



Regional Water Authority
BUILDING ALLIANCES IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

The Start of A New Session...



2017 was a significant year for the Regional Water Authority's Advocacy Program that represented the culmination of a five-year process initiated by the RWA Board of Directors in 2013. A key component of the Board's "Strategic Plan 2018+" was a

new emphasis on advocacy, with the goal of ensuring that regional needs and concerns would be positively represented on legislative and regulatory policies and actions. This year's accomplishments are a direct result of the Board's forward thinking and leadership. This year, the Advocacy Program allowed RWA's members to speak with a united voice in pursuit of our region's common goals.

For the first time ever, in 2017 the Regional Water Authority sponsored legislation. AB 968 and AB 1654, authored by Assembly Member Blanca Rubio (D-Baldwin Park), were companion measures focused on improving drought preparedness and increasing water efficiency statewide while preserving local control. While these bills were not ultimately enacted into law this year, we were very successful in partnering with Irvine Ranch Water District on the legislation and building a statewide coalition of over 100 water suppliers,

local governments and other supporters to help push these bills forward. We also partnered with water agencies around the state to successfully oppose measures that would be contrary to RWA member interests.

Additionally, we continued to monitor all state legislative bills and proposals that could impact RWA members. Overall, this year there were 164 measures tracked, 40 of which were extensively analyzed and discussed by the RWA Lobbyist Subscription Program. RWA acted on 14 of these bills.

There is and will always be much more work to be done, and each year we will strive to enhance our effectiveness and position ourselves in the strongest manner possible. As we head into year two of the 2017-2018 Legislative Session, we are well positioned for success. I am excited to build on this year's accomplishments as we push ahead and continue to advance RWA member interests in the State Capitol.

Let's keep moving forward in 2018!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Adam W. Robin".

Adam W. Robin



2017 Advocacy Priorities

1. Ensure That Long-Term Water Efficiency Legislation Accounts For Unique Local Conditions And Preserves Local Control

In 2017, RWA co-sponsored legislation to strengthen water use efficiency and enhance drought planning, preparation and reporting by water suppliers statewide. RWA engaged on all legislation related to long-term water efficiency in a manner that accounted for the following core principles:

- ◆ **Ensure that any new water use standards or targets account for unique local conditions.**
- ◆ **Protect and promote investments in a diverse, resilient and reliable water supply.**
- ◆ **Ensure that requirements are technically and economically feasible for RWA member agencies to implement.**
- ◆ **Enhance drought planning and reporting requirements, while ensuring that any state agency oversight and enforcement roles are appropriate and respect local control.**
- ◆ **Maintain existing water rights protections.**

2. Oppose Water Tax Proposals That Would Redirect Local Resources Away From Local Water Agencies

RWA recognizes the need for sensible, long-term funding solutions to assist disadvantaged communities that do not have safe drinking water, as well as to address water affordability issues for low-income ratepayers. A per-connection tax on Californians' water bills, however, such as the tax proposed in SB 623, is not an acceptable funding source to address these problems. A state water tax would hamper efforts to maintain safe and reliable water infrastructure at a reasonable cost for local ratepayers, including local low-income ratepayers.

3. Support State Funding For Regional Priorities

RWA supported the Legislature's development of SB 5, a \$4 billion general obligation bond that makes available \$10 million in funding for the Lower American River Conservancy Program, \$200 million for the implementation of voluntary agreements related to an updated Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan and \$290 million for drought and groundwater investments to achieve regional sustainability. SB 5 will be considered for approval by California voters in June 2018.

2017 Legislative Highlights

In December, the Association of California Water Agencies honored RWA and the Irvine Ranch Water District with the 2017 "Most Compelling Case" Outreach Award for their role in co-sponsoring and advocating for legislation on drought preparedness and long-term water use efficiency.



From left: RWA Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Program Manager Adam Robin, IRWD Government Relations Officer Christine Compton and IRWD Board President Douglas J. Reinhart.

