

Executive Summary

California Water Plan Update 2018 (Update 2018) provides recommended actions, funding scenarios, and an investment strategy to bolster efforts by water and resource managers, planners, and decision-makers to overcome California's most pressing water resource challenges. Update 2018 builds on progress made in *California Water Plan Update 2013*; it reaffirms State government's unique role and commitment to sustainable and equitable water resource management.

Challenges to Sustainability

For generations, California has represented much more than a place. It invokes images of exceptionally satisfying ways of life and well-being coupled with enduring, world-renowned natural resources. Yet the people and ecosystems of California are increasingly vulnerable to extremes that underscore the need to bolster planning and infrastructure to prepare for the effects of climate change. Update 2018 documents challenges that significantly affect the state's ability to manage water resources for **sustainability**. Among them:

- One in five Californians lives in a floodplain. More than \$580 billion in assets is at risk.
- Thousands of Californians lack access to safe, clean water and adequate sanitation.
- Many ecosystems and the services they provide continue to decline.
- **Groundwater overdraft** and unreliable water supplies persist in some regions.
- Extensive tree mortality has contributed to the most destructive wildfires in the state's history and to devastating mudslides.
- Climate change is exacerbating many **critical challenges**, including flood risk, reduced **water supply**, and wildfire.

Communities proactively planning and investing in water management strategies are showing resilience. At the same time, many communities remain vulnerable – those with limited resources and insufficient technical, managerial, and/or financial capacity to manage water resources.

Bold Action to Overcome Challenges

This plan recommends significant additional investment in infrastructure and ecosystem improvements to overcome challenges to sustainability. It also recommends actions to resolve **systemic and institutional issues** that contribute to many of the state’s water challenges. The plan describes scenarios to leverage existing funding for California water management and discusses some additional concepts that can inform funding decisions over the long term.

The recommended actions, listed in Table ES-1, are organized according to six goals for sustainability:

- Improve **Integrated Watershed Management**.
- Strengthen Resiliency and Operational Flexibility of Existing and Future Infrastructure.
- Restore Critical Ecosystem Functions.
- Empower California’s Under-Represented or **Vulnerable Communities**.
- Improve Inter-Agency Alignment and Address Persistent Regulatory Challenges.
- Support Real-Time Decision-Making, Adaptive Management, and Long-Term Planning.