

# Report on the Strategic Plan Communication Goal



May 6, 2021

# Communications Goal

Based on shared values, communicate with one voice on issues of regional significance to strengthen relationships, elevate regional visibility, and to influence and advance the collective interests of the region.



# Why this update?

- I realized from feedback from the workshop that some members did not understand the work we are doing
- To periodically report on the progress of the four goals of the strategic plan
- To explain why communication is important to the RWA's mission
- To help members understand the value of their investment in communication
- For members to understand the good work we do...*Do good work and tell people about it*
- To help members understand they have a role in making us become successful. **You are receiving good value on your investments!**

# Importance

## Why is communication important?

- We will not achieve our policy outcomes without clearly communicating what we need
- We are victims of our own success
- We will not be able to push back on problematic policies
- To communicate with our members

10:09

90%

← Tweet



**Max Gomberg**

@MaxGomberg

They lobby against water conservation too. It's local control run amok akin to how local control over housing has resulted in a supply & affordability crisis.



**Laura Feinstein** @ElFeinste · 14h

Replying to @MonicaLVaughan and @fig\_latin

I think it's outrageous that the state's 400 largest public water agencies are using public funds to actively lobby against statewide reform on water affordability and shutoff protections

9:06 PM · 25 Feb 21 · [Twitter Web App](#)



**Laura Feinstein** @ElFeinste · 12h

Replying to [@MaxGomberg](#)

Water NIMBYs



# Discussion Topics

- Communications Program Guidance—our foundation
- Communication to Members
- Communication to External Audiences
  - Ongoing branding and story telling
  - Relationship building with influencers
  - Issue-specific outreach
- Foundational Work for “What’s Next”



# Program Guidance

## 1: RWA Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives

- Member Communication
- External Audiences



## 2: Priority communications issues and opportunities

*(Approved by the RWA Board in November 2020):*

- Climate resiliency bond (and/or drought response)
- Federal stimulus funding (and/or economic recovery/ infrastructure funding)
- Impacts of increased regulatory requirements on rate affordability, quality and quantity
- COVID-19: Impact on water provider revenues
- Equity: Increasing attention paid to ensuring RWA outreach and programs are equitably communicated to all communities

# Member Communication

- Research into preferred communication methods and timing
- Adjusted RWA Newsletter to become RWA E-Alert
- Coffee and Conversation events
- Annual reports
- Communicating with “one voice”



**The Regional Water Efficiency Program 2020 YEAR IN REVIEW**

The Regional Water Authority's Water Efficiency Program (RWEF) brings together 19 water providers serving 2 million people to promote water efficiency in the Sacramento region. For nearly two decades, RWEF participants have partnered to:

- Engage in a regional strategy to preserve local water resources
- Network and share best practices
- Leverage dollars with other regional utilities and partners
- Build momentum of scale for attracting grants
- Maximize advertising dollars for broad and consistent customer outreach
- Provide a regional school education program

In 2020, even as the coronavirus pandemic challenged the world like never before, the RWEF and its members continued their essential work, focusing on outdoor water efficiency as stay-at-home orders spurred new interest in gardening and landscaping. They continued to offer regional rebates on water-efficient products; build partnerships with local and state agencies; support trainings for landscape professionals in sustainable practices; conduct new public opinion research; and implement comprehensive outreach, advertising, and school education programs.

**ATTRACTING GRANT FUNDING**

The RWEF allows members to leverage their investments in water efficiency and take advantage of grant funding available now and in coming years. Since 2003, the program has secured nearly \$14.7 million from highly competitive grant programs, including more than \$5.3 million in grants in just the past three years.

In 2020, the RWEF received \$2.4 million in new grant funding from Proposition 1 (The Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2016) for several new multi-year programs and priorities. These include programs to help water providers detect and repair leaks in the water system and public opinion research on water efficiency attitudes and behaviors, as well as new rebates to incentive outdoor water efficiency by residential customers and indoor water efficiency by commercial, institutional and industrial customers.