"Thanks to the Regional Water Authority, we are in control of our destiny rather than allowing other parts of the state to determine state water policy alone. We have long needed a champion, and the Regional Water Authority has elevated the Sacramento Region's position at the State Capitol as a respected voice on water policy issues."

Mayor Linda Budge, City of Rancho Cordova

"Having support from the Regional Water Authority as we champion responsible water policy was instrumental."

Jim Cooper, California State Assembly Member, District 9



By the Numbers

- 2,890** Number of total bills introduced in the 2017 Legislative Session
- 164** Number of bills introduced in the 2017 session with identified potential impacts on RWA members
- 40** Number of 2017 bills identified as high or medium priority ("hot list") at the start of the session
- 14** Number of hot list bills with active positions
- 5** Number of hot list bills enrolled by the Legislature (one bill was vetoed by the Governor)

RWA “Hot List” bills enrolled by the Legislature in 2017

Bill (Author)	Bill Title & Description	RWA Position (Action by Governor)
AB 313 Gray	Community Water Systems: Lead User Service Lines	Support (Vetoed)
AB 746 Gonzalez Fletcher	Lead Testing: School Sites	Support If Amended (Signed)
SB 5 DeLeon	CA Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection & Outdoor Access Bond	Support (Signed)
SB 427 Leyva	Community Water Systems: Lead User Service Lines	Oppose Unless Amended (Signed)
SB 580 Pan	Water Development Projects: American and Sacramento Rivers Flood Control	Support (Signed)

A full analysis and text of all top priority bills are available on the RWA website at rwah2o.org.

As the 2017 session came to a close, eight hot list bills became two-year bills that may be acted upon in the 2018 legislative session. A recap of RWA’s position on these two-year bills is provided below:

Legislation	Topic	RWA Position
AB 968 Rubio	Urban Water Use Efficiency	Support - RWA Sponsored Bill. <i>This bill would establish new water efficiency targets for water suppliers for the year 2025 in a manner that would recognize and incentivize the development of resilient water supply sources and protect existing water rights.</i>
AB 975 Friedman	Wild and Scenic River Designations	Oppose. <i>This bill would take certain provisions from the federal Wild and Scenic River law and apply them to existing State law in an inconsistent manner that could limit local land use authorities and present operational challenges for water suppliers.</i>
AB 1427 Eggman	Groundwater Storage	Support. <i>This bill would establish that the underground storage of water is a beneficial use.</i>
AB 1654 Rubio	Urban Water Management Planning	Support - RWA Sponsored Bill. <i>This bill would enhance drought planning requirements for water suppliers and protect water suppliers’ investments in resilient water supplies.</i>
AB 1668 Friedman	Urban Water Conservation	Oppose unless amended. <i>This bill would, in part, authorize the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to adopt a variety of enforceable water use standards, including standards for outdoor residential use. This bill is a companion measure to SB 606.</i>
AB 1669 Friedman	Urban Water Conservation	Oppose. <i>This bill would authorize the SWRCB to adopt and revise standards for water use including, but not limited to: standards for indoor residential water use; outdoor irrigation in connection with domestic, industrial, institutional or commercial water use; and, industrial, institutional and commercial water use.</i>
SB 606 Skinner/ Hertzberg	Urban Water Conservation	Oppose Unless Amended. <i>This bill would, in part, authorize the SWRCB to adopt a variety of enforceable water use standards, including standards for outdoor residential use. This bill is a companion measure to AB 1668.</i>
SB 623 Monning	Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund—Water Tax	Oppose Unless Amended. <i>This bill would impose a per-connection tax on every public water system customer. The proceeds of the tax would fund a “Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund” administered by the SWRCB to address specified drinking water issues. Other funding sources would include dairy and fertilizer fees.</i>

Influencer Outreach

STATE LEGISLATIVE LEADERS

Building upon existing relationships, RWA staff continued to hold one-on-one meetings with legislative members and staff to advocate for key issues. Over the course of 2017, RWA staff met with all five Senators and seven Assembly Members representing the five-county Sacramento region, as well as members of key policy and budget committees.

