

AGENDA
IRVINE RANCH WATER DISTRICT
WATER RESOURCES POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS
COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2025

This meeting will be held in-person at the District’s headquarters located at 15600 Sand Canyon Avenue, Irvine, California. The meeting will also be broadcasted via Webex for those wanting to observe the meeting virtually.

To observe this meeting virtually, please join online using the link and information below:

Via Webex:<https://irwd.webex.com/irwd/j.php?MTID=m282a58c235a77fd909b69ab83a9b6698>

Meeting Number (Access Code): 2484 438 0481

Meeting Password: nMcgdP3Ed23

As courtesy to the other participants, please mute your phone when you are not speaking.

PLEASE NOTE: Participants joining the meeting will be placed into the Webex lobby when the Committee enters closed session. Participants who remain in the “lobby” will automatically be returned to the open session of the Committee once the closed session has concluded.

Participants who join the meeting while the Committee is in closed session will receive a notice that the meeting has been locked. They will be able to join the meeting once the closed session has concluded.

CALL TO ORDER 8:30 a.m.

ATTENDANCE Committee Chair: Steven LaMar _____
 Committee Member (alt.): John Withers _____

<u>ALSO PRESENT</u>	Paul Cook	_____	Paul Weghorst	_____
	Neveen Adly	_____	Kevin Burton	_____
	Wendy Chambers	_____	Fiona Nye	_____
	Christine Compton	_____	Jim Colston	_____
	John Fabris	_____	Amy McNulty	_____
	Louis Bronstein	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
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PUBLIC COMMENT NOTICE

If you wish to address the Committee on any item, please submit a request to speak via the “chat” feature available when joining the meeting virtually. Remarks are limited to three minutes per speaker on each subject. Public comments are limited to three minutes per speaker on each subject. You may also submit a public comment in advance of the meeting by emailing comments@irwd.com before 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 19, 2025.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. Notes: Weghorst
2. Public Comments
3. Determine the need to discuss and/or take action on item(s) introduced that came to the attention of the District subsequent to the agenda being posted; and determine which items may be approved without discussion.

INFORMATION

4. REVIEW OF 2025 ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES AND 2026 LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES PLANNING – COMPTON

Recommendation: That the Board provide input on the proposed 2026 regional, state, and federal legislative issues of interest to IRWD, and receive and file the proposed “Initial 2026 Legislative and Regulatory Resource Allocation Plan” and the “Legislative / Regulatory Issues and Activities of High Concern to IRWD in 2026.”

OTHER BUSINESS

5. Directors’ Comments
6. Adjourn

Availability of agenda materials: Agenda exhibits and other writings that are disclosable public records distributed to all or a majority of the members of the above-named Committee in connection with a matter subject to discussion or consideration at an open meeting of the Committee are available for public inspection in the District’s office, 15600 Sand Canyon Avenue, Irvine, California (“District Office”). If such writings are distributed to members of the Committee less than 72 hours prior to the meeting, they will be available from the District Secretary of the District Office at the same time as they are distributed to Committee Members, except that if such writings are distributed one hour prior to, or during, the meeting, they will be available electronically via the Webex meeting noted. Upon request, the District will provide for written agenda materials in appropriate alternative formats, and reasonable disability-related modification or accommodation to enable individuals with disabilities to participate in and provide comments at public meetings. Please submit a request, including your name, phone number and/or email address, and a description of the modification, accommodation, or alternative format requested at least two days before the meeting. Requests should be emailed to comments@irwd.com. Requests made by mail must be received at least two days before the meeting. Requests will be granted whenever possible and resolved in favor of accessibility.

November 20, 2025
Prepared and
submitted by: C. Compton
Approved by: Paul A. Cook 

WATER RESOURCES POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

REVIEW OF 2025 ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES AND 2026 LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES PLANNING

SUMMARY:

This report provides a review of IRWD's 2025 legislative and regulatory priorities and advocacy activities. It also provides an overview of expected 2026 legislative and regulatory issues in Washington, D.C., Sacramento, and regionally. Also described are proposals that the District's associations and stakeholders are sponsoring. The report proposes an initial 2026 staff resource allocation plan for legislative and regulatory issues of importance to IRWD in the coming year. Staff recommends that the Board provide input on the proposed 2026 regional, state, and federal legislative issues of interest to IRWD, and receive and file the proposed "Initial 2026 Legislative and Regulatory Resource Allocation Plan" and the "Legislative / Regulatory Issues and Activities of High Concern to IRWD in 2026."

