet periods, when impacts on fish and the ecosystem are lower and water quality is higher.
5. Encourage the development of a statewide water transfer market that will improve water management and allow more efficient use of available resources.
6. Support improved coordination of Central Valley Project and State Water Project (SWP) operations and implementation of voluntary agreements that are fair to users of both projects and do not unfairly shift costs to SWP contractors.
7. Support continued state ownership and operation of the SWP, including project facilities, as a public resource.
8. Authorize and appropriate the federal share of funding for the long-term Bay-Delta solution, including for the EcoRestore Program.
9. Provide the ongoing state share of funding for the EcoRestore Program.
10. Provide state funding for aquatic toxicity monitoring in the Bay-Delta. Such legislation should not place a surcharge on water supply exports nor should it substantively reduce funding for other measures that protect the environment and public health.
11. Are consistent with the San Diego County Water Authority Board of Directors' July 25, 2019 adopted Bay-Delta and project policy principles, including the following:
 - a. On April 29, 2019, Governor Newsom signed Executive Order N-10-19, directing the preparation of a water resilience portfolio approach that meets the needs of California's communities, economy and environment through the 21st century, including consideration of multi-benefit approaches that meet multiple needs at once, and a single-tunnel Bay-Delta project.
 - b. The San Diego County Water Authority Board of Directors supports Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-10-19 and directs staff to inform the Newsom Administration that its support for a single-tunnel Bay-Delta project is expressly conditioned upon the project costs being characterized by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) as conservation, or supply changes, as similar facilities historically have been defined in the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California's (MWD) SWP contract with DWR.

- c. As reflected in Table 2 of DWR's Appendix B to Bulletin 132-17, data and Computation used to Determine Water Charges, and for which costs are recovered in Article 22(a) of Delta Water Charge of MWD's SWP Contract; allow for the exemption of north-of-Delta SWP contractors.
- 12. Support establishment of an independent and transparent oversight function to monitor and provide regular updates on project implementation progress, including expenditure tracking, construction progress, project participants' contributions, and all other relevant activities and developments.
- 13. Allow access to all SWP facilities, including project facilities, to facility water transfers.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

- 1. Impose water user fees to fund ecosystem restoration and other public purpose, non-water-supply improvements in the Delta that benefit the public at large.
- 2. Transfer operational control of the SWP or any of its facilities to MWD, the State Water Project Contractors, Central Valley Project Contractors, the State and Federal Contractors Water Agency, any entity comprised of MWD or other water project contractors, or any other special interest group.

Metropolitan Water District

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

- 1. Provide an appropriate level of accountability and cost control over MWD spending.
- 2. Protect and safeguard San Diego County Water Authority's Preferential Rights in the Metropolitan Water District Act.
- 3. Require MWD to refund or credit to its member agencies revenues collected from them that result in reserve balances greater than the maximum reserve levels established pursuant to state legislation.
- 4. Required MWD to implement actions that advance and support its long-term financial stability, fiscal sustainability, and that moderate fluctuations in rates and charges for its member agencies from year to year, in a publicly transparent manner.
- 5. Amend the Metropolitan Water District Act to change voting allocation on its Board of Directors based on a member agency's total financial contribution to MWD, and in a manner similar to the voting allocation method of the County Water Authority Act.

Colorado River

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

- 1. Supports implementation and funding of the California Colorado River Water Use Plan, including the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program.
- 2. Provide funding for Colorado River salinity control projects and other water quality management efforts.
- 3. Provide for state and federal authorizations and appropriations of non-fee-based funds to implement Salton Sea mitigation and the State's phased approach to restoration in the form of

the Salton Sea Management Program, consistent with its obligations under Chapters 611, 612 and 613 of the Statutes of 2003.

