

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING

September 24, 2025

4:30 p.m.



626 443 2297



www.upperdistrict.org



248 E. Foothill Blvd., Suite 200 - Monrovia, CA. 91016



info@usgvmwd.org

Securing Water Resilience for the San Gabriel Valley

**A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
DIRECTORS**

Wednesday, September 24, 2025
4:30 P.M.

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. ROLL CALL OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS
4. ADOPTION OF AGENDA [1]
5. PUBLIC COMMENT

As provided under Government Code Section 54954.3, members of the public may address the Board on items considered on this agenda. Please complete the appropriate speaker's card and submit it to the Board Secretary. A three-minute time limit on remarks is requested.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS [2] - None
7. CONSENT CALENDAR [1]

(a) Minutes of a regular meeting of the Board of Directors held on September 10, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.

8. ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS [1]

(a) Overview of Upper Water Delivery Infrastructure *(The General Manager will provide a presentation.)*

Recommendation

This item is for information only. No action is anticipated.

(b) Approval of General Manager Contract Amendment

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board of Directors consider the matter and instruct staff accordingly on the following amendments to the General Manager's contract:

1. Compensation adjustment
2. Term of the contract

9. INFORMATION ITEMS [2]

(a) Press Releases and News Articles

10. ATTORNEY'S REPORT [2]
11. GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT [2]
12. DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS [2]
13. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS [1]
14. ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION – None.
15. ADJOURNMENT – To a regular meeting of the Board of Directors to be held on October 8, 2025 at 4:30 p.m. at 248 E. Foothill Blvd. Room #103, Monrovia, CA 91016.

LEGEND: [1] INDICATES ACTION ANTICIPATED BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON THIS ITEM
[2] INDICATES INFORMATION ITEM - NO BOARD ACTION NECESSARY

PRESIDENT JENNIFER SANTANA, PRESIDING



American Disabilities Act Compliance (*Government Code Section 54954.2(a)*)



To request special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the District office at (626) 443-2297.



UPPER SAN GABRIEL VALLEY MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 10, 2025 | 4:30pm

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors was called to order at 4:30pm at the District office located at 248 E. Foothill Blvd, Rm. 103, Monrovia, California. The presiding officer was President Jennifer Santana.

ROLL CALL

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Treviño, Chavez, Garcia, Fellow, and Santana

DIRECTORS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Tom Love, General Manager; Steve O'Neill, District Counsel; Steve Johnson, District Engineer; Patty Cortez, Assistant General Manager; Evelyn Rodriguez, Chief Financial Officer; Venessa Navarrette, Executive Assistant/Board Secretary I; Jessica Hernandez, Administrative/Accounting Assistant; Yesenia Bugarin, Intern

OTHERS PRESENT

Jose Martinez

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

On motion by Vice President Fellow, second by Treasurer Garcia, the agenda was adopted by the following vote:

AYES: TREVIÑO, GARCIA, CHAVEZ, FELLOW AND SANTANA
NOES: NONE
ABSTAIN: NONE
ABSENT: NONE

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Administration and Finance Committee
Government Affairs and Community Outreach Committee

CONSENT CALENDAR

On motion by Director Treviño, seconded by Treasurer Garcia, the consent calendar was approved by the following vote:

AYES: TREVIÑO, GARCIA, CHAVEZ, FELLOW AND SANTANA
NOES: NONE
ABSTAIN: NONE
ABSENT: NONE

- (a) Minutes of a regular meeting of the Board of Directors held on August 13, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.
- (b) List of Demands
- (c) Financial Reports – July 2025
 - 1. Financial Statements
 - 2. Director's Public Outreach
- (d) Federal Bill Positions: H.R. 3717 and H.R. 4776 which are consistent with Upper Water's 2025-26 Legislative Policy Principles adopted by the Board in January 2025.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE INVESTMENT POLICY

The General Manager presented the annual review of the District's Investment Policy, conducted with legal counsel and Chandler Asset Management, the Administration and Finance Committee previously reviewed the amendments and recommended Board approval.

On motion by Director Treviño, second by Treasurer Garcia, the amendments to Upper Water's Investment Policy was approved by the following vote:

AYES:	TREVIÑO, GARCIA, CHAVEZ, FELLOW AND SANTANA
NOES:	NONE
ABSTAIN:	NONE
ABSENT:	NONE

WATER RATES AND CHARGES FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2026

The General Manager presented proposed water rates and charges for 2026, noting the Upper Water's surcharge will remain at \$103 per acre-foot. This is supported by a letter agreement with Watermaster covering a significant portion of the MWD RTS charge, enabling the surcharge to remain unchanged. The Administration and Finance Committee previously reviewed the item and recommended Board approval.

On motion by Vice President Fellow, second by Treasurer Garcia, Ordinance No. 25-3, repealing Ordinance 24-2 and adopting the water rates and charges for calendar year 2026 was approved by the following roll-call vote:

TREVIÑO:	AYE
CHAVEZ:	AYE
GARCIA:	AYE
FELLOW:	AYE
SANTANA:	AYE

INFORMATION ITEMS

The following items listed on the agenda were presented as informational items and ordered received and filed:

- Press Releases and News Articles

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

The District Counsel reported working with staff to provide support on a liability waiver for the U.S. Forest Service, policy manual matters, and the General Manager's performance evaluation process.

ENGINEER'S REPORT

The District Engineer provided updates on the interconnection studies for Monrovia, the basin-wide interconnection scope, the emergency response plan, draft IRP revisions, and noted no new activity on the boundary update.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

The General Manager informed the Board of the upcoming elections for the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) Board of Directors and appointments to the Region 8 board, with no objections, he will cast the vote for the district.

Evelyn Rodriguez, Chief Financial Officer, provided an update on the annual audit for fiscal year 2024-2025, which is set to commence next week. The audit report is expected by November with submission for the GFOA's Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting Award for the 15th consecutive year.

The General Manager then reported that the flow rate at USG-03 has been reduced to ~205 CFS due to LA County maintenance, delaying the 100,000 acre-feet delivery milestone to late October or early November. He also provided an update on new detections of the Golden Mussel at Silverwood Lake, stating deliveries continue while mitigation planning is underway, and a \$500K federal grant application has been submitted for mussel control planning.

