



August 20, 2025

President pro Tempore Mike McGuire  
 California State Senate  
 1021 O Street, Suite 8518  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Scott Wiener  
 California State Senate  
 1021 O Street, Suite 8630  
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Honorable Benjamin Allen  
 California State Senate  
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Speaker Robert Rivas  
 California State Assembly  
 1021 O Street, Suite 8330  
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Honorable Jesse Gabriel  
 California State Assembly  
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 Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Steve Bennett  
 California State Assembly  
 1021 O Street, Suite 4710  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Proposition 4 Implementation – Take Action Now**

Dear President pro Tempore McGuire, Speaker Rivas, Budget Chairs Wiener and Gabriel, and Subcommittee Chairs Allen and Bennett:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are writing to highlight the **urgent need to implement a spending plan for Proposition 4 this year. Expediently allocating this funding will honor the will of the voters and save California from significant future costs due to the impacts of climate change.**

We recognize and thank the Legislature for its leadership in putting forward a climate bond to voters. California's changing climate creates increased risks of drought, floods, intense rain events, and sea level rise that will present unique challenges to public water agencies and their ability to reliably provide critical services to California's farms and cities. The State is currently underprepared to manage a water system with a decreasing snowpack, less frequent precipitation, and increasing weather extremes. Adapting to climate change will require California to urgently and significantly rehabilitate and modify existing water facilities, improve operational flexibility, and make generational investments in new water infrastructure.

The voters overwhelmingly supported the Legislature's proposed \$10 Billion bond as Proposition 4 last year, with nearly 60 percent of the vote in favor. The public has approved the spending, and the Legislature should act to support the will of the voters.

In nearly every category related to water, there are shovel-ready projects ready to move forward when funding is available. By delaying implementation of this funding, these vital climate adaptation projects will also be further delayed. Further, as part of the June budget, key funding for dam safety (\$47 million) and recycled water (\$51 million) that was previously committed from the General Fund was reverted with proposed "backfill" of these categories from Proposition 4 dollars. Below are just a few examples of the kinds of projects that will be delayed if the Legislature fails to implement a spending plan this year.

#### Dam Safety

The true need for funding related to dam safety is unknown, but the Department of Water Resources (DWR) has conducted an analysis for just a small subset of the 1,240 jurisdictional-sized dams that fall under the Division of the Safety of Dams. For 76 of the 88 less-than-satisfactory dams with high or extremely high downstream hazard classification, repair costs are estimated to exceed \$2 billion.

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) released its first-ever solicitation for proposals for grant funding for the Dam Safety and Climate Resilience Local Assistance Program in September 2024. In response to this initial solicitation for only \$47 million in general fund dollars, DWR received responses for \$369 million in grants to help support 72 dam safety projects. The total cost of completing these grant-seeking projects is \$1.04 billion. Due to the reversion of this funding in June, however, that solicitation went unfulfilled.

More broadly, we note that just a few examples from the dam safety coalition agencies (including Valley Water, Yuba Water Agency, Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency, United Water, and several others) have project costs totaling more than \$3.4 billion. Clearly, the statewide need is both pressing and in the multiple billions of dollars.

### Recycled Water

Between FY 2021-22 and FY 2024-25 the State Water Resources Control Board has been allocated \$380.5 million for competitive grants for recycled water projects. Despite having projects lined up and ready to go, close to 80 percent of that funding has been reverted.

The State Water Resources Control Board approved a spending plan for the Recycled Water Funding Program as part of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund Intended Use Plan on August 6, 2025. This plan, using an existing, tested, and respected funding program, funds the following projects:

- Coachella Valley Water District: Phase 1 NPW Improvements Project and Nonpotable Water Pipeline Project
- City of Pismo Beach: Central Coast Blue: Phase 1
- City of Los Angeles: Advanced Water Purification Facility
- Las Virgenes-Triunfo Joint Powers Authority: Pure Water Las Virgenes-Triunfo
- Eastern Municipal Water District: Advanced Water Purification Facility and Conveyance Pipeline
- City of San Buenaventura: Groundwater Recharge
- City of Riverbank: Riverbank Regional Recycled Water Project
- McKinleyville Community Services District: Wastewater Recycling Expansion Project
- Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District: Harvest Water
- City of San Clemente: Recycled Water Quality Improvement Project
- Irvine Ranch Water District: Syphon Reservoir Project
- Carpinteria Valley Water District: Carpinteria Advanced Purification Project
- West Bay Sanitary District: Advanced Water Purification System
- San Francisco Public Utilities Commission: New Treasure Island Wastewater Treatment Plant

These projects will not receive funding if a Proposition 4 spending plan is not passed by the Legislature.

### Groundwater

The funding for groundwater storage, banking, recharge, and instream flow is highly valued by the water community. In response to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), local agencies have proposed more than 340 new recharge projects that, if built, could result in as much as 2.2 million acre-feet of additional stored water in a single wet year by 2030. Without Proposition 4 dollars, many of these projects will be delayed.

### Flood Risk Reduction

The funding for flood risk reduction projects is critical to public health and safety and the economic stability of California. Flood protection is necessary to protect important water infrastructure as well as the communities they support. The Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (Plan) 2022 Update Funding Essentials projected a \$3.2 billion need over the next five years to achieve the goals of the Plan. Without Proposition 4 funding, the lack of the State's contribution towards that need will result in projects not being constructed.

Conveyance

New regional water conveyance systems and repairs to existing facilities will be essential to create a more resilient water infrastructure system. For example, Friant Water Authority, San Luis Delta-Mendota Water Authority, and the State Water Contractors have a list of arterial conveyance projects that could begin the request for proposal for construction by July 2026 whose project costs total over \$1.4 billion. These proposed projects are only a small fraction of what is needed as many local and regional conveyance upgrades and repairs are needed throughout the State to create access to new water sources, repair canals impacted by subsidence, or provide emergency backup conveyance.

To reiterate, these are only a few examples as there are significant and critical projects ready to be implemented once the funding is available in all the water-related categories.

Finally, given the urgent need for action, the undersigned organizations strongly urge the Legislature to adopt the Administration's proposed exemption from the Administrative Procedures Act for funding guidelines for programs related to Proposition 4. Public agencies have historically participated in the public processes State agencies use to establish funding guidelines for programs, and we believe that this exemption is appropriate and necessary to ensure faster disbursement of the funds. State agencies provide opportunities for robust public participation and input as they develop these guidelines.

The need is urgent, and this bond funding is a critical tool for local public agencies to implement these crucial climate projects. The undersigned organizations urge the Legislature to prioritize implementation of a spending plan for the Climate Bond this year in support of the will of the voters. If you have any questions, please contact Julia Hall at [JuliaH@acwa.com](mailto:JuliaH@acwa.com).

Sincerely,

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Association of California Water Agencies

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CC: Members of the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 2  
Members of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 4  
Brady Borcharding, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor  
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