



2024 State and Federal Legislative Strategy: The 2024 State and Federal Legislative Priorities and related strategies provide guidance for staff to focus efforts and allocate resources for Eastern Municipal Water District's (EMWD) federal and state legislative program. These near-term priorities detail the overall strategy staff will advance in the upcoming legislative session to ensure and enhance EMWD's operations and efficiency, and to elevate EMWD's profile through the support or opposition and engagement in relevant legislation and administrative actions.

The priorities outlined below support EMWD's mission, vision, and goals, and are intended to serve as an advocacy and educational roadmap to address current issues and events as they arise in the state and federal policy arenas. These priorities support and supplement the longer-term legislative vision outlined in EMWD's Legislative Policy Principles.

Water Quality and Public Health

- Support the availability of funding for water and wastewater providers to address water quality concerns, specifically related to per-and polyfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) remediation, and support efforts to hold polluters/manufacturers those accountable.
- Prioritize the use of reliable scientific data and technology to regulate contaminants, communicate health effects, develop effective treatment technologies, as well as technologies to manage and dispose of treatment media.
- Oppose efforts to designate PFAS as a hazardous substance under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), establishing a potential chain-of-liability exposure for water and wastewater providers, or provide a municipal exemption for water and wastewater agencies.
- Support efforts by the United States Department of Defense to mitigate chemicals, including PFAS at, and adjacent to military bases to locally applicable state and federal standards.
- Support the development of state or federal grant programs that fund septic-to-sewer conversion projects which protect groundwater and drinking water reservoirs from contamination.
- Engage with the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) efforts to analyze and monitor microplastics in source water, and advocate for study findings and noticing requirements to be based on reliable and accurate data.

Safe and Affordable Drinking Water

- Allow flexibility as agencies develop and implement low-income assistance programs, while opposing programs that would mandate implementation criteria.
- Support continued efforts to implement SB 200 (Monning, 2019) to address failing and at-risk water systems, and actively engage in efforts to ensure these limited resources are effectively deployed, leveraging the greatest possible economy of scale.

- Actively monitor the progress the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund Expenditure Plan and Policy.
- Support and engage on legislation and administrative actions, when appropriate, to address water and wastewater system consolidations and governance reforms to effectively provide water service delivery to communities served by failing water systems and those at-risk of failure.

Climate Change and Water Resilience

- Support continued implementation of the Governor’s Water Resilience Portfolio, and the 2022 California Water Supply Strategy in a manner that preserves local control for the identification, funding, and development of local projects and ensures appropriate consideration of local climate change impacts and regional differences throughout the process.
- Support the development of a funding source, such as bond measures, to respond to climate change, develop infrastructure projects, and facilitate technology innovations that do not rely on a water tax.
- Support funding and technical assistance to local governments, including special districts, to develop, implement, measure, or qualify a climate action plan.
- Participate in regional collaborative efforts to implement the Governor’s 30 x 2030 executive order and the related efforts to advance the Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy.
- Support funding and local control to facilitate the transition to drought tolerant, climate appropriate landscaping.
- Support actions that leverage groundwater basins for recharge, storage, and recovery as a climate adaptation tool.

Local and Imported Water Supply

- Advocate for State budget allocations to support the expansion of recycled water projects including groundwater replenishment and potable reuse projects.
- Collaborate with the State Board to provide information regarding the impacts of mandated indoor conservation on local wastewater and recycled water supply and infrastructure.
- Continue to coordinate internally to advocate for feasible, cost-effective conservation regulations.
- Support the development of a comprehensive solution in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta (Delta) that will ensure water supply reliability and ecosystem restoration, while also adhering to the beneficiary pays principle.
- Support funding to address the subsidence of critical California water conveyance systems.
- Support the continued delivery of imported water supplies as an important component of EMWD’s diverse water supply portfolio that is vital to salt management, groundwater recharge, environmental stewardship, and water recycling. Imported water is also one of EMWD’s most affordable water supplies.

- Support efforts and funding to implement the California Water Reuse and National Water Reuse Action Plans to facilitate the development of new climate resilient water supplies and to advance water conserving measures.
- Support funding to advance EMWD’s brackish groundwater desalination program, and fully fund the clean and safe drinking water state revolving fund programs.
- Support reauthorization of the Bureau of Reclamation Water Infrastructure Investments for the Nation (WIIN) Act recycled water funding and increase the per project funding cap to \$40 million or \$50 million, dependent on the legislative vehicle.
- Support Build American, Buy American Act (BABA) waivers when certain products cannot be sourced in America to remove implementation obstacles for local project proponents.
- Support efforts and funding to help complete the North Perris Groundwater Contamination and Remediation Project.
- Support negotiations on the Colorado River to achieve system-wide long-term demand reductions; limit the investment of public resources on short-term reduction measures like following.

Water System Governance and Administration

- Support efforts to allow the continued voluntary utilization of virtual meeting platforms to conduct public meetings.
- Support legislation or administrative actions that would allow for flexibility and clarity to be incorporated into the rate design process, including the utilization of validation proceedings to set water rates or narrow reforms to Proposition 218 for locally developed low-income water rate assistance programs, while ensuring that assistance programs do not subsidize wasteful water use.
- Support consensus driven proposals to streamline and consolidate protest provisions under Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg to allow for greater clarity in consolidation and dissolution laws, and as a means to facilitate the efficient, effective and affordable delivery of public services.
- Oppose efforts that would mandate or prescribe the use or shift of special district funds or reserves.
- Oppose efforts that would limit EMWD’s ability to enact, modify, or expand assessments, fees, and property related charges to offset customer rates, and support continued infrastructure development for the provision of reliable services.

Energy and Renewable Energy

- Advocate for a sensible approach to transitioning public fleet vehicles to zero-emission vehicles based on commercial availability and includes an exemption process that realistically addresses EMWD’s operational emergency response obligation.
- Support funding to purchase zero-emission fleet vehicles and related infrastructure, such as commercial charging and fueling stations.
- Support an “all-of-the-above” approach for entities seeking to enhance their renewable energy portfolio and avoid prioritizing one form of renewable energy over another to minimize the potential for stranded assets and unrealized investments.

- Encourage the broader deployment of resources to support the installation of renewable energy supplies and battery storage solutions to reduce energy costs and limit greenhouse gas emissions.

Wildfire Mitigation and Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS)

- Support efforts and technology that would facilitate earlier and more consistent notifications for critical infrastructure providers in advance of PSPS events or other emergency situations.
- Support policies that would facilitate the deployment of a more targeted approach to PSPS events as a response to grid reliability and wildfire threats.
- Support funding solutions that can be used to reduce the risk of wildfire statewide and/or in the arid west, enable critical infrastructure providers to purchase emergency back-up power generators, make infrastructure more fire resistant and establish mechanisms to recoup increased personnel costs to respond to PSPS events that would not rely on a significant increase in costs to electricity users.
- Support continued efforts to develop statewide emergency response planning to facilitate more robust communication, interagency coordination, and deployment of resources during wildfire and other emergency events.