

Personnel:

Beginning with good news, please join me in welcoming Ernesto Velazquez-Mancilla who will be joining the Agency team on May 18th as a Water Resources Engineer focused on supporting the Agency's CSIP program work. For the Senior Account Clerk position, we have concluded interviews and are working with the County's Human Resources Department to produce an offer letter. Lastly, the application window for the Water Maintenance Worker II position for the dams has closed and the applicant screening process is underway.

Agency Outreach:

Beginning the week of May 18th, the Agency is engaged in several outreach efforts. On May 18th, the Agency is co-hosting a joint-boards workshop with the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency to present findings from six technical studies performed by the SVBGSA, with technical support from the Agency, to help inform future decisions about potential projects and actions intended to meet the objectives of the SVBGSA's six Groundwater Sustainability Plans. The workshop is for members of the Agency's Board of Supervisors and Board of Directors, and the SVBGSA's Board of Directors, as well as members of the public, to ask questions of staff and consultants pertaining to the technical memos. On May 19th, the Agency is co-hosting a workshop with Supervisor Daniels and District 5 to present findings from the Carmel River – Paso Hondo Flood Study. The Study was made possible with funding made available by Senator Laird through the Budget Act of 2023 and administered by the California Department of Water Resources. Lastly, the Agency is co-hosting a Deep Aquifers Management Recommendations workshop with the SVB, the Marina Coast Water District GSA, and the County of Monterey. The focus of the workshop is to present the Management Recommendations to Deep Aquifers well owners and to discuss next steps. Funding for the DA Management Recommendations memorandum was provided through a grant awarded by the California Department of Water Resources to the Marina Coast WDGSA.

Strategic Plan Update:

The Agency's Strategic Plan Update is in full swing. The Agency has identified small stakeholder groups and our consultant, Jacob Green & Associates, has begun to schedule interviews and focus group meetings. We are also planning for a special Board of Directors meeting this July. To keep abreast of the Update, please follow the Planning Committee. Lastly, we have developed a survey for community members to express views regarding water management, flood protection, and long-term resource sustainability. We are encouraging the Agency's Supervisors, Directors, and stakeholders to share the following links on respective social media platforms so that we may maximize the opportunity for Monterey County residents to participate in this important planning effort.

[Monterey County Water Resources Agency Strategic Plan Community & Stakeholder Survey](#)

[Agencia de Recursos Hídricos del Condado de Monterey Encuesta Comunitaria](#)

Legislative Update:

FY2027 Interior Department Budget: In testimony before Congress, Interior Secretary Doug Burgum spent much of April defending the Trump Administration's proposed FY2027 Interior Department budget, which includes significant cuts to public lands, water, and conservation programs. The proposal would reduce Interior's overall discretionary budget by roughly 13%, including a Bureau of Reclamation budget of approximately \$1.27 billion, while eliminating key western water programs such as WaterSMART and Title XVI water recycling grants – programs the Agency has and continues to rely upon for project funding and sources the SVBGSA is looking to for future projects. Additional proposed reductions affecting western water and natural resource interests include cuts to USGS. On a brighter note, Burgum strongly endorsed congressional efforts to advance permitting reform, arguing that laws such as NEPA and the Endangered Species Act have been “weaponized” and are slowing needed infrastructure and energy development.

EPA Water Reuse Action Plan 2.0: The EPA announced the launch of Water Reuse Action Plan (WRAP) 2.0, a renewed federal initiative focused on expanding water reuse to support agriculture, industry, energy production, and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and data centers. The plan emphasizes collaboration with states, local governments, and industry partners rather than new federal mandates, while promoting investments and best practices for recycled water use and water supply resilience. The initiative received support from the Congressional Western Caucus, which praised the effort as an important step toward strengthening long-term water reliability and economic growth in the West. This is all against the backdrop of the Administration's budget that, like other water programs, proposes to cut funding in these areas. How the balance between funding cuts and new initiatives is struck is “to be determined”.

EPA FY 2027 Budget Proposes Cuts to SRF Water Infrastructure Funds: The Trump Administration's FY2027 budget request proposes cutting EPA's state revolving fund (SRF) programs by roughly 90 percent, a reduction of more than \$2.5 billion, just as both the SRF programs and supplemental Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding are set to expire at the end of this fiscal year. Water agencies are pushing back and remain cautiously optimistic that Congress will again reject the cuts, as it did in FY 2026. The Agency has been looking at SRF as one of the financing options to help fund future CSIP program costs.

Trump Administration's Expedited Permitting Agenda: Recent developments in Congress suggest that momentum for bipartisan permitting reform is continuing to build, although significant policy differences remain. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee leaders are reportedly working closely together on a broad package aimed at streamlining approvals for energy, infrastructure, and transmission projects. Negotiators are discussing faster environmental reviews, expanded electric transmission siting, litigation reforms, and greater certainty for already-issued permits. Senate leaders have indicated that draft legislation could emerge later this summer.

At the same time, the White House is pushing Congress to include reforms to Clean Water Act Section 401, which gives states authority to condition or block federally permitted projects based on water quality concerns. Separately, bipartisan House lawmakers introduced the “CERTAIN Act,” which would provide greater protection for lawfully issued permits, establish clearer agency timelines, reduce duplicative reviews, and improve interagency coordination.