

Water Forum 2.0

Business Caucus Statement of Interests

NEGOTIATING STEERING COMMITTEE

APRIL 15, 2021

Co Equal Objectives

The business caucus supports the co-equal objectives identified in the 2000 Water Forum Agreement of ensuring sufficient and reliable long-term water supplies while promoting, enhancing and preserving the fishery, wildlife, recreational and aesthetic values of the lower American River.

- ▶ Sufficient and reliable long-term water supplies account for economic health, growth and quality of life in the region.

Reliability and Certainty of Supply

The Water Forum Agreement 2.0 needs to provide the community with a supply that can be counted upon regardless of climate, varying demand or year-to-year uncertainties.

- ▶ The business community cannot adequately plan for and maintain the participation in and distribution of jobs and economic benefits to its residents when water is not reliable.
- ▶ Adequate supplies including urban uses for planned growth and delivery mechanisms must be reliable for accurate planning efforts and realistic outcomes.
- ▶ Certainty of sufficient water supplies should not be sacrificed during years when climate conditions vary from normal. Water supply planning should account for measures to harness excess water occurring during wet years in order to ensure adequate reserves to accommodate dry years.
- ▶ Provide supplies adequate to serve all water demands in the community anticipated during the planning period.

Reliability and Certainty of Supply

An appropriate level of redundancy can provide reliability of our water supply. Planning cooperatively between agencies to share water supplies in dryer years can provide more certainty. This will require additional facilities. The costs need to be commensurate with the benefits.

- ▶ **Water Forum Agreement 2.0** needs to account for and be able to adapt to future climate change impacts on water supply.

Once established, this reliability should allow water supply to be available without debate either area by area or use by use.

- ▶ Once adopted, **Water Forum Agreement 2.0** should not constrain the timing or location of site-specific demands.

Climate change, economic health, growth and quality of life all bring the need for increased water supply security and resiliency.

Promote Economic Growth and Health of the Region

The vitality of the region relies on economic growth to provide jobs, housing and improve services.

- ▶ Economic growth and the maintenance and creation of jobs are of critical importance to the community. Employment for all members of the community provides a foundation for services, individual and family self-sufficiency and community stability.
- ▶ For this region to remain economically healthy, we must continue to attract a diversity of jobs and industry to this region, as well as maintain and facilitate the growth of existing industries. Providing adequate and attainable housing is an important component of economic growth. This region has become an attractive location to new residents due to the employment and the housing opportunities as well as the other quality of life factors.
- ▶ To continue to recruit new businesses and maintain our current business community, we need to assure that the basic needs, including water supply, are available. Water supply must be cost effective and be competitive with other regions.

Promote Economic Growth and Health of the Region

Water Forum Agreement 2.0 should not act as, or be used as, a growth control mechanism.

- ▶ Water Forum Agreement 2.0 should be designed to accommodate all water demand in the community and not be used as a tool to control or direct growth or demand. The community has other mechanisms and more appropriate governmental agencies to direct the path of growth.
- ▶ This region continues to be a place within our state where more achievable housing opportunities exist. Housing is a statewide crisis and must be addressed to benefit all current and future residents of this region.

Promote Economic Growth and Health of the Region

Water Forum Agreement 2.0 should respond to the planned growth in the region.

- ▶ Healthy growth levels should be established by the community using open and public forums and decision-making processes. The Water Forum Agreement 2.0 should then facilitate and accommodate those growth levels.
- ▶ General Plans are the planning tool and guiding document for a local jurisdiction and it is within that context that population and capacity issues should be discussed and balanced to meet the environmental, social, and economic needs of a community. No single issue should be allowed to drive those decisions. In the case of water, the resource should be developed to accommodate the demand.
- ▶ Growth decisions must be informed by objective information about available water supply. The legislature has identified the requirements for such an assessment through SB 610 and SB 221.

Promote Economic Growth and Health of the Region

Lack of planning for resolving water supply issues will not prevent increasing demands from economic health (or growth), but will affect current users, including existing residents and businesses.

Demand for water is non-responsive to the planning or actual provision of water supply. The Water Forum Agreement 2.0 should strive to meet the desired and projected levels of demand without attempting to direct or restrict those demands. Planning for the impacts of a variety of hydrological conditions, increased supply security and water efficiency are ways to manage demand. Over-reliance on long term conservation could lead to diminished supply, which would be unhealthy for the region.