4. Limit the Quantification Settlement Agreement mitigation costs imposed on the funding parties to the amount committed in accordance with the original Quantification Settlement Agreement legislation.
5. Provide a governing structure and/or specified managing office over the state's Salton Sea Management Program to provide guidance and oversight of restoration activities.
6. Support the sustainability of the Colorado River and provide operational flexibility through the development of storage, including in Lake Mead, and through the renegotiation of the new interim storage guidelines for the continued operation of the River.
7. Allow for the option to create an alternate conveyance route, when technically and financially feasible, for reliable delivery of San Diego County Water Authority's independent Colorado River water supplies and integration of compatible partnership projects along the proposed conveyance routes as a model of the Governor's Water Resilience Portfolio approach to water management.
8. Support the State's Salton Sea Management Program under the guidelines of the Revised Water Order (Stipulated Order) adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board in November 2017.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Impose additional mitigation costs or obligations for the Salton Sea on the non-state parties to the Quantification Settlement Agreement.

State Water Project

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Provide for development of a comprehensive state water plan that balances California's competing water needs, incorporates the water resources and infrastructure concepts included in the Governor's "Water Resilience Portfolio" and "California's Water Supply Strategy Adapting to a Hotter, Drier Future" and results in a reliable and affordable supply of high-quality water for the state of California and the San Diego region.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Make urban water suppliers less reliable or substantially increases the cost of imported water without also improving the reliability and/or quality of the water.
2. Revise the Central Valley Project Improvement Act to jeopardize the Act's environmental integrity, compromise SWP supply reliability and/or limit the ability of urban agencies to transfer and/or bank Central Valley Project water for use both within and outside the Central Valley Project service area.
3. Transfer operational control of the SWP or any of its facilities to MWD, the SWP contractors, Central Valley Project contractors, the State and Federal Contractors Water Agency, any entity comprised of MWD or other water project contractors, or any other special interest group.

Water Transfers

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Encourage and facilitate voluntary water transfers consistent with other Authority and San Diego County Water Authority and policies and agreements.
2. Provide appropriate protection or mitigation for the environment, groundwater basins, water-rights holders and third-part impacts within the district transferring water.
3. Create a water transfer clearinghouse that serves as a neutral information resource that focuses on the collection, assembly and dissemination of information on water transfers.
4. Streamline the permitting and approval process for implementing transfers that will improve water management consistent with other Authority and San Diego County water Authority policies and agreements.
5. Encourage efficient use of existing facilities to advance voluntary transfers of water consistent with other Authority and San Diego County Water Authority policies and agreements.
6. Provide that any water transfer between users within counties, watersheds or other areas of origin shall be deemed not to operate to the injury of any use of water with a point of diversion that is not located within the same hydrologic area as the transferor of the water.
7. Allow for the storage of the San Diego County Water Authority's Colorado River water supplies to provide enhanced flexibility with annual transfer volumes, support drought contingency planning, and align with the Governor's Water Resilience Portfolio and the Governor's Water Supply Strategy approach to water management.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Adversely affect water management efforts by granting property rights status for the right to use or receive water and requires compensation for federal actions that impact users of water from federal projects.
2. Create a water transfer clearing house that is anything other than a neutral information resource.
3. Increase regulatory or procedural impediments to water transfers at the local or state level.

Policy Category: Local Autonomy

As a unique retail water agency in the region with a diverse water resources portfolio, that generally meets the majority of its water demands, as well as high percentage of disadvantaged communities within its service area, the Authority must preserve the Governing Board's ability to govern the Authority's affairs and maintain affordability for ratepayers.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Diminish the power of the Authority's Governing Board to govern the Authority's affairs.
2. Diminish the power or rights of the Authority to govern relations with its employees.
3. Diminish the Authority's autonomy at the regional level.

Policy Category: Local Water Resources

The Authority has made significant progress in diversifying and improving its local water supply and reliability in an effort to reduce reliance on increasingly expensive imported water supplies.

Generally, the Authority supports initiatives that provide funding for the development and/or expansion of local water supplies, including initiatives that fund, promote or facilitate the development of groundwater and potable reuse.

