



Regional Water Authority
BUILDING ALLIANCES IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

2018 | **Advocacy Program Highlights**

A New Year and A New Administration

RWA began our legislative advocacy program in 2015 during Governor Jerry Brown's Administration. While we have not always agreed with the Governor, we worked tirelessly to forge partnerships and create ongoing coalitions to help strengthen our positions, and I believe this shows through our many successes.



While we worked hard on issues such as long-term conservation rules and implementation, drought preparedness and regulations, and water affordability, we were also able to implement policies and principles that all 21 of our water provider members could support. There were several areas in which we were actively involved such as water use efficiency standards and opposition to a proposed water tax that will continue, undoubtedly, under the new Administration. We learned much and grew during the Brown Administration and as a result we are well positioned to implement our priorities with Governor Gavin Newsom.

In early 2019 we look forward to briefing Mr. Newsom and the new Legislature on issues and policies that are critical to our members. In fact, a priority in 2019 is to shift even more from a reactionary position to a proactive one. The amazing coalition partners we have worked with over the years will be central to this endeavor. We will continue to work with our partners to advocate for funding solutions to the critical issue of safe drinking water for disadvantaged

communities. We will search for solutions that do not require a tax on water bills and work to define details for implementing water efficiency and drought preparedness. RWA and member agency staff serve in key roles on statewide associations, which will help further these efforts.

Forging partnerships will always be a key priority of the Advocacy Program. In 2019 we will look to engage new members and diversify our reach with groups representing the agricultural, environmental, and business communities as we engage on a variety of priority issues on behalf of RWA's members.

A blue ink signature of John Woodling, consisting of a stylized 'JW' followed by a flourish.

John Woodling, Executive Director



2018 Advocacy Priorities

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

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, 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. The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 was passed with 57.59 percent support in June 2018.

2018 Legislative Highlights



BY THE NUMBERS

2,637

Number of total bills introduced in the 2018 Legislative Session.

1,363

Number of bills signed into law by the Governor.

78

Number of bills in the 2018 session with identified potential impacts on RWA members.

21

Number of bills identified as high or medium priority ("hot list") at the start of the session.

12

Number of hot list bills with active RWA positions.

2

Number of support bills chaptered.

2

Number of oppose bills chaptered.

PUSH FOR DRINKING WATER TAX DIES IN THE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

An effort to impose a “voluntary” water tax on residents to pay for safe drinking water projects died in the Legislature. Senate Bill 845 by Bill Monning (D-Carmel), would have required water providers to apply a “voluntary remittance to provide safe drinking water to disadvantaged communities” on each customer bill by July 1, 2019. Customers would have to opt-out of the fee.



Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon called the legislation and other one-time monetary allocations to water projects “a piecemeal funding approach” that “won’t work.” RWA joined more than 200 water providers, cities, business organizations, and others to oppose the measure, which would have required new costly and complex systems for collecting donations to send to Sacramento. RWA will continue to work with coalition partners to advocate for funding solutions to the critical issue of safe drinking water for disadvantaged communities that do not require a tax on water bills.

“Requiring local water agencies and cities across the state to impose a tax on water for the State of California to redistribute is not the appropriate response to the problem and ignores better funding opportunities and resources that could be available to address the problem.”

5/15/18 Letter to the Assembly Budget Committee opposing the water tax

SB 606 AND AB 1668 AMENDED BEFORE BECOMING LAW

RWA secured key amendments to legislation requiring urban water providers throughout California to set new permanent water use targets for their service areas by 2022 before they became law this year. Senate Bill 606 by Robert Hertzberg (D-Van Nuys) and Assembly Bill 1668 by Laura Friedman (D-Glendale) provide a framework for setting water use targets, as well as implementing and enforcing the new water use requirements.

“RWA and Sacramento region water suppliers have demonstrated a long-term commitment to achieving lasting improvements in water use efficiency.”

2/12/18 Letter to the State Water Resources Control Board commenting on permanent prohibitions against wasteful and unreasonable water uses

“RWA would oppose any requirements that would shift sole responsibility for implementation of any final SWRCB prohibitions to local water suppliers.”