LOCAL LEADERS

Throughout the year, RWA staff met with local elected officials to update them on priority issues and seek their future support with state legislative leaders. A key objective of this outreach effort was to develop a strong team of local elected officials RWA and its members can call upon to provide political support and advocacy for water-related issues important to this region.

LEGISLATIVE PROCESS WORKSHOP

In October, RWA staff offered a new benefit for members—a workshop on the California legislative process. The session explained how RWA engages the Legislature and how individual agencies can participate in the process both through RWA and directly with their local legislators. “Hot topics” that are expected to be taken up by the Legislature and regulatory agencies in 2018 were also discussed.



ADVOCACY THROUGH MEDIA OUTREACH AND SOCIAL MEDIA

RWA continued outreach via the media to convey RWA's perspective and the region's accomplishments, as well as to build relationships with reporters, by issuing news releases, media statements and letters to the editor.

Accomplishments include working with the Coachella Valley Water District to successfully place an op-ed in the Desert Sun in support of RWA co-sponsored legislation AB 968 and AB 1654. In addition, RWA partnered with the Water Forum to host a press event in November at the Nimbus Fish Hatchery in Rancho Cordova to promote the region's successful efforts regarding environmental stewardship on the lower American River, water supply planning and water use efficiency. The event attracted media coverage from multiple outlets, including KCRA (Channel 3), ABC 10, Capital Public Radio and others.

RWA launched a new social media presence to further connect with news media, members and stakeholders and to provide yet another avenue for outreach.



RWA Executive Director John Woodling outlines how water providers are working to protect the lower American River.

"The Regional Water Authority has elevated the Sacramento Region's position at the State Capitol as a respected voice on water policy issues. We are now an integral player in shaping legislation to protect our constituency."

Mayor Jeff Slowey, City of Citrus Heights

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2018

A significant part of RWA's work in 2017 focused on proactively developing a vision for legislation that supports a locally-based approach to drought preparedness and long-term water use efficiency and then building and working intensely with a broad coalition throughout California to move this vision forward. This approach provides an important foundation and framework as we look toward 2018 and beyond.

Continued advocacy on legislation for implementing the Governor's framework on long-term conservation, now moving forward in AB 1668 (Friedman) and SB 606 (Hertzberg/Skinner/Friedman), will be a top legislative priority in 2018, along with SB 623 (Monning), legislation that includes a proposed tax on residential water bills. RWA will continue to engage on these bills and other priority legislation in a manner that is consistent with RWA's established policy principles.

In addition, RWA is continuing to serve in leadership positions that both provide the Sacramento region a voice on critical policy and regulatory issues, as well as build relationships statewide. These include serving as chair of the Practitioner Advisory Panel convened by the California Department of Water Resources to provide input on implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, as well as chair of the Association of California Water Agencies' Groundwater Committee. RWA and member agency staff serve in key roles on ACWA's State Legislative Committee and lead the Sacramento Metro Chamber's State Legislative Summit.

Forging partnerships will always be a key priority of the Advocacy Program. RWA successfully grew a statewide coalition of over 100 water suppliers, local governments and other supporters to help advance RWA's sponsored legislation in 2017. In 2018 we will look to diversify our reach with groups representing the agriculture, environmental and business communities as we engage on a variety of priority issues on behalf of RWA's members.

LOBBYIST SUPPORT

The success of the RWA Advocacy Program is dependent on the RWA members who financially contribute to the Lobbyist Subscription Program, which supports RWA's contract lobbyist.

The 2017 Lobbyist Subscription Program members include:

Citrus Heights Water District*
City of Folsom
City of Lincoln
City of Roseville
City of Sacramento
Carmichael Water District
Del Paso Manor Water District
Elk Grove Water District
Fair Oaks Water District*
Placer County Water Agency
Sacramento County Water Agency
Sacramento Suburban Water District
San Juan Water District

** RWA members that joined the Lobbyist Subscription Program in 2017.*

Staff will continue to recruit additional RWA members to participate in 2018.

STAFF

For any questions or more information, please contact RWA Advocacy Program Manager Adam W. Robin at (916) 967-7692.

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