

Talking Points:

- RWA members have been providing safe, reliable drinking water to customers for more than a century. Member agencies are here to meet the needs of our local communities. Today our mission remains, to contribute to the achievement of the human right to water, which is the right of every Californian to have access to safe, clean, affordable water.
- There can and must be steady and reliable funding that does not harm the human right to water. A one-time general fund investment in a trust fund is appropriate and effective.
 - A one-time investment of \$1 billion will provide stable and ongoing funding.
 - This is not a new tax, not a regressive tax on a basic human need, and not a tax when there is an estimate \$30 billion of surplus available.
 - The Water Board has itself recommended against a regressive water tax to fund water affordability. If it doesn't make sense in that setting, it doesn't make sense in this one.
- All 2 million people in the Sacramento region currently receive safe drinking water. 600,000 of those are low-income, 450,000 of which are renters who do not directly receive a water bill. A water tax would require all Sacramento residents to pay more with no benefit, and no practical way to reduce that burden on low-income households, especially renters.
- Placing a tax on water is akin to “robbing Peter to pay Paul” and will hinder our ability to achieve all that goes into meeting the human right to water (reliable, high-quality, affordable water) in the Sacramento region.

Additional points to keep in mind:

- We should fund and solve the problems we've characterized first. The Water Board estimated the annual O&M cost for safe drinking water at \$43 million.
- A trust proposal meets and is consistent with views shared by the Speaker of the Assembly on new taxes and the budget surplus:

"I'm not sure that folks are necessarily ready to run out and raise taxes again, particularly when we have an \$18 billion budget reserve and things are going well," he said. "So I'm not sure folks are all that excited about it." Mr. Rendon signaled his thoughts on how the political environment would change with a new governor in town, saying the \$14 billion surplus that Mr. Brown had squirreled away should be spent "particularly on programs that make a difference in the long term." – Speaker Anthony Rendon in the New York Times January 7, 2019