BACKGROUND:

2024 IRWD Priorities and Activities:

In November 2024, the Board reviewed an overview of expected 2025 legislative issues in Washington, D.C., and Sacramento, including proposals that the District's statewide associations were considering for introduction. At that time and after providing input, the Board received and filed the initial 2025 Legislative and Regulatory Resource Allocation Plan and the Legislative / Regulatory Issues and Activities of High Concern to IRWD in 2025. The document helped guide the District's governmental relations efforts this past year.

The 2025 priorities included actively engaging in the discussions related to the implementation of the creation of a statewide Low-Income Water and Wastewater Rate Assistance Program; seeking recognition of the importance of emergency water supplies, advocating for the removal of hindrances to recycled water projects, storage, and use, advocating for accelerated / continued state investment in dam safety, and engagement on a number of regulatory proposals. Over the past year, staff and IRWD's state legislative and regulatory advocates worked on each of these issues and other issues of importance to the District, including legislation related connections fees and new housing developments and proposals on climate resilience bonds.

The 2025 priorities at the federal level included federal funding for the South Valley Conveyance and Storage Project, seeking reauthorization and redefining of eligible groundwater storage projects under Bureau of Reclamation's Small Storage Grant Project, seeking creation of a federal dam safety program, seeking funding for the Santiago Dam Improvement Project, and seeking additional funding for the Syphon Reservoir Improvement Project.

Expected 2026 Federal Legislative and Regulatory Issues:

While it is expected that in 2026 Congress and federal agencies will work on a number of issues of interest to the water and wastewater communities, during the first part of 2026, Washington, D.C. will be focused on the federal budget and the expiration of the continuing resolution. Despite the Congress' and the administration's focus on the budget and other distracting issues, staff and the District's federal advocates will continue to seek progress on the key issues of interest to IRWD.

Staff, joined by the District's federal advocates, will discuss the expected 2026 political environment and federal issues of interest to IRWD with the Committee. Among the federal issues staff will discuss with the Committee are:

- The possibility of a water package during the year;
- Seeking reauthorization of and clarification of groundwater storage eligibility within the Bureau of Reclamation's Small Storage Grant Program; and
- Continued advocacy for the creation of a federal dam safety program, which focuses on funding infrastructure rehabilitation and improvement projects.

Expected 2026 Statewide Legislative and Regulatory Issues:

As is typical at the beginning of each legislative year, the California Legislature and State regulatory agencies are expected to take up a number of issues of interest to the water and wastewater communities in 2026. Staff, joined by the District's state advocates, will discuss the expected 2026 political environment and state issues of interest to IRWD with the Committee. Among the state issues staff will discuss with the Committee are:

- Obtaining an exemption from the Administrative Procedures Act for Proposition 4 funding awards;
- Low Income Water Rate Assistance and possible water tax proposals;
- Permit and housing streamlining;
- Building Standards Commission's implementation of SB 745 Drought-Resilient Buildings Regulations;
- Implementation of SB 72 (Caballero, D-Salinas);
- [SB 1157](#) Indoor Water Use Work Groups and Study;
- The State Water Resources Control Board's (State Board) consideration and adoption of new maximum contaminate levels; and
- Other State Board and other State agency regulations.

Expected 2026 Association Proposals:

IRWD's association and industry partners are in the process of completing their 2026 legislative planning. A summary of those planning efforts is provided:

Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA):

ACWA held its 2026 legislative planning meeting on November 7, 2026. At the time of the writing of this report, ACWA is considering sponsoring legislation on establishing a statewide low-income rate assistance program and legislation related to wildfire-related liability for water agencies.

Bioenergy Association of California (BAC):

BAC will hold its annual planning meeting on November 19, 2025. At the time of the writing of this report no specific proposals or topics have been released for consideration at the meeting. Staff will provide an update on any new information.

California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA):

CASA will hold its annual planning meeting on December 5, 2025. At the time of the writing of this report no specific proposals or topics have been released for consideration at the meeting. Staff will provide an update on any new information.

California Municipal Utilities Association (CMUA):

CMUA held its 2026 legislative and regulatory planning meeting on November 13, 2025. At this point in time, CMUA is not planning on sponsoring legislation next year, but will actively work on the issues of importance to its membership. Staff will provide an update on any new information.