Patty Cortez, Assistant General Manager, provided a legislation update regarding the Golden Mussel bill. She reported that golden mussel legislation was successfully introduced as part of a public resources trailer bill and includes liability protections for water agencies, establishes 180-day review period for control plans at CDFW, and allocates \$20 million in funding for grants, research, and monitoring. She credited Assemblymember Rubio for moving the language with leadership. Separately, she noted the DCP trailer bill did not advance this session but is expected to be reconsidered next year.

Lastly, the General Manager congratulated Patty Cortez for 12 years of service with the district.

METROPOLITAN REPORT

Vice President Fellow provided an update on the general manager selection process for MWD. He reported that a candidate for general manager is expected to start in October.

WATER QUALITY AUTHORITY REPORT

Secretary Chavez reported that the Water Quality Authority report was provided in the agenda packet. He highlighted that a public hearing was held to maintain assessments at \$12 per acre-foot for the proposed fiscal year 2025/2026; and a closed session was held pursuant to Government Code 54957 for the renewal and adjustment of the Executive Director's employment contract.

WATERMASTER REPORT

On behalf of Kelly Gardner, the district engineer, provided an update on the Key Well elevation reaching 250ft with significant imported water in storage; he reported that for the Water Quality Monitoring Program, 29 wells have been sampled in August, 53 in July with no new detections. Discussions at the Basin Management Committee included the review of the new EPA requirements for PFAS testing. Lastly, he highlighted proactive basin management, including resource development assessments and long-term funding commitments for water deliveries.

AB 1234 Compliance Report

A summary report was provided in the agenda packet.

DIRECTORS' COMMENTS

Director Treviño requested the meeting be adjourned in memory of John Burton, a longtime state leader who recently passed away. He noted Burton's service as a state senator, congressman, and chair of the California Democratic Party, as well as his legacy.

Director Chavez echoed Director Treviño's comments, reflecting on his time serving in the legislature alongside John Burton and emphasized Burton's leadership, influence, and enduring legacy, noting that he will be deeply missed.

Vice President Fellow requested the meeting be adjourned in memory of Charlie Kirk, who tragically passed away at age 31. He reflected on the loss, noting Kirk's character and family values.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJORN TO CLOSED SESSION

A closed session was held pursuant to Government Code section 54957; Public Employee Performance Review; Position: General Manager.

REPORT ON CLOSED SESSION

The Board reconvened after closed session. District Counsel reported that a discussion was held by the Board, instruction was given to staff, and no formal action was taken during closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

President Santana asked if there was any other business to come before the Board. There being none, the meeting was adjourned in memory of John Burton and Charlie Kirk to a regular meeting of the Board of Directors to be held on September 24, 2025, at 4:30 p.m.

PRESIDENT

ATTEST

SECRETARY

SEAL

Attachment 1
Consent Item 7 (b)
September 10, 2025

Demands numbered 23065 through 23109 on the General Fund Account of the Upper Water at Citizens Business Bank, totaling \$639,539.09 and demands numbered 1327 through 1337 on the Water Fund Account at the same bank totaling \$1,752,029.27.

23065	Anthony Fellow	Director's Compensation, April 2025 8 Days District Business 10 Days MWD Business Meeting/Travel Expenses/Allowance Less Deferred Comp. Less Taxes Withheld (Previously Paid 8/15/25)	2,040.00 2,550.00 516.87 (500.00) <u>(1,412.48)</u>	\$ 3,194.39
23066	Anthony Fellow	Director's Compensation, June 2025 10 Days District Business 9 Days MWD Business Meeting/Travel Expenses/Allowance Less Deferred Comp. Less Taxes Withheld (Previously Paid 8/15/25)	2,550.00 2,295.00 516.87 (500.00) <u>(1,471.50)</u>	3,390.37
23067	Anthony Fellow	Director's Compensation, July 2025 7 Days District Business 10 Days MWD Business Meeting/Travel Expenses/Allowance Less Deferred Comp. Less Taxes Withheld (Previously Paid 8/15/25)	1,854.00 2,619.00 516.87 (500.00) <u>(1,386.90)</u>	3,102.97
23068	ACWA/JPIA	Inv. 558, Property Program 07/01/25-03/31/26 (Previously Paid 8/19/25)		14,230.26
23069	789, Inc.	Inv. UW-522280, Branding and Creative Services, September 2025 (Board approved 7/09/25)		5,750.00
23070	ACWA/JPIA	Inv. 0706709, Health Insurance Premium - September 2025		32,969.74
23071	Aleshire & Wynder, LLP	Legal Services, July 2025 Inv. 98273, Retainer Inv. 98274, Transactional Fees Inv. 98275, Transactional Fees (Board approved 04/13/22)	4,713.00 43.50 501.50	5,258.00
23072	Amazon Capital Services	Inv. 1QQR-636T-YV RH, Meeting and Office Supplies		143.40
23073	Azusa Light & Water	Inv. 4631, MAA Program Reimbursement, March and April 2025		3,495.06
23074	Best Best & Krieger, LLP	Inv. 1037298, Federal Legislative Advocacy Services through 7/31/25 (Board approved 01/22/25)		7,500.00
23075	BizFed Institute	Inv. 1510, 4th Annual Water Resiliency Summit, Sponsorship		5,000.00
23076	California Contract Cities	Inv. 515639, Membership Dues, 01/01/25 -12/31/25		6,500.00
23077	Department of Water & Power	Inv. GA440269, Recycled Water Program Permit Fees, September 2025		83.33
23078	Discovery Science Center	Inv. 2163, Water Education Program, July 2025 (Board approved 07/08/20)		340.50
23079	Education & Outreach Company	Inv. 25-904, UD Logo Items		723.79
23080	Foothill Municipal Water District	Inv. 737, Strategic Consulting Services, August 2025 Cost-Share		2,500.00
23081	G3, Green Gardens Group, LLC	Inv. 1387, Firescaping Workshop, June 2025 (Board approved 06/12/24)		1,950.00
23082	Garden View, Inc.	Inv. 165889, Plant Voucher Program Inv. INV-073125, Plant Voucher Program	19,288.70 <u>33,551.81</u>	52,840.51
23083	HCI Systems, Inc.	Inv. I0127612, Building Maintenance Service Call		741.00

