



June 14, 2023

Re: Newsom Administration Infrastructure Package: Build California’s Clean Future, Faster

Position: SUPPORT

To the Honorable Members of the California State Legislature,

On behalf of the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) and the undersigned organizations we are writing to express our strong support for the Newsom Administration’s proposed infrastructure package to accelerate critical water infrastructure projects that meet state social, climate, and economic goals. These proposals maintain the integrity of appropriate environmental review, government transparency, and community engagement.

Collectively our organizations represent hundreds of water and wastewater systems and thousands of farmers, ranchers, contractors, union workers, engineering firms, and many others throughout California. ACWA members specifically include cities, counties, special districts, and other local governments that provide safe drinking water to millions of Californians.

California faces a range of water management challenges, including droughts, floods, and other natural disasters. While our weather patterns have always been variable, climate change has, and will continue to exacerbate the weather whiplash that is intensifying drought and precipitation events. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated effort between state and local agencies to construct and maintain water infrastructure projects needed in a 21st

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century climate. Unfortunately, the current permitting process for water infrastructure projects in California is complex and lengthy and can be a significant barrier to progress in expanding and improving our water supply and flood risk reduction systems. This can result in delays, higher project costs, and uncertainty for communities, agricultural interests, and businesses that rely on a reliable and sustainable water supply. In addition, this can result in worse environmental outcomes, delaying projects that provide important benefits to aquatic and natural resources.

California has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to leverage federal funding to invest in California's clean infrastructure, grow the state's economy, and create thousands of good paying jobs. Yet major infrastructure projects are too often bogged down in overly onerous regulatory processes and a siloed approach to permitting approvals, which increases overall costs and delays critical projects. In order to streamline permitting and build infrastructure responsibly and expeditiously, the Administration is proposing thoughtful, common sense reform measures to streamline regulatory and review processes so projects can be planned, permitted, and built faster while protecting the environment. Importantly, these proposals provide unique streamlining benefits under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to advance climate-friendly projects without reducing the environmental and government transparency benefits of the environmental review process.

For these reasons, our organizations are in strong support of the Administration's water infrastructure package to build California's clean future, faster. If you have any questions regarding our position, please contact ACWA State Relations Director, Adam Quiñonez at AdamQ@acwa.com.

Sincerely,

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