

Law Summary

Senate Bill 72 California Water Plan: Long-Term Supply Targets

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SB 72 California Water Plan: Long-Term Supply Targets

Author: Senator Anna Caballero

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Summary

SB 72 aims to amend and improve the California Water Plan in the next update, and every five years after that until 2050. The bill calls for more transparency with the public and legislators and for collaborative, cohesive efforts across all invested parties of California regarding water supply and management.

SB72 is a bipartisan bill amending the California Water Plan (CWP) to include specified flow targets and create working relationships with environmental interests, tribes, and various laborers in agriculture, research, and more. The current CWP covers projects and strategies relating to water infrastructure development, water conservation and recycling, desalination, and conjunctive water use. This bill adds new provisions to the CWP to include projected targets for urban / municipal, agriculture, tribal, and environmental uses. The CWP should also contain precise and transparent reports regarding costs, environmental impacts, amendments, and departments' suggestions. Finally, any major changes to the CWP will require public workshops, so anyone can comment on proposed changes.

General Purpose of the New Law

The California Water Plan is currently limited in its scope, advisory committee membership, and budget, which limits the state's ability to effectively address water needs. The goal of this law is to broaden accessibility to more experts, Native American tribes, and organized labor for a broader assessment of the purposes to which the state's water is put. It will also increase California Environmental Quality Act provisions to ensure no projects will negatively impact safe drinking water.

Since 1873, the state of California has passed several laws attempting to find fair and science-based solutions to California's water scarcity problem. In 2009, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Reform Act was passed to increase water supply reliability by restoring the Delta's ecosystem, but it was found that too much information was missing because too few stakeholders were being heard. This law broadens the scope of stakeholder input into the water plan.

Where to Learn More

Governor Newsom's Official Notice of SB 72 Signing to California State Senate: <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/SB-72-Signing-Message.pdf>

Official Law Text : https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260SB72

What the Law Does

This law establishes new requirements for updating California's water plan and ensures transparent, collaborative planning:


- **Updates the Water Planning Timeline:** The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) shall update the state water plan by December 31, 2028, and release a preliminary draft of proposed changes by December 31, 2027. For all future updates, DWR shall release preliminary drafts one year in advance to allow for public comment.
- **Creates an Advisory Committee:** DWR, working with the California Water Commission, shall establish an advisory committee to assist with water plan revisions. The committee will include representatives from agriculture, water providers, local governments, tribes, environmental justice organizations, and organized labor involved in water infrastructure construction.
- **Requires Public Participation:** All advisory committee meetings will be open to the public, with written notice provided in advance that includes meeting dates and locations.
- **Mandates Science-Based Planning:** All revisions to the California Water Plan shall be supported by the best available peer-reviewed scientific information for each region of the state.

Expected Outcomes

Improvements on flood-safety infrastructure, water quality, water access, climate resiliency, water management, ecosystem rehabilitation, water treatment, water deliveries, water costs, water capturing and water storage.

Cost

The exact costs of the planning and implementation have yet to be determined.



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