



CALIFORNIA FOUNDATION  
ON THE ENVIRONMENT  
AND THE ECONOMY

# DRAFT AGENDA CFEE Water Conference

## *The Era of Rising Temperatures and The Remaking of California’s Water System*

December 8-9, 2022

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*Rising global temperatures are upon us, and California’s water supply is shrinking and shifting.*

*The Department of Water Resources forecasts, perhaps optimistically, a 10 percent supply decrease by 2040. Moreover, the loss of snowpack and its gradual melt combined with the intensification of both droughts and downpours pose new challenges that our infrastructure and management practices are not yet equipped to address.*

*This conference will explore the Newsom Administration’s strategy to adapt to our evolving climatic conditions while surveying California’s water system to identify opportunities to better manage and reconcile the competing needs of our diverse municipal, environmental, and agricultural communities.*

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### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8

11:30 – 12:45pm	Arrival – Check-In and Lunch
12:45 – 1:00pm	<b>Welcome – Conference Overview and Roundtable Introductions</b>

Preview of conference topics, speakers, and goals

**Jay Hansen**, President & CEO, CFEE

1:00 – 2:15pm

**Session 1****The Administration’s “Water Supply Strategy” – Poring Over the Details**

In August 2022, the Newsom Administration unveiled a revamped strategy to build on its work – and that of the Legislature – to enhance California’s water supply. Our opening panel will examine what is new in the Governor’s Water Supply Strategy and preview what public funding, regulatory streamlining, and policy changes will be needed to effectuate the plan.

- What is the science telling us about the future of our water supply? What does the “aridification” of the West functionally mean?
- What data is supporting the Department of Water Resources’s projection for a 10 percent reduction in supply? What is the best case scenario? Worst?
- What new investments will be needed to build additional storage, conveyance, recharge, desal, and reuse infrastructure? How will these costs be shared?
- What are the best opportunities to reinvest in existing infrastructure to enhance California’s water supply reliability?
- What new regulatory streamlining is planned to expedite permitting and development of these complex, expensive projects?
- How should and might water rights be “modernized?”
- How does the Administration envision partnering with the Legislature?

**Wade Crowfoot**, Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency

**Christy Bouma**, Legislative Affairs Secretary, Governor’s Office

**\*Newsha Ajami**, Chief Development Officer for Research, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

2:15 – 3:45pm

**Session 2****Goodbye Snowpack, Hello Rainfall – New Infrastructure for New Hydrology**

Our water system, which was largely designed for a slow-melting snowpack-fed supply, must be reengineered to take advantage of increasingly common extreme and sporadic rain events. Accordingly, the Newsom Administration has a goal to create an additional 4 million acre-feet of above ground and below ground storage to stockpile water from these big storms, making it the largest potential expansion of our water supplies ever. What will be needed to achieve this ambitious target?

- What progress has been made in retrofitting and building new facilities designed for extraordinary precipitation?
- Where can we expect new or expanded surface storage?
- What new infrastructure is needed to convey rainfall to ideal sub-basins where aquifer recharge can occur? Who is in charge of building and coordinating this infrastructure?

- How do Groundwater Sustainability Agencies responsible for groundwater sustainability plans access water from those with water rights?
- Do we also need to adopt new management practices to maximize the value of our storage, conveyance, and recharge projects?
- How does new storage relate to clean drinking water and restoration policies of the Newsom Administration?
- What do we have to do to get ready for so-called “megafloods,” which are increasingly probable and seem poised to overwhelm our flood defenses?

**Karla Nemeth**, Director, Department of Water Resources

\***Andrew Meredith**, President, State Building & Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO

**Speaker, Environmental**

**Speaker, Groundwater Sustainability Agency**

3:45 – 4:00pm	Break
4:00 – 5:30pm	<p><b>Session 3</b>  <b>Think Local, Act Local – How Can the State Help?</b></p>

Home to more than 7,000 water systems and an array of watersheds, weather patterns, and local conditions, there can be no one-size-fits-all approach in California. Far from it, the intense provinciality of water management is likely to put regional and local efforts in the driver’s seat for conservation, efficiency, reuse, and supply diversification initiatives. How can the state further empower regional and local actors to make progress on collaborative water resiliency objectives?