23084	Home Depot Credit Services	Building Maintenance Supplies through 08/13/25 Inv. 2889968 Inv. 9487009 Inv. 9901326	87.30 503.79 <u>49.69</u>	640.78
23085	Image Property Services, LLC	Inv. 16901, Janitorial Services, July 2025		1,907.59
23086	Joey C. Soto	Inv. 2025-UD-GA-JUL-130, Grant Writing Services, July 2025 (Board approved 06/08/22)		1,652.50
23087	John Robinson Consulting, Inc	Inv. UW202301-19, As-needed Engineering Support Services, July 2025		3,300.00
23088	Kelly Services, Inc.	Inv. 5610252284, Temporary Services Weeks Ending 07/27/25 Inv. 5610287546, Temporary Services Weeks Ending 08/03/25 Inv. 5610351315, Temporary Services Weeks Ending 08/10/25 Inv. 5610417664, Temporary Services Weeks Ending 08/17/25 (Board approved 10/11/23)	1,596.00 1,064.00 518.00 <u>1,428.00</u>	4,606.00
23089	Land's End Business Outfitters	Inv. SIN13282823, UW Logo Items		109.29
23090	Luis Aguilar	Inv. 0074905, Logo Item Embroidery Services		64.35
23091	Media Marketing Services, Inc.	Inv. W250528REI, Reissued Lost Check for the Bottled Water Program		3,339.00
23092	Quality Logo Products	Inv. QSI-1206329, UD Logo Items		7,553.80
23093	San Gabriel River Watermaster	Inv. FY 2025-26, SGR Watermaster Budget for Water Year 2025/26		123,500.00
23094	Southern CA Water Coalition	Inv. 2076, Annual Membership Dues, 07/01/25 - 06/30/26		5,000.00
23095	Stetson Engineers, Inc.	Inv. 2533-231, General Engineering Support Services, June 2025 Inv. 2728-039, Integrated Resources Plan Update, June 2025	17,430.90 <u>8,343.75</u>	25,774.65
23096	The House of Printing, Inc.	Inv. 172397, District Business Cards Inv. 172443, District Business Cards Inv. 173049, UD Logo Items Inv. 173413, District Business Cards	263.42 117.89 1,360.26 <u>281.78</u>	2,023.35
23097	Upper District Payroll Fund	Inv. JUL 25, Reimbursement of Payroll and Payroll Taxes for Employees Inv. JUL 25D, Reimbursement of Payroll Taxes for Directors Inv. JUL 25D-B, Reimbursement of Payroll Taxes for Directors	174,855.93 8,292.64 <u>8,568.22</u>	191,716.79
23098	Upper District Revolving Fund	Inv. AUG 25, Revolving Fund Account Replenishment - August 2025 Office Supplies Computer Systems/Equipment/Maintenance/Insurance/Outside Service Directors's Outreach Telephone/Utilities/Building Maintenance Water Conservation Program Expenses WRP Operation & Maintenance/Permits/Water Purchases/Public Info Medical/ODA Reimbursement/Processing Fee/Others	491.79 291.75 5,029.00 5,956.10 872.74 45,003.64 <u>20,174.44</u>	77,819.46
23099	U.S. Bank Corporate Payment System	CalCard Charges through 08/22/25 Meetings, Travel, Conferences Computer Systems/Office Equipment/Supplies/Maintenance & Service/Utilities Conservation Program Expenses, Education and Outreach	5,963.10 699.54 <u>1,044.50</u>	7,707.14
23100	Vet Hunters Project	Inv. 09/12/25UD, 6th Annual Stand Down Event Sponsorship		500.00
23101	VOID	Printer Error		-
23102	Via Promotionals	Inv. 23115, District Logo Items Inv. 23116, District Logo Items Inv. 23126, District Logo Items Inv. 23148, District Logo Items Inv. 23207, District Logo Items Inv. 23208, District Logo Items Inv. 23219, District Logo Items	1,975.82 5,855.83 1,936.51 2,386.80 898.27 1,426.24 <u>718.25</u>	15,197.72
23103	Willdan Financial Services	Inv. 010-62874, FY 2025/26, Standby Charge Services through June 2025 (Board approved 04/09/25)		3,633.30
23104	ACWA/JPIA	Inv. 07/01/25CL, Cyber Liability Program, 07/01/25-07/01/26		2,381.00

23105	Anthony Fellow	Director's Compensation, August 2025 8 Days District Business 10 Days MWD Business Meeting/Travel Expenses/Allowance Less Deferred Comp. Less Taxes Withheld	2,592.00 3,240.00 516.87 (500.00) <u>(1,708.87)</u>	4,140.00
23106	Ed Chavez	Director's Compensation, August 2025 10 Days District Business Meeting/Travel Expenses/Allowance Less Deferred Comp. Less Taxes Withheld	3,240.00 1,273.26 (500.00) <u>(1,398.98)</u>	2,614.28
23107	Charles Treviño	Director's Compensation, August 2025 8 Days District Business Meeting/Travel Expenses/Allowance Less Deferred Comp. Less Taxes Withheld	2,592.00 516.87 (500.00) <u>(1,019.13)</u>	1,589.74
23108	Jennifer Santana	Director's Compensation, August 2025 5 Days District Business 3 Days District Business - July 2025 Rate Adjustment Meeting/Travel Expenses/Allowance Less Deferred Comp. Less Taxes Withheld	1,620.00 207.00 516.87 (500.00) <u>(446.50)</u>	1,397.37
23109	Katarina Garcia	Director's Compensation, August 2025 6 Days District Business Meeting/Travel Expenses/Allowance Less Deferred Comp. Less Taxes Withheld	1,944.00 516.87 (500.00) <u>(303.21)</u>	1,657.66
TOTAL			\$ 639,539.09	

