

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES**CALIFORNIA WATER COMMISSION**

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October 23, 2013

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Mr. Jonathan Shapiro
Chairman, Little Hoover Commission
925 L Street, Suite 805
Sacramento, California 95814

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Member

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Member

Dear Chairman Shapiro:

Adán Ortega, Jr.
Member

The California Water Commission would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide the following comments for consideration during the Little Hoover Commission's Climate Change Adaptation study.

David Orth
Member

Anthony Saracino
Member

California's water resources are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Climate change is already impacting water resources in California, with increasing impacts expected in the future. Generally, California's water systems were designed using historical hydrology, assuming these factors will be constant in the future. However, climate change is increasing the uncertainty and variability of precipitation, resulting in more intense wet and dry periods, more floods and droughts, and reduced snowpack, which acts as an important natural reservoir in our state. These impending changes present a compelling challenge for water managers at all levels and in all regions of California and make planning for adaptation to climate change non-negotiable.

Sue Sims
Executive Officer

No single adaptation strategy is adequate to protect California's water resources as these changes occur. In order to maintain sustainable water supply and a healthy environment in light of a changing climate, California must pursue multiple water management solutions simultaneously. The California Water Commission believes this is best accomplished through Integrated Water Management (IWM), "...a strategic approach to planning and implementing water management programs that combines flood management, environmental stewardship, and water supply actions to deliver multiple economic, environmental, and social benefits across watershed and jurisdictional boundaries" (California Water Plan Update 2013). Given future uncertainty regarding precipitation, adding flexibility to the system must be a key strategy for adaptation. IWM, with its focus on creating multiple benefit projects with fewer resources, and system flexibility and resiliency, is an important component of climate change adaptation. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) is currently developing IWM through its collaborative California Water Plan (CWP) Update 2013. We would encourage you to reference the CWP for sustainable climate change adaptation strategies related to water resources.

Mr. Jonathan Shapiro
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Additionally, the Commission sees great value in collaborative, cross-agency processes to identify and address climate change impacts such as the 2011 work by DWR and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Resources Legacy Fund, that developed the Climate Change Handbook for Regional Water Planning. The handbook provides a framework for water managers to incorporate climate change into Integrated Regional Water Management Plans, however the strategies can be applied to any watershed or water supply planning process. The Climate Change Handbook explains that "integrated regional water planning is an excellent framework for addressing water-related climate impacts, as it provides a process for stakeholders with varied water related priorities to work together to develop solutions that satisfy all water uses and needs." This handbook, and the California's Integrated Regional Water Management program, provide examples of how the Water Resources community is implementing cross-agency coordination to address climate change, a topic discussed in depth at the Little Hoover Commission's August 22 hearing on Climate Change Adaptation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. The Water Commission looks forward to the Little Hoover Commission's report as a means to assist policy makers as well as the public and private sectors in developing effective programs and policies to address the changes California will increasingly face as a result of climate change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sue Sims", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sue Sims
Executive Officer