Surface Water and Alternative Sources

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Facilitate and encourage the use of rainwater-capture systems and alternative water sources for use in irrigation.
2. Ensure that decision-making with regard to stormwater management and recapture is kept at the local or regional level through local water agencies, stormwater districts, cities, counties and regional water management groups.
3. Promote and encourage the use of stormwater management to reduce pollutant loading, increase local municipal water supplies, and improve water quality through low-impact development and watershed-based stormwater treatment systems.
4. Provide incentives for the local or regional use of stormwater management, nutrient management, and recapture.
5. Reduce or remove regulatory hurdles that hinder the use of stormwater management and recapture.
6. Encourage land use practices that promote efficient landscape design, groundwater recharge and reduce runoff of pollutants into local water supplies.
7. Provide broad local autonomy and flexibility – within the existing Sustainable Groundwater Management Act framework – for local entities to manage and utilize local groundwater resources for local and regional needs.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Restrict the Authority's ability to manage, store or distribute water supplies through actions to manage or recapture stormwater.
2. Diminish the water rights or legal historical uses of downstream water users through actions to manage or recapture stormwater.

Desalination

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Provide funding for brackish groundwater desalination studies and facilities.
2. Recognize and support the development of brackish groundwater desalination as an important water supply.
3. Streamline permitting of desalination facilities.

4. Ensure that desalination intake and discharge regulations are science-based, considering site-specific conditions and recognizing that not all technologies or mitigation strategies are feasible or cost-effective at every site.

Funding

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Provide funding or other incentives for conservation, peak management programs, water recycling, potable reuse, groundwater recovery and recharge, surface water development and management projects, including reservoir management, source water protection and watershed planning studies and facilities that sustain long-term reliable water resources
2. Provide financial incentives to assist in the disposal of concentrate, sludge and other byproducts created in the water treatment process.
3. Provide for the interchangeability of funding for groundwater and surface water enhancements to best fit the hydrogeologic attributes of a particular region.
4. Authorize, promote and provide incentives or credits for development of local drought-resilient water supply projects such as desalination, non-potable recycling and potable reuse projects.
5. Provide funding for potable reuse demonstration projects and studies.
6. Provide funding for infrastructure improvements at desalination facilities.

Water Recycling & Potable Reuse

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Recognize and support the development of potable reuse as a critical new water supply for the State and San Diego County.
2. Authorize and facilitate expanded use of local water resources including water recycling, potable reuse, graywater, rainwater harvesting (e.g. cisterns and rain barrels) and brackish groundwater.
3. Authorize local governmental agencies to regulate the discharge of contaminants to the sewer collection system that may adversely affect water recycling and reuse.
4. Encourage dual plumbing in new development where non-potable recycled water is likely to be available to enable utilization of recycled water.
5. Encourage the use of recycled water in commercial, industrial, institutional and residential settings.
6. Promote uniform regulatory interpretation of state recycled water system standards.
7. Support beneficial revisions to the California Plumbing Code that facilitate recycled water systems.
8. Streamline regulatory processes and requirements to encourage and support the development of potable reuse and non-potable reuse as a municipal water supply.
9. Define purified recycled water as a source of water supply, and not as a waste.
10. Recognize the entire interconnected urban water cycle, as well as public health and safety, must be taken into consideration in long-term water use efficiency policies, particularly including the unintended consequences of declining flows on water, wastewater, potable reuse and recycled water systems.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Limit the ability of local government agencies to regulate the discharge of contaminants to the sewer collection system that may adversely affect water recycling and reuse.
2. Establish unreasonable regulatory requirements or fees relative to the safe use of recycled water which may unreasonably impede or create a disincentive to its further development.
3. Mandate the reduction of wastewater discharges to the ocean absent inclusion of funding to offset the significant costs of implementation.

Policy Category: Right of Way and Property

The Authority generally supports initiatives that improve its ability to maintain and protect its property, rights of way, easements, pipelines, and other facilities. The Authority generally opposes initiatives that interfere with or increase the cost of obtaining, maintaining and protecting property and rights of way.

