



Factsheet: Modernizing
State Water Infrastructure

Delta Conveyance Project

Securing a Critical Water Source

The State Water Project is a collection of 700 miles of canals, pipelines, reservoirs and hydroelectric power facilities that deliver water flowing from the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the taps of 27 million Californians and 750,000 acres of farmland. Critical to the success of the state's economy, on average this water source provides about 30% of the water used in Southern California, but can provide even more in wet years.

To protect this water source from challenges brought by climate change, weather extremes, seismic risks and sea-level rise, Gov. Gavin Newsom's Delta Conveyance Project proposes to modernize the state's aging water infrastructure in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The project is designed to improve the system's ability to capture and move water during periods of abundant rainfall or high run-off from snowpack, while meeting all water quality and endangered species protections, and deliver it to reservoirs and groundwater basins throughout the state.

New Delta conveyance has been studied for more than a decade. Planning for the latest proposal – the DCP – began in 2020, drawing in part from prior designs and study of California WaterFix and the Bay Delta Conservation Plan.

Next Steps

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and other participating public water agencies are funding the preconstruction environmental review, design, planning and permitting for the DCP. Metropolitan's Board of Directors approved funding its share of the preconstruction costs in 2020 and 2024, amounting to about \$300 million through calendar year 2027.

A future decision would come before Metropolitan's board in 2027 based on further design and permitting, as well as updates to the cost estimate and further details of project benefits, to determine whether Metropolitan will participate in the construction of the project.

Proposed Delta Conveyance Project



A Smarter, Smaller Project Shaped by Community Input

The current project is significantly refined from past proposals, reflecting extensive community input. It cuts the construction footprint in half, reroutes infrastructure to avoid the central Delta and the need to use barges to move materials. It also avoids known tribal cultural resources and includes an estimated \$960 million in environmental mitigation and a \$200 million Community Benefits Program.

Project features:

- Two new intakes in the North Delta equipped with state-of-the-art fish screens with a capacity to divert up to 6,000 cubic feet per second when hydrology, water quality and species regulations permit.
- One below-ground, 45-mile tunnel that is more earthquake resilient.
- A new pumping plant to lift water into the existing Bethany Reservoir on the California Aqueduct, creating redundancy in case levee failures draw high-salinity water into the south Delta or the Banks pumping plant otherwise goes offline.

A Legislative Proposal to Streamline the DCP

For years, the state has proposed projects to address the challenges of conveyance through the Delta, but they have been slowed by red tape and bureaucratic delays. In May 2025, Gov. Newsom introduced a package of legislation as part of his May revise aimed at reducing those delays, while maintaining environmental protections.

For Metropolitan, streamlining the DCP is critical. It ensures the district, as well as water agencies across the state, can make informed investment decisions that support long-term water reliability and affordability for the communities we serve.

Each year the DCP is delayed adds an estimated **\$500 million** to the project's costs

Risk of Inaction

The ability to move water when supplies are abundant will become increasingly important as California experiences more rain, less snow and longer periods of drought.

23%

Projected reduction in reliability of the State Water Project

10%

Expected loss of California's water supply due to hotter, drier conditions

"This proposal would allow our board to consider whether to make a long-term investment in the DCP without delay, alongside consideration of other strategies to ensure Southern California has reliable and affordable water amid a changing climate."

– Deven Upadhyay,
Metropolitan Water District General Manager

Goals of the Legislation

Simplifies Permitting

Removes outdated timelines on the SWP's permits, treating it as an ongoing program unless the state decides otherwise. This change speeds up the approval process by avoiding unnecessary debates about water rights unrelated to the DCP, while maintaining the State Water Board's ability to impose environmental protections in the DCP water rights proceeding.

Provides a Clear Path for Funding

Confirms that the California Department of Water Resources can issue bonds, to be repaid by participating water agencies, to fund construction of the DCP. DWR's revenue bonds are never repaid through statewide taxes.

Prevents Unnecessary Legal Delays

Requires any litigation challenging the project to be resolved, including any appeals, within 270 days, if feasible. It also limits court orders that could stop construction unless there's an immediate threat to public health or safety. This helps prevent costly delays during legal challenges, while still ensuring that any legal violations are addressed.

Streamlines Land Purchase Process

Gives DWR the ability to settle land value disputes directly with property owners, avoiding lengthy court proceedings and reducing the need to use eminent domain, to the benefit of willing property owners. It authorizes DWR to offer purchase prices for private property that exceed the amount that could otherwise be offered and allows DWR to handle its own land purchase contracts without extra layers of state review.

Speeds Up Utility Work

Allows DWR to make advance payments to utility companies for electrical work needed for construction, potentially saving months of time and helping to keep the project on schedule and on budget.



The California Aqueduct (photo courtesy of DWR)

About Metropolitan

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a state-established cooperative that provides water to its 26 member agencies in a service area of nearly 19 million people across six counties. The district imports water from the Colorado River and Northern California to supplement local supplies, and helps its members to develop increased water conservation, recycling, storage and other resource-management programs.

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