

2021

Advocacy Program Highlights





Better Together

In 2021 RWA celebrated its 20th Anniversary,

a true testament to our region's working together collaboratively for the benefit of future generations. Along with this milestone we were able to advocate for the region in a more strategic and effective way that saw many successes.

This Annual Report describes highlights of our recent work to meet the environmental objectives and overall mission that guide our work. Please take a close look at those highlights: they show the sheer breadth of the RWA's advocacy, from resiliency to climate to water and watersheds and to agricultural land and more. What they do not reveal is the amount of research, discussion, writing time and effort that go into getting positions "right" so we can confidently advocate for them with our elected officials and their staff and agency leaders and staff—who listen to the RWA because they know we do the necessary homework.

We are developing detailed advocacy positions on climate change mitigation and adaptation, on reducing wildfire risk and flooding while preserving native habitats, ensuring the Sacramento Regional Water Bank and all Supershed projects are successful. Climate change has evolved into a crisis that we must proactively manage and adapt to the lasting consequences. We already know that temperatures will continue to increase and that weather patterns will change significantly. We are experiencing climate change firsthand this year in the disappearing snowpack that evolved into this severe drought.

Despite some climate change setbacks, the forward-thinking water providers, our collective wisdom as a region, and our longstanding partnerships in this area and statewide will allow us to manage and minimize impacts of the more extended, hotter periods and more intense but less frequent wetter periods projected to come with climate change. But we must remain resolute and committed as we develop more systems, infrastructure, and policy to build water resiliency while being mindful of using less.

We are committed to ensuring clear communication occurs with our members, the public, and environmental/business decisionmakers. The RWA will continue its distinctive and effective role in our region for many more years. I want to thank you, our members because we are stronger together.

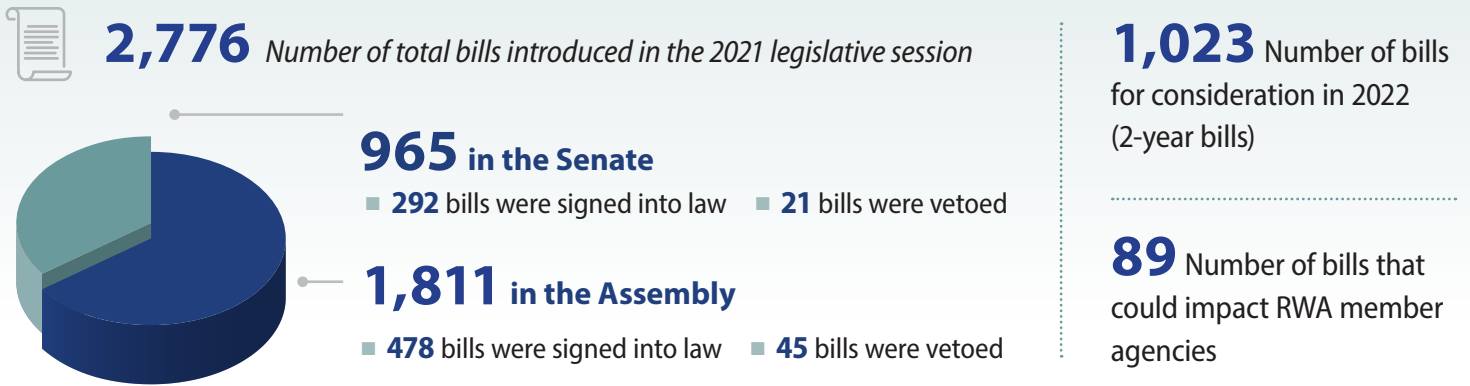
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Peifer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jim" and last name "Peifer" clearly distinguishable.

Jim Peifer

Executive Director



By the Numbers



40 Number of HOT list bills with RWA positions

- 10 Number of support bills chaptered
- 1 Number of support bills vetoed
- 12 Number of support bills that turned into a 2-year bill
- 1 Number of oppose bills chaptered
- 5 Number of oppose bills that turned into 2-year bills
- 3 Number of neutral bills chaptered
- 1 Number of neutral bills vetoed
- 7 Number of neutral bills that turned into 2-year bills