1327	Central Basin MWD	Invoice No. USGV-JUL25, Purchase of 2.6 AF of Recycled Water in June 2025 (Previously Paid 09/04/25)	\$ 1,912.36
1328	City of Industry City Hall	Invoice No. R05312025-D, Purchase of 59.9 AF of Recycled Water in May 2025	25,158.00
1329	City of Industry City Hall	Invoice No. R05312025-E, CIP Charge for May 2025 @ \$117 per AF	9,356.30
1330	City of Industry City Hall	Invoice No. R06302025-D, Purchase of 80.1 AF of Recycled Water in June 2025	33,642.00
1331	City of Industry City Hall	Invoice No. R06302025-E, CIP Charge for June 2025 @ \$117 per AF	11,719.70
1332	City of Industry City Hall	Invoice No. R07312025-D, Purchase of 101.9 AF of Recycled Water in July 2025	42,798.00
1333	City of Industry City Hall	Invoice No. R07312025-E, CIP Charge for July 2025 @ \$117 per AF	14,270.30
1334	Metropolitan Water District	Invoice No. 11935, Net RTS and Capacity Charges for the 3rd Quarter of 2025 and Purchase of 509.8 AF of Treated Water in July 2025	1,583,294.11
1335	San Gabriel Valley MWD	Invoice No. 579, 99.75 AF of Water Delivered through the Alhambra/MWD Exchange Agreement in July 2025 @ \$260 per AF	25,935.00
1336	Suburban Water System	Invoice No. 6799, Phase IIB Normal Operating Charge, August 2025	1,889.81
1337	Suburban Water System	Invoice No. 6793, Operating Cost, Mar. - Jul. 2025	<u>2,053.69</u>
TOTAL			\$ 1,752,029.27

PRESS RELEASE: Landmark legislation to address California's water supply challenges heads to the Governor's desk

mavensnotebook.com/2025/09/05/press-release-landmark-legislation-to-address-californias-water-supply-challenges-heads-to-the-governors-desk/

Policy and regulation Guest Contributor September 5, 2025

September 5, 2025



Press release from California Water for All:

SB 72 (Caballero), critical water legislation to transform the state's water management approach, has passed the Assembly floor and is headed to the Governor's desk for signature. The bill addresses the state's lack of water with multiple strategies to codify water supply targets, enhance the existing California Water Plan to plan water needs by region, and legislate reporting collaboration among the water community and all stakeholders.

"I'm proud of my colleagues' support on SB 72 in both houses. This bill represents a clear opportunity for the Governor to reaffirm his climate leadership and embrace new and bold strategies to address water supply challenges. The Department of Water Resources' new State Water Project Adaptation Strategy underscores the urgency of this bill, which is a necessary next step to secure California's water future in the face of intensifying climate threats," said Senator Anna Caballero, bill author.

Backed by a broad coalition of water, environmental, business, public safety, and agricultural stakeholders, SB 72 is co-sponsored by the California Municipal Utilities Association (CMUA), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), and the California Council for Environmental and Economic Balance (CCEEB), and would transform water management in California to:

- Establish necessary statewide water supply targets to capture and produce enough water for all uses.
- Require the State, water community, and stakeholders to work together to develop comprehensive, long-term water supply solutions.
- Enhance the California Water Plan to drought-proof the state
- Complement Governor Newsom's Water Supply Strategy to ensure water supply planning targets and action extend beyond any single administration.

"Water managers across the state agree, SB 72 is the next step we need to turn a scarcity mindset into a coordinated, climate-resilient strategy. It sets real goals and planning requirements to ensure water reliability for all – communities, farms, ecosystems – no matter what the climate throws at us," said Craig Miller, General Manager of Western Water. "We urge Governor Newsom's support of SB 72 as it will lock in California's commitment to meeting the water needs for all, demonstrating his unwavering dedication to addressing California's perpetual water supply challenges."

"As a proud co-sponsor of SB 72, we are encouraged by the overwhelming legislative support of the bill and are hopeful that Governor Newsom will also recognize the critical value and sense of urgency of signing this bill into law," said Danielle Blacet-Hyden, Executive Director of CMUA and bill co-sponsor. "SB 72 will advance Governor Newsom's climate and water resource objectives for California to deliver a drought-resilient, equitable water system. SB 72 codifies his vision into lasting law."

"Our counties are the first responders when our communities run out of water, and we can't plan for housing growth without it," said Graham Knaus, CEO of CSAC and bill co-sponsor. "But the state's current strategy dates back to the 1960s and lacks any clear, measurable goals. It's time for California's water policy to join the 21st century. Sen. Caballero's common-sense, bipartisan bill gets it done."

"On behalf of our coalition of business, labor and public leaders statewide, CCEEB has been proud to co-sponsor and partner with Senator Caballero and many organizations statewide to pass such transformative water legislation," said Tim Carmichael, President of CCEEB and bill co-sponsor. "The passage of SB 72 is a critical step towards ensuring comprehensive, coordinated, and resilient water supply planning and development for California."

Senator Caballero will host a press conference on Monday, September 8, at the Capitol Cactus Garden at 10 a.m. to discuss the importance of the Governor signing the bill into law.

CA Water for All is a statewide effort seeking to educate policymakers about the urgent need for a legislative solution to address California's ongoing water supply challenges. The effort is focused on bringing together the water community, policymakers, and stakeholders to collaborate on ensuring Californians have a sustainable and reliable water supply for all beneficial uses now and for future generations.

CAL MATTERS: Newsom's bid to fast-track Delta tunnel stalls again

 mavensnotebook.com/2025/09/11/cal-matters-newsoms-bid-to-fast-track-delta-tunnel-stalls-again/

Delta Conveyance Project Cal Matters September 11, 2025

September 11, 2025



Water wonks say the proposal to speed the multibillion Delta tunnel project could rise again. 'This is the zombie offspring of the zombie project,' one opponent said.

By Rachel Becker, Cal Matters

This story was originally published by CalMatters. Sign up for their newsletters.



In a blow to Gov. Gavin Newsom's ambitions to replumb the Delta, California lawmakers once again punted on his plan to fast-track a deeply controversial \$20 billion tunnel project that would funnel more water to the south.