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Improve the Authority's efforts to maintain and protect its property, rights of way, easements, pipelines and related facilities, and minimizes liability to the Authority.
2. Protects the Authority's properties from restrictions when surrounding properties are incorporated into preservation areas.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Impair the Authority's efforts to acquire property or property interests required for essential capital improvement projects or acquisition of property to meet pipeline water drain-down needs to existing facilities.
2. Increase the cost of property or right of way acquisition.
3. Restrict the Authority's use of public rights of way or increases the cost of using public rights of way.
4. Restrict the transfer of property acquired for purposes of environmental mitigation or environmental mitigation credits to other public or private entities for long-term management.

Policy Category: State Administrative and Regulatory Agencies

The Authority generally supports initiatives that ensure transparency and regulatory agencies like the State Water Resources Control Board maintain consistent application of state water quality laws.

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Ensure consistent application of the law by the State Water Resources Control Board and the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards.
2. Ensure an open and transparent process of adoption of regulations, policies and guidelines.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Eliminate the State Water Resources Control Board and/or the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards without ensuring that the functions and expertise of the boards is maintained in any reorganized entity.

Policy Category: Water Facilities and Operations

The planning, design, construction, maintenance and operation of water facilities is an essential activity of the Authority. Portions of the Authority's water delivery systems are nearly 100 years old. As components of these water systems naturally age, it is critical to actively monitor, repair or replace the assets, which include pipes, valves, facilities, equipment and other infrastructure.

The Authority generally supports initiatives that provide state and federal funding for water storage, watershed protection, treatment and delivery facilities, groundwater recharge and other water infrastructure development, security, asset management, maintenance and rehabilitation.

Construction and Asset Management

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Provide incentives that encourage contractors to recycle or reduce waste associated with the construction of water facilities.
2. Encourage the use of current and emerging technologies for monitoring and assessing the condition of water system infrastructure.
3. Encourage water suppliers to develop and execute asset management programs that include visual inspections, internal/external inspections, asset condition assessments, corrosion mitigation and risk analysis in a manner that recognizes the individuality and uniqueness of each water supplier and its systems.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Limit the Authority's sole jurisdiction over the planning, design, routing, approval, construction, operation or maintenance of water facilities.
2. Limit the Authority's discretion in protecting the security and privacy of comprehensive inventories of all assets, which include infrastructure location, condition, performance and useful life.

Funding

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Fund or otherwise facilitate planning, design, construction and/or maintenance of public water storage, watershed areas, and treatment and delivery facilities, and facilitates maintenance and/or enhancement of groundwater recharge spreading areas and groundwater basin rehabilitation that benefit the region.
2. Provide funding for water infrastructure development, infrastructure security and infrastructure rehabilitation and replacement projects that benefit the region.
3. Fund enhancements to water treatment, recycling and potable reuse facilities to meet increased regulations.
4. Provide funding for the preservation of cultural resources affected by construction or operation of water conveyance and storage facilities.

5. Provide funding for projects that enhance security against terrorist acts or other criminal threats to water operations, facilities or supplies.
6. Provide funding for the control, prevention or eradication of non-indigenous aquatic species, including dreissenid mussels.
7. Provide incentives that encourage the optimization, expansion and cooperative use of existing surface reservoirs.
8. Provide funding for projects that improve the security of the Authority's facilities and operations.
9. Provide funding to water agencies for the voluntary retrofit of facilities for on-site generation of chlorine.
10. Permit the use of grant funding for projects implemented under public-private partnerships where the grant provides funding for a public benefit.
11. Provide funding for water supplier asset management programs that involve the active monitoring, repair or replacement of physical assets and infrastructure, which includes pipes, valves, facilities, equipment and other infrastructure.

