



Fact Sheet on Water Resilience Portfolio Initiative

April 2019

Governor Gavin Newsom signed an executive order on April 29, 2019, directing three state agencies to develop a comprehensive strategy to build a climate-resilient water system and ensure healthy waterways through the 21st century.

1. What action did Governor Newsom take?

The Governor signed an executive order directing the secretaries of the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Food and Agriculture to prepare a water resilience portfolio that meets the needs of California's communities, economy and environment through the 21st century.

2. Why does the state need a water resilience portfolio?

California faces a range of water challenges, from severely depleted groundwater basins to vulnerable infrastructure to unsafe drinking water in many communities to uncertain water supplies for our cities and agriculture. Climate change magnifies the risk. There is widespread agreement that a coordinated portfolio of complementary actions is needed to build water resilience, ensure healthy waterways and meet long-term water needs. Five years of historic drought showed the importance of regional investments in a diverse water supply portfolio, including conservation, water recycling, groundwater storage and cleanup, and more. Pursuing a statewide portfolio of actions creates opportunities to build resilience, leverage past investments and meet multiple objectives.

3. What elements will be part of the portfolio?

The portfolio will integrate and build on programs, policies and investments already in place to build a climate-resilient water system. While specifics will be defined over the coming months, likely elements include making the most of every drop through recycling and conservation, expanding stormwater capture and groundwater recharge to their full potential, modernizing water infrastructure -- including in the Delta -- to withstand climate pressures, and advancing multi-benefit projects such as floodplains that improve flood protection, enhance habitat and recharge groundwater basins. The Governor's executive order emphasizes the need for innovation and new technologies, strengthened partnerships and regional approaches.

4. How will the three agencies carry out their charge?

The California Natural Resources Agency, California Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Food and Agriculture will establish a working group to develop the water resilience portfolio. The working group will inventory and assess current water supplies and the health of waterways. It will also assess projected future water needs, anticipated climate-driven impacts on water systems, including more severe droughts and floods, and other challenges.

The working group will gather input through a variety of public workshops and listening sessions, and hold regular meetings to review work in progress, consider public comment and develop a water resilience portfolio to recommend to the Governor.

5. Hasn't this already been done? How does this differ from previous planning efforts?

The Newsom Administration's portfolio initiative will build on previous work, including the California Water Action Plan released by the Brown Administration in 2014 and updated in 2016. It will take advantage of new data and lessons learned since then to reassess priorities in the Water Action Plan, identify potential new priorities for the Newsom Administration and identify ways to improve integration across state agencies to implement those priorities.

6. What does this mean for the Delta tunnels project?

Governor Newsom has stated that modernized Delta conveyance is needed as part of a water resilience portfolio for California. He has directed his team to take steps to advance a smaller capacity, strategically designed single tunnel to deliver water through the Delta. The Department of Water Resources will begin taking those steps in the coming days and weeks.

7. What are the next steps?

The agencies plan to establish the portfolio working group in the coming weeks and begin to inventory and assess current supplies and conditions. Public input will be gathered through workshops and other venues. A draft portfolio is expected to be submitted to the Governor later this year.