Grant	Projects	Funds Received	Begin Date	End Date	Local Cost Share
Proposition 84 Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Grant	Public Outreach, Capital Pools Garden, and Irrigation Efficiency	\$1,800,000	1/1/2014	6/30/2020	Yes
Proposition 84 2015 IRWM Grant	Public Outreach, Leak Detection & Repair, Advanced Customer Information Systems, and Detection of SMART Irrigation Controllers	\$800,000	8/24/2016	6/30/2021	Yes
Regional San Joaquin Annual Water Conservation Program	Rebates for Toilets, Clothes Washers, and Pre-Rinse Spray Valves	\$300,000	6/1/2009	5/1/2020	Yes



**2020 | Advocacy Program Highlights**

**Staying Nimble During Extraordinary Times**

2020 was a year of unprecedented challenges, not only for the essential work of water providers, but for almost all aspects of our daily lives. The year's new rules of engagement created by the COVID-19 pandemic of social distancing, shelter-in-place orders, and working from home, have devastated our economy, and delayed critical infrastructure funding.

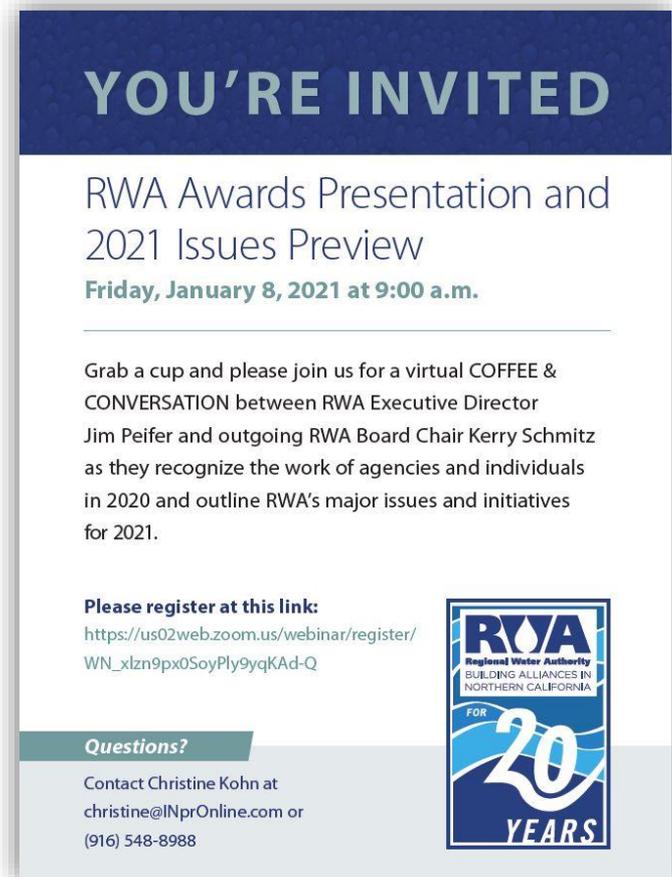
After approving \$1.1 billion in new funding to help the state cope with the coronavirus pandemic, the California state legislature adjourned for an emergency recess on March 16, 2020, disrupting the typical legislative calendar, as well as the state budget process. Prior to the pandemic, the Governor's January budget and several legislative proposals included a multi-billion-dollar bond for the November 2020 ballot to support climate resiliency. However, due to COVID-19, funding and legislative items not related to the pandemic were shelved.

This was a blow to our efforts to advance much-needed funding for initiatives such as the Sacramento Regional Water Bank, among other projects. Despite that setback, RWA members still received \$8.75 million in state grants and eligibility for nearly \$1 million in federal funds. We plan to build on that success moving forward. Additionally, just as everyone was forced to do, RWA pivoted quickly in light of the state's rapidly changing legislative and economic conditions and moved to identify shovel-ready projects that create jobs in preparation for when federal stimulus and/or modified state stimulus funds become available.

If there is a silver lining to this horrific year, it has to be that our "new normal" has afforded us the opportunity to slow down and reflect deeply on what is most important to us as individuals, to the organizations we lead, and to the communities we serve. We have worked very closely with our partners and customers to ensure everyone's safety during this trying time.

We look forward to continuing our regional collaborative efforts and refocusing on our efforts to gain funding for critical infrastructure projects.

*Ryan Ojakian*  
 Ryan Ojakian  
 Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Manager



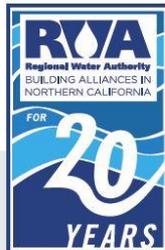
**YOU'RE INVITED**

RWA Awards Presentation and 2021 Issues Preview  
 Friday, January 8, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

Grab a cup and please join us for a virtual COFFEE & CONVERSATION between RWA Executive Director Jim Peifer and outgoing RWA Board Chair Kerry Schmitz as they recognize the work of agencies and individuals in 2020 and outline RWA's major issues and initiatives for 2021.

