

WESTERN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

Legislative Policy Platform and Principles

Introductory Statement

The purpose of the Legislative Policy Platform and Principles (Platform) is to guide Western Municipal Water District's (Western) overall legislative program and provide a foundation for all legislative actions taken on behalf of Western. The Platform provides a broad understanding of how Western responds to legislation and what ongoing principles are most important to Western when developing legislative priorities. The Platform is intended to be a document that is reviewed and adjusted as needed.

The Platform is important to both Western's wholesale and retail customers because all of Western's legislative and regulatory activities are taken on behalf of all customers within Western's service area. Western is hard at work ensuring the voices of all customers are being heard as the state and federal governments continue to develop policies that directly impact our region.

Background

California's water system is both highly interconnected and decentralized, which creates unprecedented challenges that require multi-faceted and complex solutions. Some of these challenges include:

- Water supply diversification
- Emerging water quality concerns
- Upgrading and adding new infrastructure
- Funding and financing of projects
- Environmental impacts

Prioritizing long-term efficiency and resource planning, diversification of Western's water supply, and innovation of our facilities are all necessary to offset the negative effects brought by climate change.

Western understands that there is no "silver bullet" solution to the complicated sets of issues water agencies face. Western supports policy solutions that advance sustainable, comprehensive, cohesive, and science-based approaches to providing water and wastewater services. Moreover, holistic policy solutions that do not create unintended consequences in other areas of the state are a priority for Western.

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Western's Approach to Local Control

Western fundamentally supports the preservation of local government control and decision-making, except to the extent that state and federal law provides for oversight by regulatory agencies.

Each water agency is unique in its geography, customer demographics, resource mix, and political drivers; therefore, Western believes that the local, elected governing body is best situated to determine locally appropriate strategies to reach legislative or regulatory mandates and goals.

When mandates are necessary, Western supports a less prescriptive approach that includes clear funding mechanisms. And when establishing statewide goals, Western supports allowing public agencies the needed flexibility to meet those mandates in regionally and locally responsive ways, including but not limited to considering local needs, existing resources, and politics.

Ultimately, rate stability, community involvement, public accountability, local decision-making, and personal customer service are some of the important benefits of local governance.

In considering the increasingly prescriptive legislative and regulatory actions and mandates, Western will uphold the autonomy of special districts and other local public agencies to operate independently, to the greatest extent possible within the law, to protect the interests of the customers, ratepayers, member wholesale agencies, and Western.

This set of Legislative Platform and Principles, along with the Legislative Priorities, upon review and approval of the Board of Directors, serve as a basis for positions and actions undertaken on behalf of Western on legislation and regulatory proposals.

Legislative Policy Platform

This Platform supports Western's mission and focuses on providing the highest quality, reliable water and wastewater services for customers. By adopting the platform and supporting policy principles, Western's Board of Directors (Board) sets a clear direction for staff to adopt official district positions on clearly stated legislative issues at the start of the legislative session and throughout the year. By doing this, the legislative approval process is streamlined by receiving clear direction at the beginning of the legislative session from the Board on pertinent legislative issues.

On both federal and state levels, Western may support legislative proposals, policies, and regulatory actions that are consistent with the Platform. Western may oppose those legislative proposals, policies, and regulatory actions that are inconsistent with Platform. In cases where a legislative proposal, policy, or

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regulatory action is not a priority for Western but may affect the water industry, Western may choose to choose to take a “watch” position.

For proposed legislation, either consistent with Western’s Legislative Platform, Legislative Priorities (Priorities), or consistent with legislative positions Western has taken in the past, Western staff shall be authorized to prepare position letters for the General Manager’s signature. Items not addressed in the Platform or Priorities may require further Board direction.

Any legislative positions and/or actions that are deemed as potentially “controversial” by the General Manager will be presented to the Board for further action. Generally, Western will not address matters that are not pertinent to Western’s services, such as social or international issues.

Other Western departments are encouraged to monitor and be knowledgeable of any legislative issues related to their areas. However, any requests for Western to take positions on a legislative or regulatory matter must be directed to the Strategic Communications Department. Western departments and staff may not take positions on legislative or regulatory issues without the review and approval of the Director of Strategic Communications.

Legislative Policy Principles

To most effectively and efficiently accomplish Western’s core mission of delivering wholesale and retail water and wastewater services to our customers, consistent with Board direction and the adopted plans, the Government Relations Division within the Strategic Communications Department uses the following eight legislative principles and the related priorities as a basis for taking positions on legislation.

▪ ***Principle of Water Supply Reliability***

Priorities:

- Support the development of a Delta conveyance project that benefits both the environment and the 27 million people who rely on it as a primary source for water.
- Support measures to expand both surface and groundwater storage.
- Support funding for cost-effective water use efficiency and conservation measures.

▪ ***Principle of Local Resource and Supply Development***

Priorities:

- Support expanded options for local supply development.
- Support streamlining of federal and state regulatory and reporting mandates.
- Support legislation that minimizes cost impacts of new or expanded regulations.

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■ ***Principle of Water Quality***

Priorities:

- Support science-based approaches to regulating constituents of emerging concern.
- Support actions to safely expand potable reuse opportunities.
- Oppose measures to legislate new water quality standards instead of going through the regulatory process.

■ ***Principle of Environmental Stewardship***

Priorities:

- Support measures that credit water agencies for the positive contributions in climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Support modernization of the Endangered Species Act that allows for the best available science, adaptive management, and flexible implementation to be used.
- Support attempts at making the California Environmental Quality Act more effective and efficient in its implementation.

■ ***Principle of General Governance***

Priorities:

- Support measures that protect and advance local governance and transparency.
- Support measures that protect local revenue sources and reserve funds.
- Support expanding federal and state funding for essential water and sewer infrastructure.

■ ***Principle of Water-Energy Nexus***

Priorities:

- Support measures to decrease energy costs while increasing reliability.
- Support funding and flexibility for water agencies to support wildfire prevention and power outages.
- Support expanded definitions of renewable resources.

■ ***Principle of Human Resources***

Priorities:

- Support measures that reform the pension system and help local governments with their unfunded liability.

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- Support measures that promote efforts to advance workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion.
 - Support funding for apprenticeships and education programs dedicated to water and wastewater careers.
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- ***Principle of Information Technology***
 - Priorities:
 - Support legislation that allows for greater access of public meetings to the public.
 - Support efforts to modernize, streamline, and create efficiencies to public records request process.
 - Oppose legislation that reduces local government control over cellular technology infrastructure development, installation, and deployment.

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