Public Safety Power Shutoffs

The Authority's policy principals support initiatives that:

1. Provide for restrictions on price gouging during public safety power shutoff events and for at least 72 hours following restoration of power.
2. Provide that de-energization or public safety power shutoff events may be included as a condition constituting a state of emergency or local emergency.
3. Provide a tax exemption for the sale of, or the storage, use or consumption of, a backup electrical resource, that is purchased for exclusive use by a city, county, special district, or other entity of local government during a de-energization or public safety power shutoff event.
4. State that the use of alternative power sources (such as generators) by essential public services during de-energization or public safety power shutoff events shall not be limited by any state or local regulations or rules.
5. Recognize the critical role the Authority plays as public safety partners in public safety power shutoff events and other natural or other man-made disasters, and further, recognizes the importance of the agency's ability to provide immediate and sustained response for extended periods of time.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Authorize air quality management districts or other regulatory bodies to adopt or maintain rules that would limit or prohibit a local government entity's use of a state and/or federally compliant natural gas-powered generator during a de-energization or public safety power shutoff event.
2. Would inhibit the Authority from fulfilling its critical role as a public safety partner and making immediate and sustained response in a public safety power shutoff event or other natural or man-made disasters, such as the CARB Advanced Clean Fleet regulation.
3. Would inhibit the Authority from fulfilling its critical role as essential service providers from procuring and operating fleets which meet the needs to perform routine and emergency

maintenance of water and wastewater systems, such as the CARB Advanced Clean Fleet regulation.

Water System Operations

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Recognize water agencies as emergency responders in the event of a sudden, unexpected occurrence that poses a clear and imminent danger, requiring immediate action to prevent and mitigate the loss or impairment of life, health, property or essential public services due to natural disasters (e.g. wildfires, earthquakes), power outages as well as terrorist and other criminal activities.
2. Authorize state and federal wildlife agencies to provide assistance to local water agencies in the control, prevention and eradication of non-indigenous aquatic species, including dreissenid mussels.
3. Exempt owners and operators of water supply facilities from criminal and civil liabilities associated with dreissenid mussel infestations if due diligence requirements are being met.
4. Require mandatory inspections of boats for evidence of potential dreissenid mussel infestation before allowing boat launching in reservoirs.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Impose or mandate recreational activities on drinking water reservoirs and reservoir property where such activities have been determined to be inappropriate by the reservoirs' owners and operators.
2. Impair the Authority's ability to provide and operate the necessary facilities for a safe, reliable and operationally flexible water system.
3. Restrict the Authority's ability to respond swiftly and decisively to an emergency that threatens to disrupt water deliveries or restricts the draining of pipelines or other facilities in emergencies or for repairs or preventive maintenance.
4. Authorize state and federal wildlife agencies to control, prevent or eradicate invasive species in a way that excessively interferes with the operations or water supplies of local water agencies.
5. Prohibit or in any way limit the ability of the Authority to make full beneficial use of any water, wastewater or recycling facility and resource investments.
6. Establish prescriptive leak loss control requirements for the operation, maintenance and asset management of water conveyance and distribution systems that fail to consider full life-cycle costing.
7. Establish meter testing requirements for water meters that fail to consider industry standards and cost-effectiveness.

Workforce Development

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Advocate for local, regional and state programs that support a high-performing workforce and increase the talent pool for water agencies.

2. Increase the number of educational institutions that provide water-industry related training and related program criteria including but not limited to trades, certifications and degrees.
3. Increase the talent pool of future water industry workers through educational programs, internships and other resources.
4. Provide funding to education institutions, water agencies and workforce students regarding careers in the water industry.
5. Build awareness of water industry-related jobs through student outreach including but not limited to K-12, community colleges, universities and other educational institutions as well as outreach to the public.
6. Provide a pathway for military veterans to apply their advanced skills and experience toward state and industry-supplied certifications in the water and wastewater treatment and distribution operator fields.
7. Ensure advanced water treatment operators and distribution system operators of potable reuse and recycled water facilities have a career advancement path as certified water and/or wastewater treatment plant operators.