California Special Districts Association (CSDA):

CSDA held its 2025 legislative and regulatory planning meeting on October 30, 2025. CSDA will again sponsor a concurrent resolution recognizing Special Districts Week. Staff will provide updates to the Committee and the Board, as appropriate, as these proposals move forward.

WateReuse California:

The WateReuse Association of California held its 2026 legislative and regulatory planning meeting on October 24, 2025. At the time of the writing of this report, WateReuse will be seeking and / or sponsoring legislation to obtain an Administrative Procedures Act exemption for Proposition 4 funding awards, and legislation on permitting larger maximum loan amounts under the State Revolving Fund in exchange for a local agency paying a higher interest rate. Staff will provide an update on any new information.

Possible 2026 IRWD Sponsored Legislation:

Staff will discuss with the Committee three potential concepts for IRWD-sponsored legislation in 2026. The potential concepts include:

- Legislation related to emergency water supplies, as a follow-up to AB 514 (Petrie-Norris);
- Legislation that results in efficiencies in regulatory agency review and permitting of dam safety projects;
- Legislation related to groundwater recharge;
- Legislation related to recycled water irrigation customers and commercial, industrial and institutional performance measures urban water suppliers are required to undertake; and
- Legislation related to low-income water rate assistance.

Staff is completing due diligence related to each of these proposals, reaching out to interested parties and continuing to refine the concepts. Staff will update the Committee on those efforts and would recommend that the District sponsor no more than two legislative proposals in 2026.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

Not applicable.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE:

Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board provide input on the proposed 2026 regional, state, and federal legislative issues of interest to IRWD, and receive and file the proposed “Initial 2026 Legislative and Regulatory Resource Allocation Plan” and the “Legislative / Regulatory Issues and Activities of High Concern to IRWD in 2026.”

LIST OF EXHIBITS:

Exhibit “A” – Proposed Legislative / Regulatory Issues and Activities of High Concern to IRWD in 2026

Exhibit “B” – Proposed IRWD’s Initial 2026 Legislative and Regulatory Resource Allocation Plan

Exhibit “A”

LEGISLATIVE / REGULATORY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES OF HIGH CONCERN TO IRWD IN 2026

As a state and federal leader in water resources public policy and governance, IRWD works to promote policy initiatives that allow the District, along with other water purveyors in California, to enhance the quality and reliability of water supplies throughout the State. While IRWD will engage in a number of legislative and regulatory issues of interest to the District, the following are specific issues and activities of high concern to IRWD in 2026:

2026 Federal Issues and Activities of High Concern:

- 1) Seek federal funding for the South Valley Conveyance and Storage Project;
- 2) Seek the reauthorization of, and redefining of eligible groundwater storage projects under the Bureau of Reclamation’s Small Storage Grant Project;
- 3) Seek the creation of a federal dam safety program to provide federal funding to improve dam safety and modernization at reservoirs important to water supply;
- 4) Seek federal funding for the Santiago Creek Dam Improvement Project; and
- 5) Seek federal approval of a U.S. National Forest Service and IRWD property exchange for the portion of the Modjeska Reservoir that was constructed, via permit, on National Forest Service land.

2026 State Issues and Activities of High Concern:

- 1) Advocate for the enactment of an exemption to the Administrative Procedures Act for Proposition 4 programs and funding awards;
- 2) Continue to engage in discussions regarding the creation of a statewide Low-Income Water and Wastewater Rate Assistance Program;
- 3) Protect IRWD’s various revenue sources, and method of setting rates and other charges, in order to ensure that the District can continue to provide high quality services to its customers at low rates. Specifically, retain the District’s ability to use its water budget-based rate structure and ability to invest its replacement fund;
- 4) Engage in discussions surrounding the Proposition 218 reform efforts to protect IRWD’s interests. Communicate the District’s concern over any water rate legislation which is not consistent with the California Constitution, not voluntary in nature, or that does not provide sufficient clarity or flexibility to water agencies;
- 5) Engage in the conversations related to water and wastewater provider liability, as it relates to wildfire;

- 6) Seek recognition of the importance of emergency water supplies in water resiliency, pre-emergency designation of such supplies, and protection of their use during droughts or other water shortages;
- 7) Promote the expanded use of recycled water, and its acceptance as a resource, by advocating for the removal of hindrances to recycled water projects, storage, and use through the implantation of SB 31 (McNerney);
- 8) Engage with the Building Standards Commission on its implementation of SB 745, Drought-Resilient Buildings, and the associated changes to the Building Code proposed as a result of implementing that bill;
- 9) Advocate for accelerated / continued State investment in dam safety and the modernization of dams important to water supplies by seeking the Department of Water Resources' reestablishment of the Dam Safety Program guidelines and call for projects; and
- 10) Engage with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) on the studies and work group they are undertaking related to SB 1157 (Hertzberg) and the indoor water use standards set in that bill, and implementation of SB 72 (Caballero).