Multiple sources in the Legislature say the clock has run out on a sweeping measure that would overhaul permitting, financing and other road blocks to the Delta tunnel project. The news comes as lawmakers and Newsom race to reach a megadeal that encompasses carbon trading, wildfire funding, energy transmission, and refinery issues. The governor's office did not respond to CalMatters' inquiry.

While supporters acknowledge the tunnel bill has hit a dead end for now, this isn't the first time Newsom has tried to fast track the project. And water watchers expect that it won't be the last.

"Even if action is delayed this year, the need for modern delta conveyance has never been greater," said Jennifer Pierre, general manager of the State Water Contractors, a staunch supporter of the bill, in a statement. "The need is urgent, the support is broad, and the time to move forward is now."

Lawmakers representing Delta communities called the failure to fast-track the bill a relief. They have long said that building a tunnel to reroute water around the Delta would devastate communities, fish and local farms.

"It's going to be incredibly disruptive to my communities," state Sen. Jerry McNerney, a Democrat from Stockton, told CalMatters. "They made a good fight, but we just were too unified for them to have any progress."

Assemblymember Lori Wilson, a Democrat from Suisun City, said no amount of compensation for Delta communities would make up for the project's lasting harm.

"Once a short-sighted policy, always a short-sighted policy," she said in a statement. "We will continue to stand strong and fight for the Delta and the communities who call it home."

'Let's get this built'

The proposed tunnel, more formally known as the Delta Conveyance Project, would extend 45 miles from the Sacramento River to a reservoir near Livermore, bypassing the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, which serves as a critical hub for California's water supply.

It's the latest iteration of a decades-old plan to funnel water deliveries from Northern California around, rather than through, the Delta — with the goal of shoring up water supplies for 27 million Californians and 750,000 acres of agriculture largely in the central and southern parts of the state.

Planning for the project remains underway, though it is fiercely opposed by conservationists, Tribes, Delta cities and counties, and the fishing industry.

They fear the loss of water supplies, environmental degradation and years of construction that they say will make some towns uninhabitable. The state's own analysis warned that a Delta tunnel would put salmon at risk.

Newsom introduced the streamlining bill earlier this spring as a budget add-on, a strategy he's used before that bypasses more extensive input from lawmakers.

"We're done with barriers — our state needs to complete this project as soon as possible, so that we can better store and manage water to prepare for a hotter, drier future," Newsom said May. "Let's get this built."

Stalled, but not dead

The tunnel bill aimed to flatten roadblocks related to land acquisition, water rights decisions, funding and litigation. Delta lawmakers pushed back against it, as well as Newsom's strategy of using the budget process to shortcut deliberations.

"Drying out the north just to water the south doesn't make it better at all, and it doesn't make it fair," Assemblymember Stephanie Nguyen, a Democrat from Elk Grove, said in May.

Lawmakers tabled decisions on the bills until later in the session, and the Newsom administration continued to push for both the tunnel and the streamlining effort.

Pierre, with the State Water Contractors, told CalMatters that the failure to fast track the project didn't reflect Legislative opposition to the tunnel itself.

"We had vote cards that demonstrated the majority in both houses," Pierre told CalMatters. "This was not a function of a lack of support for the bill."

But McNerney said he thought the political cost for the administration became too high.

"I think the governor realized that he's got other battles to fight," McNerney said. "It's just not worth taking that battle to the wall."

Jon Rosenfield, science director with the San Francisco Baykeeper, said he hoped this was the last effort by the Newsom administration to "grease the skids" for a Delta tunnel.

But, he added, "This is the zombie offspring of the zombie project ... You understand if I don't necessarily believe that this is the end."

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CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

Newsom's push to fast-track Delta water tunnel stalls in the California Legislature



A drone view of Chipps Island in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, near Pittsburg. (Nick Shockey / California Department of Water Resources)



By Ian James
Staff Writer | [X Follow](#)

Sept. 11, 2025 3 AM PT

- Gov. Gavin Newsom has urged lawmakers to pass legislation speeding plans for a water tunnel in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. But his proposal failed to advance this session.
- Supporters of the Delta Conveyance Project said they will try again.
- Newsom's final term ends in early 2027 and he could pursue similar measures next year.

Gov. Gavin Newsom and some of California's major water agencies hit a setback this week when a proposal to fast-track plans for a 45-mile water tunnel beneath the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta died in the state Legislature.

Newsom has been trying to streamline legal and environmental review of the proposed water tunnel through budget measures that also would give the state authority to issue bonds to pay for the project.

Delta lawmakers said they were pleased that the governor's proposal failed to move forward in the final days of the legislative session.

Sen. Jerry McNerney (D-Pleasanton) called it a "major victory for California and the Delta."

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“The tunnel project not only would devastate much of the Delta region, but is also unaffordable and unnecessary,” McNerney said. “It’s very expensive. It’s very damaging to the environment.”

He said the Newsom administration and supporters of the proposed Delta Conveyance Project had been trying to get legislators on board, “but they still just didn’t have the total support they’d need to get this through.”



CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

Newsom seeks to short-cut process to build \$20-billion Delta water tunnel

May 14, 2025

Newsom can try again next year. His office did not immediately respond to a request for comments.

The State Water Contractors, an association of water agencies, said the governor’s proposal would streamline review, reduce costs and prevent unnecessary delays, but that it was “caught up in the crush of high-profile legislative activities,” at the end of the session.

“Even if action is delayed this year, the need for modern delta conveyance has never been greater, and the sooner we are able to make a decision on construction, the less that construction will cost,” said Jennifer Pierre, general manager of the State Water Contractors.

The state estimates the project would cost \$20.1 billion, while opponents say it could cost three times more.

Newsom and supporters of the project say the tunnel is essential to modernize the state’s water system for more severe droughts and deluges with climate change, and to withstand sea level rise and the risks of a major earthquake in the region.



CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

Newsom says California needs to build a water tunnel. Opponents argue costs are too high

Aug. 20, 2025

Opponents, including environmental advocates, fishing groups and tribal leaders, argue the project would harm the Delta’s communities and ecosystem, and further threaten native fish that are already in decline.