Policy Category: Climate Change

The potential effects of climate change are an important concern in securing reliable and affordable water supplies in the future. The Authority generally supports initiatives that incorporate considerations of climate change into water management planning, as well as initiatives that allow water agencies to partner with the energy sector to improve energy efficiency in the conveyance and use of water and decrease the Authority's carbon footprint.

Funding

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Incorporate state provided climate change information into statewide, regional and local water management planning, and provide funding for projects that assist in adapting to effects of climate change on the water supply portfolios across the state.
2. Provide financial support to local projects designed to mitigate or adapt to potential negative impacts of climate change on water supply reliability.
3. Encourage water agencies to partner with energy providers to help fund water conservation and other programs that result in reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and/or provide opportunities and incentives for voluntary implementation of local water and renewable energy projects that directly or indirectly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
4. Provides incentive, funding and assistance to water agencies so that they can comply with AB 32 (2006) requirements, and updated statutory requirements imposed pursuant to SB 32 (2016), SB 100 (2018) and SB 1020 (2022).
5. Investigate and provide financial support to projects designed to mitigate potential negative impacts of climate change on water supply reliability and affordability.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Do not allow water agency participation in the carbon credits market.

Local Planning

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Promote public-private partnerships, encourage innovation, and focus on quantifiable performance goals as opposed to top-down "one size fits all" mandates.
2. Promote continued development and deployment of more sophisticated and integrated hydrological, water quality and meteorological water monitoring for the purpose of assessing water supply conditions resulting from climate change.
3. Promote the coordination and integration of local, state and federal climate change policies and practices to the greatest extent feasible.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Require incorporation of climate change considerations into regional and local water management planning that does not provide flexibility to the local and regional water agencies

in determining the climate change impact and identification of adaptation and mitigation measures.

2. Impose top-down “one size fits all” climate change mandates that fail to account for hydrological, meteorological, economic and social variation across the state and/or that fail to incorporate local and regional planning and implementation priorities and protocols.
3. Establish a “loading order” for the development of local water supplies based on embedded energy or other factors.

Policy Category: Integrated Regional Water Management Planning

The San Diego County Water Authority, along with the City of San Diego and the County of San Diego, developed the San Diego Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan. The Authority generally supports initiatives that provide equitable funding for IRWM plans, based on population, and that allow for binational funding for projects along the border region.

San Diego County IRWM

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Define the "San Diego sub-region" and "San Diego county watersheds" as "those portions of the westward-flowing watersheds of the South Coast hydrologic region situated within the boundaries of San Diego County."
2. Allow for the creation of sub-area plans that enhance, but do not duplicate or replace, a larger recognized integrated regional water management plan.
3. Require the state to rely on the local process for selection and ranking of projects included in an approved integrated regional water management plan.

Statewide IRWM

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Require the state agencies responsible for preparing the integrated regional water management grant program guidelines to conduct a comprehensive public outreach process that ensures stakeholders have an opportunity to provide adequate input on preparation of the guidelines and that the state agencies consider and respond to comments received throughout the outreach process.
2. Establish a task force to provide recommendations to the state on improving the integrated regional water management planning process in California.
3. Ensure discretion for Regional Water Management Groups to determine the composition and structure of their organization, rather than through the imposition of a "one size fits all" mandated structure applied statewide.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Mandate a specific composition and management structure of the regional water management group that oversees integrated regional water management planning efforts with a region.
2. Preclude water wholesalers from serving on a regional water management group.
3. Dilute public water agency participation on the regional water management group.

Funding

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Provide for population-based distribution of funds to ensure adequate distribution of grant funding throughout the state.

2. Provide for the use of state grant funds for binational projects where the projects benefit water supply or water quality in the San Diego region.
3. Improve and streamline the state's reimbursement process to ensure timely remittance of IRWM funds.
4. Promote the ability of the Regional Water Management Group to more directly administer state grant funds specifically identified for IRWM Programs.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Establish funding criteria that limits local discretion in the project selection.

Policy Category: Land Use and Water Management Planning

The Authority generally supports initiatives that coordinate land use planning with water management.

