

10 Principles for Comprehensive California Water Policy

1. California must respect, and adjust to meet, the natural limits of its waters and waterways, including the limits posed by climate change. We must fund only those policies and self-management strategies that incorporate such limits and shift our relationship with water, aquatic ecosystems, and our economy toward sustainability and equity.
2. Every Californian has a right to safe, affordable drinking water. Special effort must be made to provide ready access to this basic human right to disadvantaged communities, especially those currently without any safe drinking water.
3. California's aquatic ecosystems have a right to exist and thrive, for their own benefit and the benefit of future generations.
4. California must maximize local water self-sufficiency in all areas of the State in order to achieve the goal of sustainable, reliable water supplies.
5. The quality of California's waters must be protected and enhanced through full implementation of existing water quality and land use regulations, and improvement of those regulations where needed. Public oversight and clean-up should be funded in full through fees on pollutant dischargers and water users.
6. All Californians should have immediate and ready access to decision-making processes for water. Interested and involved parties should be accorded full respect and influence in decision-making, particularly with respect to decisions affecting their communities.
7. California must institute a sustainable funding stream to support the most cost-effective water reliability and water quality solutions for the state, where "cost-effective" includes environmental and social costs. Public funding should not subsidize pollution or the wasteful use of water. Those who use and pollute California's waters, especially for financial gain, must pay the full costs associated with those uses and impacts.
8. Waterway health should be addressed on a watershed basis. Local communities and watershed groups should be better supported as local water stewards.
9. California's actions on water must respect the needs and interests of California Tribes, including those unrecognized Tribes in the State.
10. California must overhaul its existing, piecemeal water rights policies, which already over-allocate existing water and distribute rights without regard to equity. We must move away from the selling of water to the highest bidder and toward a thoughtful policy that meets all basic needs, rejects waste, and serves the Public and Tribal Trust into the future.