Leaders of 40 environmental, fishing and tribal groups wrote to legislative leaders last week opposing what they called Newsom’s “unconscionable attempt to override our democratic processes and public opinion.”

They say the state should instead invest in different types of solutions, including recycling more wastewater, storing more water underground and strengthening aging levees in the Delta.

Scott Artis, executive director of the Golden State Salmon Assn., called the death of the effort a significant win, saying the governor’s proposal would “gut environmental protections, eliminate due process, and lock in a water grab that could finish off already imperiled salmon runs.”

Commercial fishing for Chinook salmon has been banned along the California coast for the last three years for lack of fish, while a limited recreational fishing season was permitted this year after a two-year closure.

State officials defend the Newsom administration's efforts to help salmon populations recover, include restoring tidelands, removing barriers that block fish migration and reintroducing salmon in traditional spawning areas upstream from dams.

The tunnel would create a second route to transport water from new intakes on the Sacramento River to the south side of the Delta, where pumps send water into the aqueducts of the State Water Project and onward to cities and farmland.

Newsom, who is set to leave office after 2026, has said the project is essential for the state's future and has made it a central priority. State officials have said that during wet years, having the tunnel would enable the state to capture more water.



CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

State Water Project supplies could fall up to 23% within 20 years due to climate change

July 31, 2024

Supporters, including business advocates and local water officials, say the project would ensure the water reliability for Southern California's economy. In a letter in June, a coalition of water agencies, business and labor groups and other supporters said that for decades the project "has been stalled by frivolous lawsuits and duplicative reviews."

Agencies that have supported the project with funding for initial preconstruction and planning work include major urban water suppliers such as the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, as well as San Joaquin Valley agricultural water agencies including Kern County Water Agency and Dudley Ridge Water District.

Californians for Water Security, a coalition of local governments, business groups, labor unions and other supporters, said it was disappointing that negotiations to advance the governor's proposal in the Legislature stalled.

"While we are saddened that the bill did not move forward this year, we are encouraged by the massive support," the group said in a written statement. "Climate change remains a threat, and work on the Delta Conveyance Project will continue. Our work isn't done until this urgently needed project is operational and making our water supply safe for all Californians."

More to Read

This California highway is a lifeline, and deadly. Can it be fixed before it falls into the sea?

Sept. 3, 2025



Is Southern California prepared to avoid a 'Day Zero' water crisis?

Aug. 10, 2025



Newsom's plan to give water agencies more leeway in meeting rules moves forward

July 24, 2025



Ian James

Ian James is a reporter who focuses on water and climate change in California and the West. Before joining the Los Angeles Times in 2021, he was an environment reporter at the Arizona Republic and the Desert Sun. He previously worked for the Associated Press as a correspondent in the Caribbean and as bureau chief in Venezuela. Follow him on Bluesky @ianjames.bsky.social and on X @ByIanJames.

PRESS RELEASE: SAFER water for California's future: Legislature moves to continue safe drinking water program past 2030

mavensnotebook.com/2025/09/11/press-release-safer-water-for-californias-future-legislature-moves-to-continue-safe-drinking-water-program-past-2030/

Policy and regulation Conservation organizations & coalitions September 11, 2025

September 11, 2025



Press release from multiple organizations

Today, the Governor and Legislature released a three-party deal that would protect safe drinking water investments through 2045 by extending the current continuous appropriation of up to \$130 million for the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund. The Legislature also proposed to appropriate \$180 million from Proposition 4, the Climate Bond, for safe drinking water and wastewater projects. This safety net for drinking water investments is critical because federal funding is at risk of being reduced by 90%, creating a concerning gap in resources available to tackle this issue. In a legislative session where environmental justice priorities were otherwise sidelined, these moves if enacted will help to protect drinking water access for some of the most vulnerable Californians.

"SAFER is not just a program: it is hope for those of us that face the drinking water crisis," said Silverio Perez, SAFER Advisory Group member and AGUA Coalition member from the Central Coast. "In the last elections we also voted for Prop 4 so that alongside SAFER, these resources can help the nearly 1 million Californians that still don't have safe drinking water. Thanks to our legislators who listened to us during our visits to Sacramento and to our unity as a community, we've managed to protect resources like SAFER for the future.

California is taking the lead on solutions for the state in upholding the Human Right to Water. In California nearly one million people across the state are exposed to illegal levels of harmful contaminants in their tap water. According to the 2024 Drinking Water Needs Assessment, we need a

\$15.9 billion investment to achieve the Human Right to Water for all in the state. As we look towards what funding we have available, it is encouraging to see the protection of resources that are working like the Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) Fund, which aggregates multiple funding sources, including the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund to provide complete services to communities in need, including interim water supplies, technical assistance (legal, planning engineering and community outreach) and operations and maintenance.

“SAFER investments have been instrumental to bringing safe drinking water into the home of every Californian,” said Michael Claiborne, Directing Attorney with Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability. “It is reassuring that this commitment does not end in 2030, giving hundreds of communities the opportunity to achieve solutions.”

The Safe and Affordable Drinking water fund was always intended to fill gaps and leverage other state and federal funding sources. To help meet the significant funding gap identified by the State Water Board in its annual needs assessment, appropriation of Proposition 4 funding for drinking water projects is critical.

“Multiple organizations strongly supported Proposition 4 last year,” said Jennifer Clary, California Director of Clean Water Action. “That funding is even more important now, when federal decisions have reduced funding for water infrastructure and increased pressures on the state’s General Fund. This funding will allow us to continue investing in urgently needed solutions.”

California funding safe drinking water and wastewater projects in the future are key steps to make good on the promise of the Human Right to Water and to protect public health. We thank the Legislature and the Governor for prioritizing progress on solutions and will continue to work with them to advance and implement these resources for communities.