2026 Regional Issues and Activities of High Concern:

- 1) Actively participate in discussions with the South Coast Air Quality Management District regarding proposed amendments to rules and regulations that would impact IRWD, and
- 2) Work with the Regional Water Quality Control Board on adjusting storm-induced overflow protections and expand the use of recycled water in decorative lakes.

DRAFT
**IRWD’s Initial 2026 Legislative and Regulatory
Resource Allocation Plan**

PLEASE NOTE: The proposed initial resource allocations are aimed at balancing the importance of an issue to IRWD, the projected level of District resources available to work on the issue, and the likelihood that the issue will be raised and the District will be able to shape the policy, legislative and regulatory discussions or outcomes related to the issue in 2025. The allocation of District resources may change over the course of the year, based on continued input from the Water Resources Policy and Communications Committee and the Board of Directors. The allocation categories are intended to reflect the following expected levels of resource use:

- Very High - IRWD’s resource allocation would be significant. Staff and IRWD’s legislative advocates would dedicate a larger portion of their overall advocacy efforts to the issues designated “Very High” and would actively seek to be a key stakeholder shaping the policy, legislative or regulatory discussions related to those issues.
- High - IRWD’s resource allocation would be considerable. Staff and IRWD’s legislative advocates would work to create strategic opportunities to shape the policy, legislative or regulatory discussions and outcomes related to issues designated “High.”
- Moderate - IRWD’s resource allocation would be modest. Staff and IRWD’s advocates would actively engage in association and industry conversations on issues designated “Moderate” but would expect to work largely through issue-specific coalitions on these issues. Staff and IRWD’s advocates would work to identify and capitalize on opportunities to shape narrow aspects of a policy, legislative or regulatory outcome related to such issues.
- Low - IRWD’s resource allocation would be low. Staff and IRWD’s advocates would track policy, legislative and regulatory discussions and outcomes related to issues designated “Low” and would continue to seek positive outcomes for the District through IRWD’s association and industry partners. Staff and IRWD’s advocates would work on such issues should resources be available. For issues that are currently not expected to be acted upon legislatively or regulatorily this next year and are given a “Low” initial allocation, staff will reevaluate the allocation when action appears likely and increase it, as appropriate.

DRAFT Expected 2026 Legislative and Regulatory Issues	Proposed Allocation of IRWD Resources
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<u>FEDERAL ISSUES</u>	
South Valley Conveyance and Storage Project – Seek federal funding for the project by engaging with the Bureau of Reclamation and Congress on the project.	Very High
Small Storage Grant Program Reauthorization – Seek the reauthorization of, and redefining of eligible groundwater storage projects under, the Bureau of Reclamation’s Small Storage Grant Project.	Very High
Dam Safety Program – Advocate for federal investment in dam safety and the modernization of dams important to water supplies.	High
Irvine Lake and Santiago Creek Dam Improvement Project – Seek funding for the dam safety project at Irvine Lake.	High
U.S. Forest Service and IRWD Parcel Exchange – Seek federal approval of a U.S. National Forest Service and IRWD property exchange for the portion of the Modjeska Reservoir that was constructed, via permit, on National Forest Service land.	High
Atmospheric River Research – Advocate for federal programs and funding for atmospheric river research aimed at improving reservoir operations.	Moderate
Low Income Water and Wastewater Rate Assistance Program – Continue to engage in discussion regarding the creation of a federal Low-Income Water Rate Assistance Program.	Moderate
PFAS CERCLA Exemption – Engage on efforts to designate PFOA and PFOS as “hazardous substances” under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), and advocate for exemptions from liability for water and wastewater utilities.	Moderate
PFAS – Advocate for a science-based and cost-based approach in the development of PFAS regulations	Moderate
Water Resource Development Act – Seek enactment of a WRDA bill every two years which is beneficial to IRWD and Orange County, and which includes authorizations for the water infrastructure programs and funding supported by IRWD.	Moderate
Bureau of Reclamation’s Title XVI, Water Reclamation and Reuse Program, Reauthorization – Advocate for the reauthorization of Title XVI and an increased funding authorization for the Water Reclamation and Reuse Program.	Low
Clean Water Act Definition of “Waters of the U.S.” – Advocate for changes in the definition of “Waters of the U.S.” that limits impact to IRWD and its facilities and includes an exemption for constructed treatment wetlands.	Low*
Colorado River – Monitor the long-term planning effort to protect the Colorado River system.	Low
Delta Conveyance Implementation – Advocate for a change in the operation of the Delta, consistent with the co-equal goals of ecosystem protection and water supply reliability; seek the federal actions necessary to implement a permanent solution in the Bay Delta.	Low
Lead and Copper Rule – Monitor implementation of the federal Lead and Copper Rule.	Low
Syphon Reservoir Improvement Project – Continue to engage with the Bureau of Reclamation and congressional staff on additional funding for the project.	Low*

