

## **ACWA AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE 2024-2025 WORK PLAN**

### **Agriculture Committee Purpose:**

*"There shall be an Agriculture Committee whose duty it shall be to recommend Association policy, positions and programs to the Board of Directors, State Legislative Committee, Federal Affairs Committee or other committees, as appropriate, regarding agricultural issues affecting the interests of ACWA and its members."*

- ACWA Bylaws, Article VII, Section 5

The Agriculture Committee is staffed by ACWA's State Relations Department and strives to meet at least four times per year, typically at each ACWA Spring and Fall Conference and at two meetings between conferences.

### **ACWA's 2020-2024 Strategic Plan:**

The Agriculture Committee will be guided by ACWA's 2020-2024 Strategic Plan and will focus especially on helping the Association implement the following policy priority:

***"Sustainable and Secure Agriculture:** Advance state and federal policies founded upon sound science that guarantee a reliable and sufficient water supply that is delivered through modern conveyance to ensure a healthy and sustainable agricultural economy for the next century."*

### **Committee Responsibilities:**

In order to fulfil its purpose, the Agriculture Committee will:

- Review state and federal legislation and proposed regulations related to agricultural water issues;
- Recommend policies to the ACWA State Legislative, Federal Affairs, and regulatory committees;
- Make recommendations to ACWA committees, subcommittees, and work groups regarding issues that affect agricultural water agencies including, but not limited to, the following:
  - The Groundwater Committee on Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) implementation and groundwater replenishment;
  - The SGMA Implementation Subcommittee on State Water Resources Control Board processes related to SGMA implementation;
  - The Water Management Committee on the State Water Resources Control Board's Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan, agricultural water use efficiency, water rights, Colorado River issues, and water supply and storage issues; and

- The Water Quality Committee on agricultural water quality, state and federal Clean Water Act issues, and groundwater quality issues related to SGMA implementation.
- Advise ACWA's Government Relations advocacy team on agricultural issues;
- Provide a foundation for ACWA's work to improve state and federal agency consideration of how proposed regulations would affect agricultural water agencies;
- Support joint work groups in cooperation with other committees to proactively address issues that impact agriculture;
- Assist in the development of ACWA conference panels related to agricultural interests;
- Strengthen partnerships with other agricultural and water-focused organizations, such as the California Farm Bureau Federation and the California Farm Water Coalition; and
- Educate ACWA member agencies and the broader community through outreach, conference programs, fact sheets, and Quench California on the importance of agriculture and its interface with urban communities.

## Committee Policy Priorities:

In addition to the Strategic Plan's agricultural policy priority identified above, the Agriculture Committee will focus on the following policy priorities during the 2024-2025 term:

- Improving California's water supply reliability, specifically:
  - Maintaining or augmenting existing surface water supplies;
  - Increasing surface water storage to capture changing hydrology due to climate change;
  - Developing water in an environmentally compatible manner based on best available science;
  - Modernizing irrigation;
  - Improving drought resiliency for northern California agriculture communities;
  - Engaging on the Agreements to Support Healthy Rivers and Landscapes, formerly referred to as the Voluntary Agreements, to improve on the State Water Resources Control Board's "unimpaired flows" approach to updating the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan;
  - Supporting Proposition 1 storage projects' permitting, financing, and construction;
  - Expediting permitting requirements for constructing groundwater recharge basins; and
  - Advising on conveyance engineering, permitting, construction, maintenance, and repair.
- Implementing SGMA, including:
  - Keeping farmland in production;
  - Promoting smart land repurposing when retiring land from farming is necessary; and
  - Mitigating socio-economic harm.
- Improving water quality, especially for disadvantaged farming communities.
- Streamlining reporting requirements for relevant regulatory programs to reduce the required level of effort and financial burden for participating parties.
- Advocating with information from the Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley.

- Engaging agriculture in the Newsom Administration's implementation of the Water Resilience Portfolio.
- Utilizing Quench California to develop messaging that emphasizes the need for investing in water infrastructure and the protection of food supply.
- Engaging in meaningful conversations about adapting to and mitigating climate change, specifically about:
  - The inseparable connection between climate change, infrastructure repair, and new construction required to mitigate projected flood management and water supply challenges projected to be exacerbated by climate-induced changes in precipitation patterns and runoff, with particular focus on how those are connected to the loss of snowpack;
  - Opportunities to address the effects of climate change on Delta salinity through physical actions, such as a salinity barrier;
  - Collaboration in science and engineering to improve agricultural climate change adaptation related to water supply reliability, enhancing ecosystems, and ensuring a healthy and sustainable agricultural economy for the future; and
  - Support incentives for climate-smart farming practices and climate-smart land management when land is retired from agricultural production (e.g. farming for carbon sequestration).
- Supporting ACWA's advocacy on encouraging California to act on its Salton Sea obligations for habitat enhancement and dust mitigation.
- Updating committee members on ACWA's advocacy efforts related to water rights and headwaters issues.

These policy priorities are subject to change in order to be responsive to evolving and emerging issues.

## Committee Member Responsibilities:

The Agriculture Committee is responsible for advising the ACWA Board of Directors, committees, subcommittees, work groups, and staff on the agricultural perspective on ACWA's advocacy issues. In order to fulfil this responsibility, Agriculture Committee members may be asked to engage in activities such as assisting in preparing comments for state or federal hearings, developing programs for workshops and conferences, and providing input and draft language on state and federal legislation. While members are not expected to engage in every activity, they should strive to actively participate in activities that will best utilize the member's skillsets. Committee members should attend committee, subcommittee, and work group meetings as necessary to contribute to the committee's work.

## Subcommittees and Work Groups:

The Agriculture Committee may create subcommittees and work groups to address specific issues and advance ACWA's policy priorities. Subcommittees and work groups must include at least one member of the Agriculture Committee and can include interested persons from other ACWA committees and persons representing the interests of member agencies. Subcommittees and work groups will meet and collaborate as needed to advance their purposes.