###

Community Water Center (CWC) works to ensure that all communities have reliable access to safe, clean, and affordable water. Founded in 2006, CWC is a not-for-profit environmental justice organization, whose mission is to act as a catalyst for community-driven water solutions through education, organizing, and advocacy. Web: www.communitywatercenter.org; Twitter: @CWaterC; Facebook: @CommunityWaterCenter

Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability works alongside the most impacted communities in the San Joaquin Valley and Eastern Coachella Valley to advocate for sound policy and eradicate injustice to secure equal access to opportunity regardless of wealth, race, income, and place. Leadership Counsel focuses on issues like housing, land use, transportation, safe and affordable drinking water and climate change impacts on communities. Twitter: LCJandA FB: @lcjcalifornia IG: @leadership_counsel Web: leadershipcounsel.org

Clean Water Action – Since our founding during the campaign to pass the landmark Clean Water Act in 1972, Clean Water Action has worked to win strong health and environmental protections by bringing issue expertise, solution-oriented thinking and people power to the table. Our Mission is to protect our environment, health, economic well-being and community quality of life. Clean Water Action organizes strong grassroots groups and coalitions, and campaigns to elect environmental

candidates and to solve environmental and community problems. For more information, visit our website at www.cleanwater.org or follow us on Twitter @cleanh2oca and Facebook @CleanWaterActionCalifornia.

Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building more resilient and thriving rural communities. Since 1978, RCAC has provided technical assistance, training, and financing to rural water systems, schools, and local governments, ensuring that families across California have access to clean drinking water and safe sanitation.

Self-Help Enterprises (SHE) is an affordable housing and community development non-profit organization based in Visalia, California, serving nine counties throughout the San Joaquin Valley. Since 1965, SHE has worked directly with low-income families, farmworker communities and local government agencies to build and sustain healthy homes and communities.

California State Capitol. Photo by Deposit Photos.



**California Special
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Brown Act Revamp Heads to Governor's Desk

1. Brown Act Revamp Heads to Governor's Desk

Posted 2 days ago

Moments ago, the California State Senate concurred in amendments made in the Assembly to [SB 707 \(Durazo\)](#), the final action necessary to pass the Brown Act revamp out of the California State Legislature. The bill now heads to Governor Gavin Newsom's desk for signature before an October 13 deadline.

Over the last 72-hours, SB 707 has endured a wild ride through a tumultuous end to the 2025 legislative year, which saw the Legislature amend its rules to allow for an additional day of action on Saturday, September 13 to complete work on several controversial environmental bills.

After initially receiving word Thursday, September 11 that SB 707 would be made a "two-year" bill, CSDA and its partners immediately prepared to mount a last-minute campaign to advocate for a rule waiver to advance Assembly Bill 259 (Rubio), legislation sponsored by the CSDA and Three Valleys Municipal Water District. However, by the late afternoon of Friday, September 12, CSDA began tracking new rumors that SB 707 may be revived and pushed through before the Legislature adjourned for the year.

CSDA confirmed the SB 707 revival through official channels and verified previous reports that opponents to amendments to the bill secured earlier in the session by CSDA and other local government stakeholders had briefly convinced its author to pull the bill.

A small number of government-access oriented groups continue to express concerns over improvements made to the "language access" and "digital translation" provisions of SB 707 as part of a deal that removed CSDA's opposition to the measure.

In her presentation of SB 707 on the floor of the State Senate, the bill's author, Senator Elena Durazo pledged to introduce urgency legislation next year in an attempt to address opponents' concerns related to language access. As Chair of the Senate Local Government Committee, she also pledged to hold a hearing to discuss the law's digital translation provisions and implementation. While further details have yet to emerge, CSDA will work proactively to ensure the tenets of amendments negotiated on behalf of special districts are not undermined.

Marcus Detwiler
Legislative Representative
California Special Districts Association
www.csda.net

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SB 707 (Durazo) Spiked, Made a Two-Year Bill

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Added 4 days ago



California Special Districts Association




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CSDA, Coalition Partners Submit SB 707 (Durazo) Opposition Letter

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Support Page 

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CSDA Secures Amendments to Major Brown Act Update and Adopts 'Neutral' Position

 [Morgan Leskody](#)
Added 05-05-2025

Blog Entry



CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

Water bills in L.A. County are rising faster than inflation, UCLA research shows



Aerial view of farmlands near Maricopa, at the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley, where the California Aqueduct brings water from the north. (Al Seib / Los Angeles Times)



By Ian James

Staff Writer | [Follow](#)

Sept. 15, 2025 3 AM PT

- UCLA researchers analyzed hundreds of water systems across southern California.

- They found that in Los Angeles County, average household water bills climbed nearly 60% from 2015 to 2025, faster than inflation.
- Kern County systems had more than 1,500 violations in the last decade.

Over the last decade, water bills in Los Angeles County have risen nearly 60% on average, outpacing inflation and adding to financial strain for low-income households, according to a UCLA report.

The researchers compared average costs for the same amount of drinking water in 2015 and 2025, and said the results show that water affordability is an escalating problem in Southern California.

“It is concerning that we have this trend of rates outpacing inflation,” said Edith de Guzman, a cooperative extension water researcher at UCLA’s Luskin Center for Innovation.

She and co-authors said several factors have led to higher water costs, including local decisions to upgrade aging water delivery systems and prepare for drought, and compliance with water quality rules.

In addition to water costs, the researchers looked at quality as they updated their [Southern California Water Systems Atlas](#) with details on 663 water systems across six counties that serve about 40% of California’s population. They said the fact that hundreds of water utilities serve the region’s residents shows how fragmented water provision is in California, and how that leads to disparities.

Suppliers include large city-run agencies, smaller districts, investor-owned utilities and mobile home parks, among others.





CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

As water rates climb, many are struggling to pay for an essential service

March 12, 2024

In 2012, California became the first state to declare safe and affordable drinking water a [human right](#). As rising bills have left more customers struggling to pay, some have advocated for permanent [rate assistance programs](#), but those have yet to be adopted by state or federal officials.

The increases in water rates, which are approved by utilities based on their costs for delivery, are on track to become a bigger problem in the next 20 years as aging systems require more investment and regulations on contaminants get more stringent with advancing science, said Gregory Pierce, director of UCLA's Human Right to Water Solutions Lab.

"We have to invest more. But the money has to come from somewhere. And I guess right now we're just saying, 'It comes from you, local ratepayer, so you're on your own,'" Pierce said.

If California is really going to deal with affordability, there should be an effort to look for solutions for those who struggle to afford utility bills, De Guzman said.