Local Conditions

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Promote enhanced coordination and linkage of general plans and water management plans.
2. Recognize regional efforts to coordinate land use planning and water management planning in a manner consistent with the goals and objectives established by regional growth management strategies, affordable housing mandates and local general plans.
3. Discourage piecemeal or uncoordinated land use and water management planning.
4. Require that projected population and other demographic factors utilized in forecasting future water demands in accordance with the Urban Water Management Planning Act, SB 610 (2001) and SB 221 (2001), be consistent with the regional growth management plans and general plans applicable to the territory within the service area of the supplier.
5. Provide funding for, or otherwise facilitate, development of groundwater management plans pursuant to AB 3030 (1992) and groundwater sustainability efforts under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.
6. Encourage consolidation of small non-viable and non-complying water systems without shifting the financial burden to the customers of the agency receiving the consolidation.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Restrict or limit the effectiveness of the Authority in its continuing efforts to meet its obligations under SANDAG's Regional Comprehensive Plan and its efforts to develop demand forecasts based on SANDAG regional growth forecasts and general plan information.

Use of Public Lands

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Allow and fund land exchanges between local public agencies and federal or state agencies when mutually beneficial to all agencies and enhances water resources for the region.
2. Designate public lands that are tributary to drinking source water reservoirs as wilderness, habitat preserve, open space or other protected status, provided such designation does not impede current or reasonable future use of those water resources.
3. Protect floodplains and lands over prime groundwater recharge zones for stormwater catchment and bioremediation.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Impose land use designations that preclude the use of such lands for public water infrastructure determined necessary to ensure a cost-effective, safe and reliable water supply.

Water Supply Planning

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Consider the multiple local variables and priorities that are associated with water supply planning and selection of water resources for implementation.
2. Preserve the local water agency's ability to establish local priorities for water resources planning decisions.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Restrict the Authority's ability to utilize demand forecasting methodology that is best suited for the region.
2. Require the use of specific evaluation criteria in water supply planning and selection of potential water supply projects that fails to take into account or conflicts with existing local and regional planning policies and implementation priorities.
3. Impose mandates requiring specific water resources be developed by water agencies that fail to take into account local factors, such as water reliability, hydrologic and geographic characteristics, and the economic, political, public acceptance and social environment, which can influence selection of resources and/or fails to take into account or conflicts with existing local and regional planning policies and implementation priorities.
4. Limit the local water agency's ability to establish local priorities for water resources planning decisions.

Water Rights

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Protect existing water rights, water-rights priority, and local agencies' ability to use water resources for their present and future water supply reliability and environmental well-being.
2. Support funding for data modernization tools needed to monitor and enforce water rights priorities, including funding and technical assistance to fully implement existing law requiring metering of diversions and potential legislation or regulation aimed at providing real-time water diversion data.
3. Support voluntary water transfers and exchanges as the means to reallocate water supplies, including for the environment and to meet water supply reliability goals.
4. Support more flexible regulations to enhance the ability to divert water in times of high storm runoff and snow melt while protecting existing water rights and the environment.
5. Support increases in civil penalties to deter violations of State Board orders, including curtailment orders.

Policy Category: Water Quality Issues

Water quality and ensuring that every drop of water served to ratepayers meets federal and state standards is a top priority for the Authority. The Authority generally supports initiatives that assist in providing high-quality water to the San Diego region through cleanup and remediation of contaminants and protection of water sources. The Authority generally opposes initiatives that regulate the conveyance, storage and distribution of water supplies under the Clean Water Act.

