



August 15, 2016

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.  
Office of the Governor  
c/o of the State Capitol, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: California Water Action Plan Analysis by the California Roundtable on Water and Food Supply**

Dear Governor Brown,

As members of the California Roundtable on Water & Food Supply (CRWFS), we commend your efforts to set forth the unprecedented California Water Action Plan (WAP). The CRWFS is a think tank composed of a diverse group of constituents with a focus on integrated water management in California.

Utilizing our holistic framework called the *Connectivity Approach*, we completed an exhaustive review of the WAP to assess strategic opportunities to continue effective implementation beyond your Administration. This approach helps planners and resource managers design and achieve mutual benefits for agricultural, urban, and environmental interests. It focuses on supporting actions to leverage ecological, socioeconomic, and institutional linkages across the system. We believe that an integrated, whole-systems approach can increase the State's ability to efficiently leverage its resources, motivate involvement and investment by non-governmental entities, and to create a sense of unity that will only strengthen public support over time.

**Our review revealed the following strengths of the WAP:**

- It is a new paradigm that sets a path forward and toward integrated, adaptive, and collaborative management of California water resources, and provides exemplary institutional support for cross-sector collaboration.
- It offers a consistent framework focused on action and accountability and serves as a guide for integrated water management across the state.
- It fosters “connected” leadership among high-level managers to coordinate state support of integrated efforts.

**We suggest the following strategic actions to ensure the benefits and ongoing public support of the WAP extend beyond your Administration:**

1. **Institutionalize the WAP.** It is especially critical to sustain the WAP given ongoing concerns over climate change and its impact on water resources, California's growing population, and the need to balance societal needs with ecological sustainability. The WAP sets in motion a roadmap for sustainable water management and the foundation for setting the future agenda. We have identified two pathways to achieve this goal: linking the WAP update process to that of the California Water Plan (CWP), or proposing separate administrative or legislative initiatives to recognize and sustain the WAP over time.
2. **Promote investment beyond state government.** The WAP is ambitious and will require an effective strategy for engaging and collaborating with individuals and organizations outside of state government to achieve its goals of reliability, restoration, and resiliency. In addition to leveraging the concerted stakeholder input of the CWP, we recommend a rigorous community outreach effort to build broad support for water stewardship at all levels.

3. **Continue to refine the framework and develop metrics to measure and report success.** As we move into the hard work of implementation, the development and application of metrics to demonstrate progress is critical to the WAP's ongoing success. Our systems mapping exercises illuminated several ways to organize the 50+ WAP sub-actions. Additionally, we identified linkages across related sub-actions that could be lost without strong alignment among implementing agencies.
4. **Be a leader in fostering “connected” leadership.** California's water system is constantly evolving and fraught with uncertainty. Leadership for our uncertain future requires new vision, resolve, and unique, interdisciplinary skills. “Connected” leaders need a whole-systems vision for the management of the State's water resources for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Key characteristics include: understanding the interrelationships between all components of our complicated hydrologic system to promote integrated solutions, the capacity to experiment with new approaches, assess results, and call for thoughtful change, and possessing the courage to act boldly in the face of uncertainty. Fostering this kind of leadership requires high-level institutional support such as mentoring, training, and/or incentives. It is critical for the highest levels of state government, beginning with the Governor and his/her Cabinet secretaries, to recognize that a statewide, long-term, comprehensive water strategy capable of adapting to changing circumstances is essential to California's future.

With leadership, attention, and institutional support in these four areas, the WAP can evolve from a visionary instrument to a distinctive paradigm shift in California. We commend and appreciate your leadership in supporting new levels of connected resource management. The WAP is an important step in responding to the public's longstanding desire for state agencies to work anew together, to move beyond managing resources in isolation from one another, and to provide all Californians and the environment we all cherish, a reliable and resilient water supply.

The California Roundtable on Water and Food Supply would be pleased to work with the Administration in an advisory capacity to support these key leadership development opportunities. Details of our analysis, findings, and *Connectivity Approach* are presented in the enclosures. We welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your staff to discuss in greater detail the recommendations set forth in our white paper and how they can contribute to the long-term success of the WAP – for the present and future generations of Californians.

Sincerely,

Members of the California Roundtable on Water and Food Supply

Ana Lucia Garcia Briones, *Environmental Defense Fund*  
Brock Dolman, *Occidental Arts and Ecology Water Institute*  
Casey Walsh Cady, *CA Department of Food and Agriculture*  
Danielle V. Dolan, *Local Government Commission*  
Douglas McGehee, *Bank of America Merrill Lynch*  
Glenda Humiston, *University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources*  
Jovita Pajarillo, *US Environmental Protection Agency (ret)*

Juliet Christian-Smith, *Union of Concerned Scientists*  
Kamyar Guivetchi, *California Department of Water Resources*  
Mark Drew, *California Trout*  
Mark Rentz, *Integrated Natural Resources Management*  
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Rene Henery, *Trout Unlimited*  
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*CRWFS members participated in ongoing dialogues on the California Water Action Plan and contributed to this letter and report. Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only. The opinions and recommendations made by CRWFS do not necessarily reflect those of the organizations with which members are affiliated.*

CC: Martha Guzman-Aceves, Deputy Legislative Secretary

#### **Enclosures (4)**

1. White Paper: California Water Action Plan, Analysis & Findings
2. From Crisis to Connectivity: Renewed Thinking About Managing California's Water and Food Supply
3. Mapping a Pathway to Success for a California Water Action Plan Outcomes
4. 1-Page Overview: Connectivity Approach

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