"Somebody has to pick up the bill," she said. "It is increasingly challenging for some of our neighbors to do that, and if we don't think about how to generate the political will and provide assistance to those communities, we will not only fail to achieve the human right to water, but we will be leaving a lot of our neighbors behind."



CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

'A ticking time bomb': Why California can't provide safe drinking water to all its residents

Sept. 27, 2023



The report by UCLA and University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources, which also includes a [mapping tool](#) presenting local data, reveals disparities among water agencies, with poorer communities often paying as much or more than those in wealthier areas. The map enables users to zoom in and see how many people a certain water district serves, and how many violations it's had in the last five years.

People who get their water from small water systems often face more contamination problems.

Providers in largely rural Kern County had the highest number of [water contamination violations](#) among the counties studied. More than half the county's systems had violations, with 91 systems cited 1,546 times over the last 10 years, more than three times higher than any other Southern California county.



Jugs of water sit outside a home in the community of Fuller Acres in Kern County in 2023. The community's water system has exceeded safe levels for the carcinogen 1,2,3-trichloropropane. (Francine Orr / Los Angeles Times)

Many of the violations were for unsafe levels of arsenic or coliform bacteria. The contaminated water in Kern County's small farming communities reflects chronic problems "tied to agriculture, groundwater contamination, and under-resourced small systems," the report said.

The researchers found that about 88,000 people across Southern California rely on systems that have had five or more violations of drinking water regulations in the last five years. The vast majority, about 76,000 people, live in Kern County.

The findings underscore the need to improve those small water systems, De Guzman said. "I hope this tool makes obvious the inequities."



Ian James

Ian James is a reporter who focuses on water and climate change in California and the West. Before joining the Los Angeles Times in 2021, he was an environment reporter at the Arizona Republic and the Desert Sun. He previously worked for the Associated Press as a correspondent in the Caribbean and as bureau chief in Venezuela. Follow him on Bluesky [@ianjames.bsky.social](#) and on X [@ByIanJames](#).



California asks appeals court to allow preliminary work for Delta tunnel to begin

The appellate panel didn't indicate how it might rule on the question of whether preliminary, geotechnical work on the tunnel is an "action" that is separate from the entire project.

EDVARD PETTERSSON / September 16, 2025



A small house and dock sit on a peninsula jutting into Three Mile Slough on the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta in this January 2021 photo. (Chris Marshall/Courthouse News)

(CN) — The California Department of Water Resources on Tuesday asked a state appellate court to lift a preliminary injunction on geotechnical investigations for the controversial Delta Conveyance Project — a proposed 14-mile tunnel that would divert water from the Sacramento River to Central and Southern California.

Last year, Sacramento County Superior Court Judge Stephen Acquisto agreed with a group of local counties and water districts, as well as environmental and tribal organizations, that the preliminary work is a “covered action,” and the

state agency must certify that the entire project complies with the requirements of the California Delta Reform Act.

The hourlong hearing before a three-judge panel of the Third Appellate District of the California Court of Appeal in Sacramento Tuesday revolved around the question of whether the proposed preliminary work itself, as opposed to the tunnel itself, is in fact a covered action — which the water agency has to self-certify is consistent with the so-called Delta Plan for the Sacramento–San Joaquin River Delta — even though the state’s Delta Stewardship Council had said it’s not.

Elizabeth Sarine, an attorney for the California Department of Water Resources, told the panel that since the injunction was issued, the agency had filed a certification with the council for the proposed geotechnical activities, which the petitioners had an opportunity to appeal. After a public hearing, the attorney said, the council dismissed those appeals.

“As the department tried to explain to the trial court, none of the Delta Plan regulatory policies apply to a limited subset of geotechnical activities that are at issue here,” Sarine said.

Moreover, she told the panel, the proposed geotechnical work is only a very small part of the geotechnical investigations that are included in the environmental impact report prepared for the entire Delta Conveyance Project and don’t involve work on levees, trenching or any of the more intensive activities described in the report.

“A lot of those other activities aren’t proposed yet and cannot proceed until the department gets approval and funding for construction,” Sarine said.

The Delta Stewardship Council was created by the 2009 Delta Reform Act to oversee a comprehensive, long-term, legally enforceable plan to guide how multiple federal, state, and local agencies manage the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta’s water and environmental resources.

Ellen Garber, an attorney for the council, told the appellate panel that the proposed geotechnical work — which the council had found is not a covered action that requires certification for consistency with the Delta Plan — isn’t extensive or permanent enough to implicate any of the Delta Plan policies.

However, Associate Justice Louis Mauro noted, as the trial judge did last year, that the proposed preliminary activities appeared significant.

“It looks like there’s going to be many, many holes drilled up to 250 feet down, trenches and works — why is that not harm?” Mauro asked.

That original proposal was revised, according to Garber, for the certification of consistency that the council then decided wasn’t required for the more limited activities that don’t involve trenching.

Tom Keeling, an attorney speaking for the five Delta counties, local water agencies, and the environmental and tribal organizations, argued the revised proposal that the Delta Stewardship Council looked at was a “red herring” and didn’t make any difference to the trial judge’s analysis in support of the preliminary injunction.

“DWR elected not to make those geotechnical activities a separate, stand-alone project,” the attorney said. “They are part of the [Delta Conveyance Project], which is a covered action.”

Associate Justice Peter Krause wondered whether the Department of Water Resources’ “original sin” was to include the geotechnical work in the final environmental impact report for Delta Conveyance Project that it approved in late 2023 and that gave rise to the current litigation over the project.

Maybe, Krause said, the trial judge went astray by conflating the California Environmental Quality Act’s definition of a project in deciding that the preliminary work wasn’t a separate action from the entire Delta tunnel project.

Retired Associate Justice Rebecca Wiseman, who is sitting in pro tempore on the court, questioned if the panel shouldn’t give deference to the Delta Stewardship Council’s interpretation of whether the geotechnical work at issue is a covered action under the Delta Reform Act.

“The council, as I understand it, was created by the Delta Reform Act and charged with interpreting it,” Wiseman said. “As a result, there’s legislation and authority that we should show deference to their interpretation to what it means.”