



## CUWA Policy Principles

### One Water – November 3, 2016

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One Water is defined as an integrated planning and implementation approach to manage finite water resources for long-term resiliency and reliability, meeting both community and ecosystem needs. One Water considers the urban water cycle as one integrated system where all urban water flows are viewed as potential resources. Put another way: all water is one water. These policy principles are intended to provide leadership and perspective on how One Water or an integrated and collaborative approach to water management can benefit the reliability, resilience, and sustainability of California water while ensuring the protection of public health at all times.

- **In the midst of increasing uncertainty, new ways of managing California’s water resources are essential.** Climate change, catastrophic events, water shortages/drought, degradation of water quality, changing regulations, and aging infrastructure all require a shift in thinking about how we plan for the future of California water. New mindsets and approaches are essential to enable greater collaboration and integration for future statewide water sustainability, including greater affordability for all.
- **One Water is a collaborative, integrated approach to managing finite water resources.** Applying strategies that cross traditional jurisdictional boundaries, such as One Water, can help to achieve long-term resiliency and reliability for the state’s water supply, while meeting community and environmental needs.
- **One Water integrates the urban water cycle, thereby improving efficiencies, water quality, reliability, and sustainability.** Recognizing and optimizing the inherent interconnectedness of resources (e.g., surface water, groundwater, stormwater, floodwater, wastewater, and energy) creates more diverse, robust water supply portfolios. CUWA agencies are increasingly applying One Water principles to supplement water supplies with water reuse, stormwater capture, and desalination. One Water approaches protect water quality through managing watersheds and floodwaters and preserving wetlands and habitat. In planning and implementing these strategies, CUWA agencies seek to balance cost impacts to ratepayers with community and environmental needs.
- **Partnerships are essential to optimize resources, leverage joint opportunities, mitigate risk, and capitalize on additional funding sources.** CUWA supports an intensified focus on overcoming institutional barriers to improve integration. By collaborating with other agencies locally or regionally, utilities can experience multiple benefits leveraging joint funds, including grants or other sources, to achieve a broader set of projects that would not be possible on their own. CUWA agencies are actively participating in regional efforts to improve water reliability in both southern and northern California and encourage others to think collaboratively.
- **Breaking down traditional silos within various water and land management agencies at state, regional, and agency levels would allow for a more balanced approach to addressing California’s water needs.** By leveraging resources and infrastructure across geographic, political or institutional boundaries, One Water or integrated approaches can help to address supply and quality challenges. Better sharing of data and best practices among agencies is also critical to meeting California’s future water needs.

- **Aligning government policies, regulations, and programs would enable integrated approaches and strengthen One Water solutions.** Improving regulatory and government agency alignment supports One Water strategies by eliminating conflicting, disconnected, ineffective or overlapping regulatory requirements, and reducing permitting costs and delays. Better alignment will require focused efforts to plan, organize, and direct the modification of non-aligned policies, regulations and programs.
- **Enhancing existing programs like Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) can further promote greater collaboration around multi-benefit, One Water solutions.** IRWM has been an important tool for agencies throughout the state, and could be even better directed to support regional partnerships for water supply reliability and broad integrated solutions. CUWA suggests that IRWM place greater emphasis on funding such regional partnerships and integrated projects in the future to help overcome financial and institutional barriers.
- **Engaging and educating stakeholders on One Water needs and benefits statewide can help to create a culture of mutual responsibility for California's water.** Involving stakeholders as partners at the local level including community, environmental and other special interest groups is a critical element to the success of future One Water efforts. Educating the public on the interconnectedness of the urban water cycle and the value of the water as a resource and service can enhance the acceptance of integrated and innovative solutions to water management. We encourage utilities and the state to work together in developing a common language, promoting more integrated approaches, and helping to prioritize One Water projects.
- **One Water looks different depending on local or regional needs and opportunities.** Given the site-specific nature of water needs, resources, and infrastructure, any statewide One Water approach must be flexible and account for differences based on local and regional needs and opportunities. Acknowledging and leveraging these differences could present opportunities for optimizing water use across the state.