- ▶ If water supply does not plan to meet the inevitable population growth, current users (all segments of the community) will suffer.

Regional Context

Water Forum Agreement 2.0 exists in a larger regional context. Planning for our needs is influenced by activity outside our region. To be successful we need to consider the effects and influence of other regions within the state.

- ▶ Our caucus has interests which extend into other areas of the state. While we recognize this process is not designed to solve all the water problems of California, we should strive to work collaboratively with other regions.
- ▶ Failure to resolve our local issues and adequately plan for our own needs may result in outside interests benefiting from water supply that should remain within the Sacramento region.

Planning Period and Realistic Demand Projections

Establishing a strategy for the Water Forum Agreement 2.0 starts with determining a planning period and targeting a water supply demand it will strive to meet.

- ▶ We believe a robust and enduring water supply plan should consider long-term needs of the region. It should look far enough out into the future to ensure that near- and long-term opportunities for this region are not constrained unnecessarily by inadequate water supply.

Water Efficiency, Conservation, and Recycling

- ▶ Efficiency and conservation are both important components of a robust water supply plan but provide different approaches to increasing water supply. Conservation is a consumer behavior choice to reduce water consumption. Efficiency utilizes technical changes in order to reduce the amount of water normally consumed.
- ▶ Efficiency is preferable to conservation, as gains are long-lasting. Existing residences and business should be incentivized to upgrade to water-efficient fixtures as well as irrigation systems and landscaping. “Brown as the new green” is not healthy for the ecology, economic value, or quality of life in our region. Good landscaping is a benefit to the entire region, as it reduces energy costs, minimizes the heat island effect, and sequesters carbon increasing urban ecology and increasing home values. The inherent value landscaping brings should be accounted for in a water supply plan.
- ▶ Water efficiency practices can also reduce the need for regular conservation/reduced demand for water without requiring a behavioral change. Conservation should be used as a tool in times of limited supply. Long-term water conservation can lead to desensitizing people, and could have the opposite effect. The efficacy of both efficiency and conservation measures need to be continuously evaluated.
- ▶ Cost effective water reuse and recycling can be used to augment water supply.

Cost Implications

Water Forum Agreement 2.0 should consider solutions that are both economical and cost effective relative to the benefits.

- ▶ We support investment in projects that allow for economic growth and enhance the water supply.
- ▶ Consider exploring new infrastructure projects and the innovative use of new and existing infrastructure.

Groundwater

Conjunctive use of groundwater is essential.

- ▶ **Water Forum Agreement 2.0** should safely optimize groundwater use for the environmental and economic benefits to the community.
- ▶ Optimizing groundwater use offers redundancy and the flexibility to deal with wet and dry conditions.
- ▶ Supporting conjunctive use efforts to share groundwater supply directly or in lieu with those water purveyors which do not have alternatives to surface water is part of a solution.
- ▶ It must be recognized that some water purveyors do not have the opportunity to use surface water and therefore must rely on groundwater.
- ▶ Management of groundwater resources will be essential to sustain groundwater supply opportunities.

Groundwater

Recharging of groundwater aquifers may be cost effective, reliable, and beneficial.

- ▶ As our water supplies become more in demand, consider banking surface water in wetter years. Although this will result in additional capital costs, it will improve water supply reliability.

Quality of Life Should be Maintained

The business community relies on and contributes to a high quality of life in this community which includes economic and environmental components.

- ▶ Business is part of the economic engine which generates the capital to create and continue to fund universally recognized "quality of life" factors. Many of the amenities that people want in their community are funded by the business community, through taxes, volunteer efforts, charitable donations, and additional job generation.
- ▶ "Quality of life" should be maintained and has many components, including:
 - ▶ Availability of affordable housing for all income levels
 - ▶ Business opportunities
 - ▶ Cultural amenities
 - ▶ Recreational opportunities
 - ▶ Environmental resources
 - ▶ Healthy urban landscape
 - ▶ Desirable neighborhoods and communities

Quality of Life Should be Maintained

People should have choices in water use efficiency and conservation. Education should drive messaging and empower people to make individual water management decisions that fit with their unique quality of life.

Clarifying Questions & Discussion