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Subject: Vision statement brainstorming
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Please distribute the attached public comment regarding the agency's vision statement brainstorming and enter it into the public record.

Thank you,

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MCWRA Vision Statement Strategy Protocol

A disciplined modernization brief for transforming a passive reputation statement into an impact-driven water future.

Prepared for Monterey County Water Resources Agency strategic planning discussion · July 2026

PROTOCOL THESIS

MCWRA's vision should stop asking to be recognized as competent and start declaring the future it intends to help secure: resilient water, thriving communities, productive agriculture, and a protected Monterey County environment.

Executive Frame

Bottom Line

The current MCWRA vision statement is respectable but underpowered. It emphasizes knowledge, integrity, and quality, but it is passive, internally focused, and too generic to carry the weight of Monterey County's actual water future.

A stronger vision should be outward-facing and locally grounded. It should name the outcome MCWRA exists to help create: sustainable and resilient water conditions that allow communities, agriculture, and the natural environment to thrive.

Recommended Vision

WORKING DRAFT

To secure a sustainable and resilient water future that enables Monterey County's communities, agriculture, and natural environment to thrive for generations to come.

This is the strongest option because it is clear, public-facing, locally relevant, and durable. It does not reduce MCWRA to operational excellence. It connects MCWRA’s work to the county’s future.

Protocol Overview

Element	Strategic Function	Application to MCWRA
Thesis	The vision should express impact, not self-image.	Move from “be recognized” to “secure a sustainable and resilient water future.”
Surface	The problem is not values; the problem is weak directionality.	Knowledge and integrity matter, but they are operating standards, not a vision.
Mechanism	Tie water to beneficiaries and long-term outcomes.	Communities, agriculture, and environment become the core beneficiaries.
Artifact	Produce a concise, memorable statement.	One sentence; easy to repeat; locally distinctive.
Action	Test top options with Board, staff, and stakeholders.	Narrow to 2–3 options, then refine for adoption.

Quick Assessment of the Current Vision

Current Vision

CURRENT STATEMENT

Be recognized throughout the region as a leader in water resource management through demonstrated knowledge, integrity and the quality of our actions.

Strengths

- It names important operating values: knowledge, integrity, and quality.
- It positions MCWRA as a regional leader.
- It is safe, conventional, and unlikely to create internal controversy.

Weaknesses

- Passive posture:** “Be recognized” makes outside approval the center of the sentence.
- Internal focus:** It describes how the Agency wants to be seen, not what outcome it exists to create.
- Generic language:** It could fit many California water agencies with little change.

Limited emotional force: It does not strongly connect to Monterey County’s communities, agriculture, coast, or future generations.

Weak strategic pressure: It does not tell staff, partners, or the public what kind of future MCWRA is trying to build.

Strategic Diagnosis

The current vision is not wrong. It is too small. It reads like a reputation goal when MCWRA needs a future-state goal.

Capability Matrix

Surface	Decision Domain	Method	Output
Clarify	What should the vision do?	Separate operating values from future-state ambition.	A cleaner purpose frame.
Benchmark	What do strong visions share?	Compare water-sector and elite non-water examples.	Pattern recognition.
Localize	What makes Monterey County distinct?	Name communities, agriculture, coast, environment, resilience.	A regionally grounded statement.
Decide	Which option best survives scrutiny?	Rank options by clarity, memorability, fit, and durability.	Recommended vision option.
Govern	How should adoption proceed?	Stakeholder testing and alignment with mission, values, goals.	Implementation path.

Entropy Diagnostic

Metric	Status	Meaning
Entropy Index	Elevated	The current statement is clear but under-specified; it does not force strategic choices.
Signal Clarity	Medium	Leadership and integrity are visible, but community impact is muted.
Assumption Load	Moderate	The analysis assumes MCWRA wants a modern, public-facing, aspirational vision.
Claim Stability	Mixed	The critique of passivity is strong; external benchmark claims should be verified before final public use.
Decision Friction	Medium	The Board may prefer a safe statement unless given a sharper rationale for change.

Evidence and Reasoning

Pattern from Strong Water-Agency Visions

The strongest water-agency visions tend to do three things:

Name the public benefit. They focus on reliable water, resilience, sustainability, equity, stewardship, or prosperity.

Name the shared nature of water. They often imply partnership among agencies, customers, communities, and ecosystems.

Look forward. They frame water management as a future-making responsibility, not merely a service function.

Example	Useful Lesson for MCWRA
PUB Singapore: “Water for Every One. Everyone for Water.”	Memorable, reciprocal, and built around shared responsibility.
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California	Combines leadership with people, partners, planet, and inclusion.
Innovation / stewardship examples	Show how technical excellence can be paired with environmental responsibility.
Legacy-focused examples	Reinforce that water agencies govern for generations, not election cycles or budget cycles.

Pattern from Elite Non-Water Visions

The best vision statements outside the water sector are not self-congratulatory. They are outcome-driven.