- How have communities responded to calls for conservation? What additional measures can be taken to encourage voluntary reductions in water use?
- What can the state do to help municipalities to develop local projects like stormwater capture, recycling, desal, and turf removal?
- After allocating \$8 billion for water projects in the past three years, what tangible progress has been made on water resiliency efforts? What other state funding is still needed?
- How can water agencies maintain affordability and public buy-in while making critical investments and calling for conservation?
- What more can be done to address ongoing concerns about water quality?

**Dave Eggerton**, Executive Director, Association of California Water Agencies

**Speaker, Investor-Owned Utility**

**Speaker, Academic**

**\*Mark Pestrella**, Director, Los Angeles County Public Works

6:00pm

**Reception & Water Tech Showcase**

During our evening reception, wet your whistle while we showcase several innovative gadgets that can help reshape the future of water management.

7:00pm

Dinner

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9**

7:30 – 9:00am

Breakfast

9:00 – 10:20am

**Session 4**

**The Great Withering – How Do We Prepare for the Likely Future of the Colorado River?**

The Colorado River, one of the principal water supplies of the western United States, is experiencing a traumatic shrinking. With seven U.S. states, Mexico, and several tribal communities all relying on this rapidly depleting source, where do California and its western neighbors go from here?

- How much is the Colorado River forecast to decline in the coming decades?
- What are the current and future consequences to drinking water, irrigated farmland, ecosystems, and hydropower?
- What is the status of negotiations between Colorado River basin states?
- The MET and IID have “senior” water rights on the Colorado River – what does that practically mean when the federal government makes allocation cuts? What does it mean going forward as the river bears less and less supply to go around?
- Is there a scenario when the federal government more aggressively curtails allocations?
- What potential compromises would help to better manage this diminishing resource? What political realities stand in the way, and how will California be affected by looming tradeoffs?

**Adel Hagekhalil**, General Manager, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

**Tanya Trujillo**, Assistant Secretary for Water And Science, U.S. Department of Interior

**Speaker, Imperial Irrigation District**

**Speaker, Western State/Tribe**

10:20 – 10:30am	Break
10:30 – 12:00pm	<b><u>Session 5</u></b> <b>Farming our Future – Can Environmentalism and Agriculture Co-Exist?</b>

California’s \$50 billion agriculture industry has a tough row to hoe. As water scarcity worsens, changing weather threatens crop viability, and new groundwater management practices come into effect, the future of farming in California ranges from uncertain to imperiled. What is the game plan for supporting California ag as times get tougher? Can new environmental management techniques alleviate tensions over water competition?

- How might ecosystem – as opposed to species-focused – management strategies affect farming communities?
- What are “multi-benefit” projects, and what is their potential for delivering win-win-win solutions for ag, environmental, and other priorities?
- On our current trajectory, how many thousands (or millions) of acres of farmland will be retired due to a lack of water? What crops/commodities might the state cease to produce?
- Should we do more to incent growing certain crops in certain areas to better align with hydrological realities? What countervailing commercial forces will we have to acknowledge?
- How can we help communities, often already designated as “disadvantaged,” if significant segments of their local farming economy decline? Do we have a plan for emerging air quality challenges arising from unmanaged, former farmland?
- What would a comprehensive land use strategy for fallowed farmland look like?
- How can agricultural-urban alliances share the burdens of scarce supplies?

**Karen Ross, Secretary**, California Department of Food and Agriculture

**Speaker, UC Davis/Academic**

**Kip Lipper**, Chief Policy Advisor, Office of Senate Pro Tem Atkins

**Speaker, Ag**

12:00pm	Closing Remarks and Adjournment
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**Jay Hansen**, President & CEO, CFEE