Please register at this link:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/90250920900>

**Questions?**  
 Contact Christine Kohn at [christine@INprOnline.com](mailto:christine@INprOnline.com) or (916) 548-8988



# External Audiences

- Ongoing brand building and story telling
- Stakeholder relationship building
- Issue-specific outreach
- Foundational work for “what’s next”



# Brand Building

## CAL MATTERS

### Commentary: After this year's wildfires, California must spend to manage forest health

*Our forests can again function as they did historically and be more resilient to wildfires, if the state makes these major shifts.*

Robert Dugan and Jeff Harris, Guest Columnists

Published 10:32 a.m. PT Nov. 27, 2020 | Updated 10:32 a.m. PT Nov. 27, 2020

View Comments



City of Roseville Utilities

Published by Maurice Chaney · March 8 at 2:34 PM

"In the future, people and businesses will choose to put down roots in communities that have proactively made decisions about climate adaptation to ensure a viable future. We want them to choose the Sacramento region, where we are privileged to live in the watershed that serves us so well."



MAVENSNOTEBOOK.COM

### GUEST ARTICLE: Why the Sacramento region's watershed is 'super,' and a buffer against climate change

33,063

People Reached

3,549

Engagements

Boost Again

Boosted on March 8 at 2:35 PM

Finishes in 3 days

By Maurice Chaney

People Reached

29.9K

Post Engagements

2.4K

View Results

615

53 Comments 76 Shares

# Brand Building



February 22, 2021 to Today

Title	Views
Front Page	4,937
Home page / Archives	2,155
GUEST ARTICLE: Why the Sacramento region's watershed is 'super,' and a buffer against climate change	1,629
DAILY DIGEST, 3/10: A 'megadrought' in CA: The effects of extreme weather on Lake Oroville; Editorial: Newsom sh...	1,339
DAILY DIGEST, weekend edition: Spring arrives with grim forecast for CA water supply; Bill to create a SoCal water w...	947
DAILY DIGEST, 3/18: California appeals court limits groundwater pumping; Researchers reveal the extent to which ri...	922
THIS JUST IN ... State Water Project and Central Valley Project allocations updated (and the news is not good)	916
DAILY DIGEST, weekend edition: Rain, snow to storm the West Coast early week; The megadrought explained; Dwin...	881

# Stakeholder Relationships



**PPIC**

The Nature  
Conservancy



## Now's the Time to Invest in Water

The need for increased investment in the infrastructure that supplies safe, clean, and reliable water has never been more critical.

Just as COVID-19 is the most severe and disruptive health crisis in generations, it is also threatening the financial stability of water suppliers providing an essential public health service. Water utilities are faced with an extraordinary combination of increasing costs to meet needs and falling revenues resulting from declining commercial use and personal financial strain on ratepayers, according to the American Water Works Association (AWWA), nationwide these unprecedented pressures are projected to cost water utilities in the range of \$13 billion to \$15 billion.<sup>1</sup>



## Underfunded for Decades

The coronavirus emergency and the present threat to water suppliers follows decades of declining federal investment in the infrastructure needed for reliable water delivery to homes and businesses.

# Issue-Specific

## LOCAL NEWS

### Local officials say region is prepared as state officials warn of likely drought



by: Lonnie Wong

Posted: Mar 24, 2021 / 05:12 PM PDT / Updated: Mar 27, 2021 / 10:00 AM PDT

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (KTXL) – State water officials have raised a red flag over water supplies later this year, saying another drought is likely for Californians.

Federal and state water allocations from water storage projects have already been drastically reduced.

The evidence of a possible drought has been trickling in and capped by the most recent snow survey, which determines how much water flows into reservoirs downstream.

“It’s been very dry both this year and last year if you go back to the previous water year.” said Erik



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## **Three focus groups—1 influencer and 2 residential**

- Perceptions about climate change
- Language that would be most impactful in describing climate change impacts on water supplies
- Support or resistance to proposed solutions/adaptations
- Willingness to pay for proposed solutions
- Detailed feedback on the water bank and water transfers
- What would get them to support solutions (funding and/or advocacy with policymakers)

# What's Next?

- More media
- Digital advertising
- Progress on ensuring RWA outreach and programs are equitably communicated
- Continued member communication, including RWA 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary





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**QUESTIONS?**



# Thank you!