Final Legislative Outcome on RWA Support/Oppose bills chaptered in 2021

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

Bill – Author	Bill Title & Description	RWA Position
AB 1066 (Bloom)	Priority inland water-contact recreation sites: water quality monitoring	Oppose
AB 315 (Stone)	Voluntary stream restoration property owner liability: indemnification	Support
AB 322 (Salas)	Energy: Electric Program Investment Charge program: biomass	Support
AB 361 (Rivas)	Open meetings: state and local agencies: teleconferences	Support
AB 652 (Friedman)	Product safety: juvenile products: chemicals: perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl	Support
AB 697 (Chau)	Forest resources: national forest lands: Good Neighbor Authority Fund: ecological restoration and fire resiliency projects	Support
AB 1200 (Ting)	Plant-based food packaging: cookware: hazardous chemicals	Support
AB 1250 (Calderon)	Water and sewer system corporations: consolidation of service	Support
SB 323	Local government: water or sewer service: legal actions	Support
SB 369 (Pan)	Flood control: Yolo Bypass Cache Slough Partnership Multibenefit Program	Support
SB 427 (Eggman)	Water theft: enhanced penalties	Support



RWA Celebrates 20-Years!

//
You and the predecessors did what not a lot of people have done, which is set down your territorialism and parochial interests ... and come together to manage the watershed //

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency

//
Working together, we will continue to move the RWA's vision—our collective vision—forward and show that we are stronger together, cheers to the next 20 years! //

Jim Peifer, Executive Director of the Regional Water Authority

On October 7, 2021, local water providers, policymakers and water industry leaders came together to mark the past two decades of collaboration, as well as take an important look forward at the challenges and opportunities to come.

The night's theme—Stronger Together—reflected both the RWA's history, as well as a path forward through the challenges to come. RWA is leading the way, because of the foundation the RWA has provided over the past 20 years. RWA continues to balance the water needs of people and the environment, plan for unique solutions that span the region's entire "supershed" from the mountain tops to the groundwater basin and a track record for sustainably managing groundwater that will allow the Sacramento region to continue implementing SGMA and provide a means for tapping groundwater when needed to weather dry periods.



Funding Success In 2021

While global and local challenges persisted through 2021, the RWA focused efforts on actively pursuing funding opportunities on behalf of members. Importantly, the RWA was successful in its advocacy efforts to have \$200 million included in the state budget for multi-benefit projects [SB 170 section 80 (1)(c)].

As a result of our efforts, DWR has awarded over \$14 million in grant funding out of those funds for projects in the greater Sacramento region that advance drought and climate resiliency. Funded projects include planning for the Sacramento Regional Water Bank, groundwater wells for the Fair Oaks Water District and Orange Vale Water Company. In addition, the El Dorado Irrigation District was successful in its application for \$10 million to construct an intertie between drinking water sources to increase system reliability in response to major impacts to its infrastructure by the Caldor Fire.

Additionally, because of coordination and collaboration the RWA was successful in securing \$225,000. Funds were awarded to, the Regional Water Reliability Project sponsored by the cities of Roseville and Folsom and San Juan Water District; the Cooperative Water Reliability Project sponsored by the City of Roseville and Placer County Water Agency; and Groundwater Well #3 sponsored by Orange Vale Water Company. This funding was from federal allocations through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 219 funding.

Federal Advancements

Although travel was restricting, the RWA took the opportunity to further relationships with our congressional delegation, Senator Feinstein and agencies such as the Bureau of Reclamation. New relationships were formed with Senator Padilla and his team, new commissioners from the Bureau of Reclamation and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). RWA members are working with the FBI to provide briefings on cybersecurity threats in the region as well as tips on how to in the event of cybersecurity threats.

FEDERAL MEETINGS

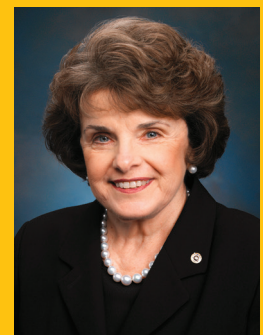
- Senator Alex Padilla
- Senator Diane Feinstein
- Congressman John Garamendi
- Congressman Tom McClintock
- Congressman Ami Bera
- Congresswoman Doris Matsui
- Bureau of Reclamation
 - Camille Touton, Commissioner
 - David Palumbo, Reclamation's Deputy Commissioner of Operations
 - Regional Director
 - Central Valley Operations Manager
- Federal Bureau of Investigation



We must continue to allocate substantial construction funding to projects that have previously received Congressional support in recent fiscal years and are supported (or, for Federal projects, not opposed) by the State of California due to their combination of improved drought resiliency and environmental benefits, including refuge water supplies.