2/12/18 Letter to the State Water Resources Control Board

For two years, RWA worked with a broad coalition of water providers, associations, and business groups to develop and shape the legislation in a way that strikes the right balance between making water efficiency a California way of life and maintaining local control over water management decisions. RWA was instrumental in achieving key amendments that make them more acceptable to local water suppliers. Rather than the unchecked and permanent ability to set and update water efficiency standards, the State Water Resources Control Board will have a one-time, and fairly constrained standard setting process. In addition, the intent of the legislature is clear that water supplies identified by water providers as available in their drought contingency plans should not be artificially constrained during a drought emergency as they were in 2015.



RWA Hot List Bills

As the 2018 session rolled out, RWA staff identified 78 bills of interest from the 2,637 bills introduced. 21 of these bills were identified as “hot list” bills that could have potentially significant implications to RWA members and that required close monitoring and potential action. Of these 21 bills, RWA took active positions on 12.

Of the 12 bills on which RWA took active positions, four were sent to the Governor for his signature, two of which RWA opposed.

FINAL LEGISLATIVE OUTCOME ON RWA “HOT LIST” BILLS IN 2018:

Bill (Author)	Bill Title & Description	RWA Position
AB 1668 Friedman	Water Management Planning	Oppose Approved by the Governor on May 31, 2018
AB 2371 Carrillo	Water Use Efficiency	Support Approved by the Governor on Sept 28, 2018
SB 966 Wiener	Onsite Treated Nonpotable Water Systems	Support Approved by the Governor on Sept 28, 2018
SB 998 Dodd	Discontinuation of Residential Water Service	Oppose Approved by the Governor on Sept 28, 2018

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



RWA Symposium Explores Making Water Affordable and Accessible

RWA hosted a symposium in March to convene thought leaders and spur dialogue about making safe, clean, affordable and accessible water a reality in California.

Attended by a capacity crowd of leaders from state government, local water providers and the non-profit sector, the event featured introductory remarks by Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg and two panels focused on identifying the challenges and then discussing potential solutions.

“Over the past several years, the issues of access and affordability of water have come to the forefront,” said RWA Executive Director John Woodling. “Although most Californians receive drinking water that meets federal and state drinking water standards, more than 300 communities lack access to clean drinking water. RWA and its members wanted to convene this symposium to explore the issues and to discuss potential viable solutions for this important social issue.”



John Woodling Honored With ACWA Emissary Award

RWA's Executive Director John Woodling was honored with the Emissary Award from the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA). The award recognizes individuals who have made remarkable contributions to California water through voluntary service to ACWA.

“John Woodling exemplifies what it means to be a public servant and leader,” said Brent Haste, President of the ACWA Board of Directors. “In addition to his many years of dedicated service in the Sacramento region, John has helped advance numerous critical statewide water issues at ACWA, such as comprehensive groundwater sustainability management and urban water conservation.”

RWA Welcomes New Advocacy Program Manager

RWA was pleased to welcome Ryan Ojakian as Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Program Manager.

Ryan brings more than a decade of experience working on a wide range of complex issues in the California legislature, most recently as senior consultant for the Assembly Committee on Water, Parks and Wildlife. There, he worked on water policy issues, including long-term urban water use efficiency legislation signed into law in May.

In addition to working for the Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee, Ryan has also served as legislative director for Assembly Member Marc Levine (D-San Rafael) and legislative aide for former California State Senator Joe Simitian (D-Palo Alto).

Ryan holds a master's degree in economics from San Diego State University and a bachelor's degree in animal physiology and neurosciences from the University of California at San Diego.



A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO DAVE BRENT

for stepping in to manage the Advocacy Program during our search for a new full-time manager!

Advocacy Transitions to Permanent Program

As we look ahead to 2019, RWA's Advocacy Program is poised to achieve yet another milestone. Since 2013, we have worked together to develop the program by creating a structure, identifying priorities, setting goals, and engaging members in a vision. In 2016, we launched the program on a subscription basis. In 2019, the Advocacy Program will embark as a permanent program offered to members. The transition is testament to the program's accomplishments and results

over the past several years to ensure that regional needs and concerns are positively and proactively represented.

We look forward to bringing this continued energy to the priority issues of expanding the region's conjunctive use program, building upon this year's successful water transfer pilot project, and continuing to move forward with the vision for an American Basin Water Bank.

ADVOCACY PROGRAM MEMBERS

Thank you to the members who financially contributed to the 2018 RWA Advocacy Program, which supports RWA's contract lobbyist. The 2018 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

STAFF

For any questions or more information, please contact RWA Advocacy Program Manager Ryan Ojikian at 916.967.7692.

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