Organization Example	Pattern
Tesla	Big societal transformation.
IKEA	Simple, inclusive, everyday benefit.
Microsoft	Empowerment of people and institutions.
Patagonia	Explicit purpose and values alignment.
LinkedIn	Clear beneficiary and clear opportunity.

Strategic Translation for MCWRA

DECISION FILTER

**What future does MCWRA help make possible for Monterey County? Not:
What does MCWRA want other people to think about MCWRA?**

Structural Honesty

Category	Statement
What is known	The current vision is passive and internally focused. It emphasizes recognition, knowledge, integrity, and quality rather than naming the external condition MCWRA seeks to create.
What is inferred	A stronger vision would likely improve strategic alignment

	by naming Monterey County’s people, farms, environment, and future water resilience as the core beneficiaries.
What remains uncertain	The exact final wording should be tested with Board members, senior staff, agricultural stakeholders, municipal partners, environmental interests, and public-facing users.
What would change the conclusion	If MCWRA deliberately wants a conservative reputation-based vision rather than an aspirational future-state vision, the recommended direction would need to be narrowed.

Strategic Options

Rank	Vision Option	Strength	Risk / Limitation	Best Use
1	To secure a sustainable and resilient water future that enables Monterey County’s communities, agriculture, and natural environment to thrive for generations to come.	Strongest balance of impact, local context, and durability.	Longer than the most memorable options.	Best formal vision statement.
2	Water for Monterey’s people, farms, and coast — everyone for water.	Short, memorable, reciprocal.	More slogan-like; may need supporting language for formal adoption.	Campaign headline or public-facing theme.
3	To lead Monterey County toward a water-secure future where innovation and stewardship sustain thriving communities, productive farms, and a healthy environment.	Strong leadership and stewardship language.	More conventional; slightly less elegant.	Good if leadership positioning matters most.
4	Creating a lasting legacy of reliable, sustainable water for Monterey County’s farms, families, and ecosystems.	Emotional and generational.	“Creating” is active but less institutionally precise.	Good for legacy and staff culture.
5	To be Monterey County’s trusted leader in water management — delivering resilience and prosperity for our communities, agriculture, partners, and environment, with no one left behind.	Explicit trust, leadership, inclusion.	Too many ideas; may feel politically loaded.	Good if equity and inclusion are central Board priorities.
6	A thriving Monterey	Concise, positive,	“Powered by” may	Good as a

	County powered by sustainable water for people, agriculture, and nature — today and forever.	headline-ready.	feel too branded for a public agency.	communications tagline.
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Recommendation Protocol

Recommended Direction

Adopt the top option as the working draft:

RECOMMENDED VISION

To secure a sustainable and resilient water future that enables Monterey County’s communities, agriculture, and natural environment to thrive for generations to come.

Why This Option Best Survives Scrutiny

- It is **active**: MCWRA is securing a future, not waiting to be recognized.
- It is **local**: It names Monterey County directly.
- It is **balanced**: Communities, agriculture, and natural environment are all included.
- It is **future-facing**: “For generations to come” connects to long-term resource stewardship.
- It is **broad enough** to cover groundwater, flood protection, infrastructure, planning, resilience, and collaboration without becoming a technical inventory.

Possible Refinement

SHORTER VERSION

A sustainable and resilient water future for Monterey County’s communities, agriculture, and natural environment.

This version is less active but cleaner and more memorable.

Governance and Continuity

Adoption Process

Internal review: Ask Board and leadership which option feels most authentic and most useful.

Stakeholder testing: Test 2–3 finalists with agricultural representatives, cities, environmental partners, staff, and community-facing users.

Memorability review: Require that the final version can be said in one breath and repeated accurately.

Strategic alignment: Ensure mission, values, goals, objectives, and performance measures ladder up to the chosen vision.

Rollout: Use the adopted vision in presentations, website materials, annual reports, staff onboarding, and strategic-plan dashboards.

Continuity Rule

The vision should not be adopted as decoration. It should become a filter for strategic priorities:

Does this project improve long-term resilience?

Does it serve communities, agriculture, and the environment?

Does it strengthen public trust?

Does it support a water future that can survive climate, groundwater, infrastructure, and governance stress?

Final Action Panel

Decision Surface	Protocol Direction
Decision to Make	Choose whether MCWRA wants a reputation-based vision or an impact-based vision.
Recommended Decision	Move to an impact-based vision.
Immediate Next Move	Advance the top recommendation and one shorter alternative into Board/stakeholder testing.
Formal Vision	To secure a sustainable and resilient water future that enables Monterey County’s communities, agriculture, and natural environment to thrive for generations to come.
Short Public Theme	Water for Monterey’s people, farms, and coast — everyone for water.

FINAL PROTOCOL

The purpose of the artifact is not to make the vision sound prettier. The purpose is to make MCWRA’s future-facing commitment clear enough that staff, partners, and the public can understand what the Agency is trying to

secure and why it matters.