Sen. Feinstein calling for funding to support the Water Bank



Strengthening Relationships

Significant Progress was made on approving a **Memorandum of Agreement** (MOA) between the RWA and Reclamation for the Sacramento Regional Water Bank. The MOA seeks to define the steps in the process to get to completion of a feasibility study, which sets the ceiling for potential future federal appropriations. The MOA is in the signature process and is anticipated to be executed in early 2022.

Voluntary agreements (VA) had stops and starts with the State in 2021. However, significant progress was made within our region to better understand risk sharing between agencies and to work towards a shared framework for determining capabilities in various year types. Work will remain steadfast within the region, and we remain ready to continue VA conversations with the California Natural Resources Agency and Environmental Protection Agency.

RWA has worked to expand our relationships throughout the region with community-based organizations and among environmental justice groups. Of specific note is the work with the **Capitol Region Climate Readiness Collaborative** (or CRC). Expanding relationships with these



interests and organizations will be important as the state moves toward funding regional approaches to climate adaptation where the state dedicated \$35 million this year and an additional \$225 million over the next two years.

Additionally, Andy Fecko with Placer County Water Agency participated in the **Public Policy Institute of California** Fall 2021 conference on drought in a panel which covered “Embracing Transformative Change”. Andy focused his comments on thinking bigger and more inclusively, taking risks to try new approaches, and explored ways to help move the state to better meet water challenges.

The RWA worked to engage with the **Delta Stewardship Council** (DSC) related to Delta Adapts: Creating a Climate Resilient Future. The RWA was instrumental in providing comments and actively engaging in workshops with the DSC to provide feedback to ensure that American River region resources are considered and protected when thinking about ways for the Delta to adapt to future conditions.

Given drought conditions statewide this year, the RWA coordinated and facilitated dozens of meetings with members on drought conditions. This included making a call to agencies for 15 percent water conservation as well as a request to shift to using groundwater where appropriate. This coordination included routine presentations on current conditions, frequent collaboration with state and federal agencies, and engagement with elected officials.



Legislative Highlights

SB 427, authored by Sen. Susan Talamantes Eggman (D-Stockton), sponsored by the Elk Grove Water District, and supported by the RWA and ACWA. This bill provides California water agencies the authority to adopt enhanced penalties for water theft, giving them a stronger deterrent to help protect the public's most valuable resource. RWA believes that SB 427 strikes an appropriate balance, allowing for sufficient fines to address an increasing public health threat. This bill was approved by Governor Newsom on July 23, 2021

AB 377, authored by Asm. Robert Rivas (D-Salinas). This bill included provisions to eliminate all "impaired waterways" and make all waters in California suitable for drinking, swimming, and fishing by 2050. AB 377 would have made drastic changes to the way that California manages water quality. The RWA outlined their opposition in a letter to the Chair of the Assembly's Committee on Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials, Bill Quirk. The letter cited numerous implications for water agencies across the state, most importantly the bill's disregard for existing permitting policies, local conditions, and existing agreements. The letter also stated local discretionary authority for permitting of discharge permits is central to the structure of state and regional board oversight under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. This bill has remained in the assembly appropriations committee since May 2021.

AB 1434, authored by Asm. Laura Friedman (D-Glendale) This bill proposes to incrementally lower the indoor water use standards to 40 gallons per capita daily (GPCD)

starting in 2030. The Department of Water Resources (DWR) and State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) conducted an Indoor Residential Water Use Study finalized in November 2021 to recommend a GPCD standard. Their study recommended incrementally lowering the indoor water use standard to 42 GPCD in 2030 as shown in Graph 1. For context, in 2017 and 2018, RWA, San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) and Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) advocated for setting an urban water use objective based on appropriate efficient water use. In 2021, RWA, SDCWA and IRWD joined forces again to oppose AB 1434, citing AB 1434 moves away from an "appropriateness" approach and arbitrarily proposes to lower indoor water use standards. In addition, RWA also pointed out that AB 1434 ignores the importance of science, data, and stakeholder input. Highlighting the stakeholder process was meant to allow these issues to be discussed and evaluated before a recommendation to change the statutory standard was made, a key part of the deal reached in 2018.

SB 222, authored by Sen. Bill Dodd (D-Napa) This bill would establish the Water Rate Assistance Fund in the State Treasury to help provide water affordability assistance, for both drinking water and wastewater services, to low-income ratepayers and expands protections and protocols for customers who are faced with having their water shutoff because of an inability to pay. RWA believes SB 222 will advance the ability to continue to provide the human right to water in the greater Sacramento region and enhance affordability assistance to those in need. This bill will ultimately be acted on in 2022.



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