Contaminants

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Assure cost-effective remediation and cleanup of contaminants of concern that have impacted groundwater and surface water.
2. Incorporate sound scientific principles in adopting drinking water standards for drinking water contaminants.
3. Exempt the conveyance, storage or release of water supplies from regulation as a discharge under the Clean Water Act and other water quality control laws.
4. Revise National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) standards and procedures to facilitate inland discharge and use of recycled water.
5. Establish appropriate quality standards, testing procedures and treatment processes for emerging contaminants.
6. Alter the definition of "lead free" to reduce the permissible amount of lead in fixtures, plumbing and pipe fittings to be installed for the delivery of drinking water.
7. Exempt purified wastewater from regulation as a discharge under the Clean Water Act.
8. Protect child public health by requiring schools to undertake lead testing in school drinking water systems.
9. Implement source control for management and prevention of contamination by constituents of emerging concern.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Regulate the conveyance, storage or release of water supplies as a discharge under the Clean Water Act and other water quality control laws.
2. Make water suppliers financially and legally responsible for mitigation of pollution contamination by third parties.
3. Make water suppliers financially and legally responsible for testing or correction of any water quality-related issues associated with private property or on-site plumbing systems.

Funding

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Provide the necessary funding for research on the occurrence, treatment, health effects and environmental clean-up related to contamination of drinking water sources.
2. Implement and fund the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board's triennial review of water quality standards.

3. Provide funding and support for water quality management efforts.

Source Water Protection

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Provide for the protection of source water such as reservoirs and groundwater basins so that the waters can be beneficially used for consumptive purposes.
2. Appropriately protect drinking source water reservoirs as special-purpose, man-made water bodies different in character than natural waterways, rivers, lakes and coastal waters, while allowing maximum flexibility for operations as part of a managed water supply system.
3. Exempt terminal reservoirs with no significant nexus to the watershed from regulation under the federal Clean Water Act.
4. Direct the state's participation or assistance in water quality issues related to or threatening the Colorado River water source.
5. Providing for watershed planning, watershed signage and actions to protect source water – including reservoirs – such as land acquisition around reservoirs, limited land use and increased buffer areas.
6. Reduce the water quality impacts caused by runoff into local reservoirs using a watershed-based approach.
7. Streamline permitting of facilities constructed for the purpose of improving water quality.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Contributed to the degradation of source water quality around reservoirs and groundwater basins.

Policy Category: Water Use Efficiency

The Authority recognizes that its ratepayers are consistently some of the lowest water users in the San Diego region and similarly among some of the lowest users in the state. The Authority generally supports initiatives that provide funding for water-use efficiency programs, particularly those that allocate a portion of funds to disadvantaged communities. The Authority also generally supports initiatives that recognize local control in determining water use efficiency criteria.

The Authority's policy principles support initiatives that:

1. Provide incentives, funding and other assistance where needed to facilitate market transformation and gain wider implementation of water-efficient indoor and outdoor technologies and practices.
2. Provide incentives, funding and other assistance to facilitate water use efficiency partnerships with the energy efficiency sector.
3. Recognize local control in determining how to meet an overall efficient water use goal, based on the combined efficient indoor use, outdoor use and leak loss, as established under the criteria provided for in statute.
4. Ensure accurate and streamlined reporting of implementation of water conservation measures and regulations.
5. Encourage reasonable tracking of water use and improved efficiency in the Commercial, Industrial and Institutional (CII) sector.
6. Promote statewide implementation of water use efficiency best management practices and demand management measures as defined in the Urban Water Management Planning Act.

The Authority's policy principles oppose initiatives that:

1. Create stranded assets by establishing long-term demand management water use efficiency and water supply requirements that are inconsistent with the Urban Water Management Planning Act.
2. Prescribe statewide mandatory urban water use efficiency practices, including, but not limited to, methods, measures, programs, budget allocation and designation of staff dedicated to water conservation programs, that override the authority of the Governing Board to adopt management practices that are most appropriate for the specific needs of the Authority.
3. Mandate regulation of the CII sector in a manner that is discriminatory, sets unachievable best management practices or compliance targets, or would otherwise impair economic activity or the viability of the CII sector.
4. Mandate that water agencies include an embedded energy calculation for their water supply sources in the Urban Water Management Plan or any other water resource planning or master planning document.
5. Require redundant reporting of water conservation-related information.