



SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY WATER  
**Collaborative  
Action Program**

November 19, 2025

Senator Monique Limon  
Senate President pro Tempore  
California State Senate

Speaker Robert Rivas  
Speaker of the Assembly  
California State Assembly

Senator Scott Wiener  
Chair, Senate Budget Committee  
California State Senate

Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel  
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee  
California State Assembly

Senator Benjamin Allen  
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee 2  
California State Senate

Assemblymember Steve Bennett  
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee 4  
California State Assembly

**RE: San Joaquin Valley Water Collaborative Action Program Budget Requests for Fiscal Year 2026/27**

Dear pro Tem McGuire, Speaker Rivas, Senator Limon, Assemblymember Gabriel, Senator Allen, and Assemblymember Bennett:

The San Joaquin Valley Water Collaborative Action Program (CAP) is writing to express our need for immediate funding to address critical San Joaquin Valley water infrastructure, habitat, and safe drinking water needs. This investment will help address several State policy objectives, including implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA); drought resiliency in a hotter, drier climate; the human right to water; maximizing water supplies and storage during wet year conditions; and protection and restoration of habitat.

**Accelerate and Increase Proposition 4 Deployment:**

We appreciate the action last year to move some Prop 4 resources to agencies. However, many of the amounts moved reflected early agency action to set up programs still tethered to a potentially lengthy Administrative Procedures Act (APA) process, rather than meet the intent of the voters to move funds as soon as possible. Water managers, communities, and growers are all working to meet SGMA's 2040 sustainability goals and cannot wait an additional year or miss critical atmospheric rivers to implement shovel ready projects that need funding now. We urge the Legislature to **revisit a full APA exemption as an early budget action in January**. If new

guidelines are needed, the Legislature can create alternative pathways for public engagement that do not contain the APA's potential delays.

### **Increase Proposition 4 Allocations for 26/27 for Infrastructure:**

In line with our above comments, we request more funding be allocated as soon as possible from Prop 4 for water projects that support the resilience of the San Joaquin Valley. SGMA implementation has served as a catalyst to shift water management in the San Joaquin Valley to focus on investing in projects like capturing flood flows in multi-benefit modulating reservoirs and moving them to recharge basins over sandier soils to support groundwater levels throughout the year. In the Kaweah Subbasin, for example, the Seaborn Reservoir project is an 8,000-acre-foot storage project that seeks to convert an abandoned aggregate mine into flood control on the Kaweah River, while providing substantial riparian, wetlands, and meadow habitat and community recreation benefits. Flood flows can be released to projects like the Okieville Recharge Basin, which recharges 150 acre-feet per year near the disadvantaged community of Okieville to support their water supplies and improve water quality.

Many good projects in the San Joaquin Valley are ready to be implemented, but are just looking to Prop 4 to begin construction. Waiting longer means missed opportunities to capture water, leaving communities with worse water quality and making the path to groundwater sustainability more difficult.

**To that end, we request the following allocations this year of at least \$709.2M to support projects in the San Joaquin Valley:**

- **Safe Drinking Water for Disadvantaged Communities – \$180M**
- **Regional Water Conveyance – \$73M**
- **Multibenefit Land Repurposing – \$50M**
- **Groundwater Storage and Recharge – \$356.25M**
- **Biodiversity and Accelerating Nature-Based Climate Solutions – \$50M**

### **Ensure Proposition 4 Supports Disadvantaged Communities:**

The intent of the voters in Prop 4 is clear that at least 40 percent of funds must provide direct and meaningful benefits to disadvantaged communities. However, not all programs within the bond can meet this bar. To that end, the Legislature must ensure that programs that can more easily provide benefits for DACs are expected to meet higher percentages, in order to meet the 40 percent floor. Within the Water Chapter, we believe that the programs for drinking water and wastewater, groundwater storage, the Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program, flood control, dam safety, stormwater capture, watershed climate resilience, the state's conservancies, and the Salton Sea are prime examples of investments that support DACs.

Additionally, the water conservation funding could provide benefits to DACs, which are

some of the highest impact opportunities for water conservation, but programs for direct installation of water-efficient appliances into low-income households must be created to ensure direct and meaningful benefits can be provided. The Legislature should work with stakeholders and DWR to develop a program to fund technical assistance providers to provide direct-install programs for low-income households, with a focus on those served by small water systems.

We urge the legislature to deploy a portion of Prop 4 funds this year to address the challenges facing the San Joaquin Valley, which will only become more expensive, complex, and detrimental to people, the environment, farms, and businesses the longer we wait to act.

Sincerely,



Ann Hayden  
Environmental Defense Fund



Sarah Woolf  
Water Wise

Co-Chairs  
San Joaquin Valley Water Collaborative Action Program