

Legislative Update

WRCA has an active legislative program and took positions on numerous bills in 2018. Highlights include:

SB 966 (Onsite Reuse) by Senator Scott Wiener was signed into law, which will expand water recycling in California by developing state-wide onsite water reuse regulations. It requires the State Water Board to issue comprehensive regulations, including health and safety standards, to help local jurisdictions implement these programs. SB 966 allows local communities to create onsite water recycling programs. The oversight and management of onsite treatment of water for non-potable use developed under this framework will be risk-based and focused on protecting public health. SB 966 was sponsored by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission.

SB 606/AB 1668 (Water Efficiency/ Drought Planning)

Supported by the Governor’s Office and the State Water Board, the measures authorize the Water Board to set permanent water use efficiency standards. As signed into law, for recycled water (non-potable) the Water Board must follow the existing standards for outdoor irrigation and allow for variances as appropriate. For potable reuse water, agencies are allowed to increase their agency-wide water use targets by up to 10% (15% in some areas) depending upon the total amount of potable reuse in the water supply. In a drought, the measures allow agencies to adopt drought contingency plans and find that their recycled water is a “fully reliable supply”— not subject to cut backs. The bill directs the Water Board to defer to local agency plans during a drought.

WaterReuse California (WRCA) is the primary advocate for recycled water in California. With its active legislative, regulatory and outreach program, WRCA supports the establishment of policies and development of funding options that support as many water recycling solutions as possible; that a range of customized “mix and match” options offer each community or region the most potential for success in offsetting limited drinking water sources, including imported water.

WRCA Leads Effort to Revise Recycled Water Policy

WRCA has been successfully working to revise and improve numerous sections of the Recycled Water Policy — a regulatory policy that touches almost every aspect of recycled water production and delivery in California.

The Policy was last updated in 2009 and in 2013 the monitoring requirements for potable reuse projects were added. In May the Water Board released a major set of revisions to the Recycled Water Policy. Since then WRCA, CASA and its member agencies have met many times with the Water Board members and their staff to work through a set of concerns with the policy. WRCA and CASA also developed a stakeholders group to address ongoing challenges with the wastewater petition process recognizing that it involves issues outside of the policy.

In November the Water Board released

the revised Recycled Water Policy. Final adoption before the State Water Board is set for December 11. In general, the Water Board listened to our concerns as reflected in the revised policy.

A partial list of changes include:

- Addition of a goal to the policy promoting groundwater recharge and inland recycled water projects;
- Reducing the frequency of recycled water reporting;
- Improving the wastewater change petition section to more closely align with existing laws;
- For potable reuse projects, following the CEC Expert Panel recommendations to implement a phased approach to biosassay monitoring before regulatory consequences occur.



Potable Reuse Regulation Timeline

In the last four years California has made tremendous progress in the advancement of potable reuse. WRCA and its members have worked throughout this time with the State Water Board and the Legislature to support 1) the adoption of groundwater replenishment regulations; 2) the issuance of the “DPR Report to the Legislature”

stating direct potable regulations are feasible; 3) the adoption of Surface Water Regulations; and 4) the passage of AB 574 (Quirk) specifying “types” of “DPR” and setting a 2023 deadline for the Water Board to adopt statewide regulations for “Raw Water Augmentation.”

WRCA Seven Chapters: Providing Regional Support & Collaboration

In 2018 California's seven regional chapters collectively brought together hundreds of utilities, consulting firms and water recycling users to discuss local projects and challenges. Working closely with WRCA, these chapters also provide all California members timely updates on state regulatory and legislative activities that impact recycled water.

Each chapter has a representative on the WRCA Board of Trustees. WRCA is committed to supporting the efforts of the chapters and increasing information sharing. In 2018 WRCA President Rich Nagel and Managing Director Jennifer West visited every local chapter and discussed ways to provide additional collaboration and benefits to our members.


The seven WRCA Chapters are:

- Central Coast
- Central Valley/Sierra Foothills
- Northern California (Bay Area)
- Los Angeles
- Orange County
- Inland Empire
- San Diego

Meetings and additional information about the chapters can be found on the California website at: watereuse.org/sections/watereuse-california/chapters/



Jennifer West
Managing Director
WaterReuse California
1121 L Street, Suite 606
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 669-8401
JWest@watereuse.org

 @watereuseca

www.watereuse.org



Researchers from UC Riverside studied the effects of high TDS in recycled water used for landscape irrigation.

WRCA Commissions Study on High TDS Recycled Water

WRCA partnered with the National Water Research Institute and Southern California Salinity Coalition to commission a white paper to study the effects high "TDS" recycled water has on plant health. Researchers from UC Riverside conducted the study and calculated a formula that showed when going above the 1.0 ETAF (current level allowed for recycled water) is necessary to maintain plant health. WRCA presented the paper to the Department of

Water Resources (DWR) and other stakeholders. This paper will be used to inform upcoming regulatory decisions from DWR and the State Water Board on the use of recycled water on landscape irrigation. (See WRCA website for full report.) WRCA also participated throughout the year by representing recycled water interests in the DWR update on the statewide model water efficient landscape ordinance.

WRCA Hosts Successful Monterey Conference

With the assistance of the Central Coast Chapter, and many generous sponsors, WRCA hosted an informative and well attended annual conference in March. The conference featured more than 40 technical presentations and panel discussions concerning the status of potable reuse research, onsite reuse and more. A highlight was the WaterReuse Family Feud North vs South, where general managers faced off to see who was the most knowledgeable about water recycling in California.



Mike Markus, Orange County Water District and Prabhakar Somavarapu, Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District face off during Family Feud

Bioassay Implementation Advisory Group Formed

WRCA is providing funding for an NWRI led effort to develop a "Bioassay Implementation Advisory Group." The Group, meeting for the first time in January 2019, will help develop standard operating procedures for the two bioassays required

in the Recycled Water Policy and help analyze and assess monitoring data. This group should provide major assistance to potable reuse agencies that need to comply with the new bioassay testing requirements.