

Solano County Water Agency



2019 STATE LEGISLATURE Priority Issues and Policy Guidelines



Photos provided by Ken W. Davis, Putah Creek Council, and Agency Staff

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SOLANO COUNTY WATER AGENCY PRIORITY ISSUES & POLICY POSITIONS

The Solano County Water Agency (SCWA) is dependent on the support of policymakers at all levels of government to provide Solano County's cities and agricultural areas with reliable access to water and perform flood management and habitat conservation activities. State resources and legislative support for vital infrastructure needs and developments are paramount to SCWA's ability to fulfill this commitment to the County's residents, businesses and agricultural users. Accordingly, SCWA supports the priority issues and policy positions as outlined below.

Water Supply Reliability

Summary: Water is a fundamental ingredient and determinant of our quality of life in Solano County. The natural features of the Delta, agricultural production, and the County's urban communities are all shaped in part by the availability of water. Today we collectively benefit from the foresight and fortitude of those who championed construction of the Solano Project, the North Bay Aqueduct, local water supply projects, and defended our water rights – projects that require substantial long-term planning and coordination.

- Support State and local legislative and regulatory actions that protect local water resources and allow local control of water management activities.
- Support legislation and policies that provide funding for development and implementation of Groundwater Sustainability Plans, pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).
- Support conservation and water use efficiency solutions, and regulatory actions, that recognize local water supply conditions, preserve and protect existing water rights, and maintain local decision-making authority for water supply management.
- Support legislative actions that provide funding and non-regulatory incentives that enhance conservation efforts.

Infrastructure

Summary: Solano County's water supply and flood management infrastructure is aging and in some cases not well suited to address today's water management challenges, particularly with respect to flood management. In addition to simply maintaining existing infrastructure there is a need to retrofit and construct new infrastructure.

- Support existing and new funding sources for local water infrastructure construction and maintenance.
- Support Federal, State and local efforts to address causes of sea level rise and to accomplish necessary infrastructure adaptations.

- Support legislation and initiatives that provide timely funding to complete the North Bay Aqueduct Alternate Intake Project and support regional water conveyance needs.

Flood Management

Summary: Flood management has evolved over time to encompass multiple objectives and disciplines. Over the years, Solano County’s flood management facilities have been increasingly used to capture and convey agricultural return flows, urban storm water runoff, and discharge tertiary treated wastewater. In the future these facilities will assume a role in groundwater recharge and habitat enhancement. These new roles, coupled with climate change and sea level rise, constitute new challenges and are likely to necessitate the retrofitting and/or repurposing of existing infrastructure, as well as the construction of new infrastructure.

- Support policies that provide funding for the design, implementation, and maintenance of flood management systems and facilities - canals, levees, and soft infrastructure.
- Support legislation and policies that provide funding for flood protection and preparedness, and emergency systems and procedures.
- Support actions and activities that facilitate communication among local, state and federal flood management entities.

Habitat Conservation and Stewardship

Summary: The Solano County Water Agency is committed to policies and projects that protect the environment and preserve vital water supplies.

- Support legislation and policies that provide funding for implementation of the Solano Project Habitat Conservation Plan.
- Support legislation and policies that promote Lower Putah Creek Coordinating Committee (LPCCC) programs and projects.
- Support legislation and policies that protect the County’s waterways from invasive species such the Nutria Rat, Zebra and Quagga mussels.

Integrated Regional Water Management

Summary: The Solano County Water Agency embraces integrated water resources management and is party to both the Westside Sac Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, and the Bay Area Integrated Regional Water Management Plan.

- Seek author to propose legislation and policies that provide consistent and reliable funding for integrated regional water management planning.

- Support legislation and policies that provide funding for implementation of integrated regional water management plans

Agricultural Sustainability

Summary: Agriculture is an essential component of Solano County’s economy and culture. Over the last 30 years the County has experienced significant urbanization and an associated reallocation of agricultural water supplies for urban uses, as well as the reallocation of agricultural water supplies for environmental purposes. In Solano County, the diminishment of agricultural water supplies, coupled with the conversion of agricultural properties to urban and more recently, large scale habitat restoration projects, threatens the long-term viability of agriculture.

- Support legislation and policies that preserve reliable and affordable agricultural water supplies.
- Support legislation and policies that minimize the disruption of agricultural operations by habitat restoration projects.
- Support legislation and policies that facilitate the construction, maintenance and operation of agricultural drainage and water supply conveyance and storage infrastructure.

Yolo Bypass/Cache Slough Complex

Summary: The Cache Slough Complex (CSC), located at the downstream end of the Yolo Bypass, is widely perceived by State and Federal resource agencies as an ideal setting for large scale habitat conservation and restoration. These habitat conservation and restoration activities can at times conflict with the flood management, water supply and agricultural functions of the CSC.

- Support State and Federal funding for and implementation of the Corridor Management Framework – the locally preferred approach to achieving Federal, State and local policy objectives in the region.
- Oppose Federal and State efforts that restrict local control.
- Support legislation and initiatives that provide funding for development of a detailed Yolo Bypass/Cache Slough Complex Management Plan that includes implementation of flood protection improvements, preservation of agriculture, conservation of habitats and their functionality, and implementation of water supply and drainage improvements.

State Water Resources Control Board Bay-Delta Plan Update

Summary: The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) is conducting a lengthy review and update of the 2006 Bay-Delta Plan to ensure that beneficial uses of water in the Bay-Delta watershed are reasonably protected. The outcome of this effort is likely to impact the Solano County Water Agency's operations and water supply portfolio.

- Support efforts to ensure the reasonable protection of all beneficial uses of water in a way that is consistent with the coequal goals of improving water supply reliability and protecting, restoring and enhancing the Bay-Delta ecosystem.
- Support policies that are consistent with the principles of collaboration, comprehensive solutions, science, functional flows, economic considerations, and consistency with State policy.