

THE 2009 CALIFORNIA COMPREHENSIVE WATER PACKAGE

AT A GLANCE

On November 4, 2009 the California State Legislature passed a wide-ranging water package, Legislative Bills SBX7, aimed primarily at addressing the state's aging water infrastructure, future water supply issues throughout California regions, and the environmental plight of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta. The package includes an \$11.14-billion bond proposal to fund the project. This was an attempt to confront the state's growing water problems. The bond will go before voters in November 2010.

The bill package is intended to improve planning in the Bay-Delta area and to set up mechanisms by which future decisions about water supply and allocation can be balanced with ecological concerns. In addition, the legislation includes measures that aim to improve groundwater monitoring and record keeping on water diversion activities, promote water conservation, and require more efficient use of water in the urban and agricultural sectors.

The 2009 Comprehensive Water Package consists of a 5-bill package:

1. Senate Bill 1 (**SBX7 1**): Delta Governance and Management.
2. Senate Bill 2 (**SBX7 2**): Water Bond Measure.
3. Senate Bill 6 (**SBX7 6**): Groundwater Monitoring.
4. Senate Bill 7 (**SBX7 7**): Water Conservancy.
5. Senate Bill 8 (**SBX7 8**): Water Rights Enforcement.

SBX7 1 SB 1 makes comprehensive changes to the governance of the Delta, where a significant portion of San Diego's water comes from. Provisions include revisions to the composition of the existing Delta Protection Commission, the establishment of a Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy to promote environmental restoration and the economic well-being of the Delta, and the creation of a new state agency, the Delta Stewardship Council, to have jurisdiction over land use projects in the Delta area. This bill also includes provisions relative to the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, which will include an endangered species permitting process. The permitting process is viewed as the mechanism by which a Delta canal could be approved. Supporters say that building a canal around the Delta, which would supply two-thirds of the state with urban and irrigation water, would improve water deliveries to Central and Southern California while stopping negative environmental impacts on the Delta.

SBX7 2 authorizes the issuance of \$11.14 billion in bonds for the development of a program to fund a variety of water conservation and efficiency projects. Locally, \$87 million was designated with the intent of helping safeguard San Diego communities from drought, protect and improve water quality, and improve local water security by reducing dependence on imported water. \$3 billion of the \$11.14 billion was set aside for statewide water system operational improvement. **\$1.25 billion** was allocated for water recycling programs such as advanced treatment technology projects that recycle water or that remove salts and contaminants from water sources. This bond measure will be submitted to the voters at the November 2, 2010 statewide general election.

SBX7 6 establishes a new groundwater monitoring program to more regularly and systematically monitor groundwater throughout the state. Local agencies will be required to monitor water levels in their groundwater basins to help better manage the resource during normal water years and drought conditions. This bill requires groundwater information be made readily and widely available.

SBX7 7 requires a 20 percent reduction in urban per capita water use by 2020, and at least a 10 percent reduction by 2015. Urban retail water suppliers, including the 24 water districts in San Diego County, must adopt consistent water use targets by 2011. Agricultural water suppliers must implement efficient water management practices by July 2012, and prepare an agricultural water management plan that meets specified requirements by December 2012.

SBX7 8 clarifies the types of statewide water diversions for which record keeping is required, and revises requirements relating to the contents of statements of diversion and use. This is important because it ensures that water is being used for its proper purposes; thus, creating accountability for both water diversion and funding. The bill also imposes civil liability for the failure to file a required diversion and use statement for a diversion or use that occurs after January 1, 2009, for tampering with water measuring devices, or for making a material misstatement in connection with the filing of a diversion and use statement.