DRAFT Expected 2026 Legislative and Regulatory Issues	Proposed Allocation of IRWD Resources
Tax-Exempt Municipal Bonds – Maintain the current tax-exempt status of municipal bonds with the exception of restoring the tax-exempt status of local government advanced refundings. Oppose prohibitions on the use of tax-exempt bonds within WIFI or any similar program.	Low
Tax Parity for Water Efficiency Rebates – Advocate for tax parity between water and energy efficiency rebates.	Low
Total Maximum Daily Load Limits – Advocate that the Environmental Protection Agency use the best available science when setting Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) limitations related to Clean Water Act compliance and approve TMDLs for California based on relevant studies related to California’s environment and local conditions.	Low
STATE ISSUES	
Administrative Procedures Act Exemption for Prop. 4 Funding Programs – Advocate that the Legislature and Governor enact an exemption to the Administrative Procedures Act for Proposition 4 programs and funding awards.	Very High
Drought Resilient Buildings - Engage with the Building Standards Commission on its implementation of SB 745, Drought-Resilient Buildings, and the associated changes to the Building Code proposed as a result of implementing that bill.	Very High
Proposition 218 Reforms – Engage in discussions surrounding the Proposition 218 reform efforts to protect IRWD’s interests. Communicate the District’s concern over any water rate legislation which is not consistent with the California Constitution, not voluntary in nature, or that does not provide sufficient clarity or flexibility to water agencies.	Very High
Low Income Water and Wastewater Rate Assistance Program – Continue to engage in discussion regarding the creation of a statewide Low-Income Water and Wastewater Rate Assistance Program.	Very High
Water Rates & District Revenues – Protect IRWD’s various revenue sources, and method of setting rates and other charges, in order to ensure that the District can continue to provide high quality services to its customers at low rates. Specifically, retain the District’s ability to use its water budget-based rate structure and ability to invest its replacement fund.	Very High
Emergency Supplies – Seek recognition of the importance of emergency water supplies in water resiliency, pre-emergency designation of such supplies, and protection of their use during droughts or other water shortages.	High
Dam Safety Program – Advocate for accelerated / continued State investment in dam safety and the modernization of dams important to water supplies. Advocate for the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to reestablish the State Dam Safety Program to make Proposition 4 funding awards.	High
DWR – Engage with DWR on policy, regulatory and permits issues of concern to IRWD, including the implementation of SB 72.	High
Indoor Water Use Studies – Engage with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) on the studies and work group they are undertaking related to SB 1157 (Hertzberg) and the indoor water use standards set in that bill.	High

DRAFT Expected 2026 Legislative and Regulatory Issues	Proposed Allocation of IRWD Resources
Recycled Water – Promote the expanded use of recycled water, and its acceptance as a resource, by advocating for the removal of hindrances to recycled water projects, storage, and use. Seek to: • Appropriate updates to the State Board’s Recycled Water Policy. • Remove recycled water as a waste. • Promote a science-based, “fit for purpose” regulatory approach to recycled water. • Advocate for the expansion of potable water reuse in California. • Seek updates to Title 17 and 22, including relief of dual-plumbed inspection/testing requirements.	High
Wildfire Prevention and Liability – Engaged in the conversations related to water and wastewater provider liability, as it relates to wildfire.	High
Atmospheric River Research – Advocate for state programs and funding for atmospheric river research aimed at improving reservoir operations.	Moderate
Bioenergy – Continue to advocate for the permissive and beneficial use of bioenergy and biosolid waste-to-energy programs and projects.	Moderate
Biosolids – Seek a broader spectrum of permissible uses of biosolids byproducts including a possible “healthy soils” designation. Engage on the State Board’s review of the General Order (WDR) for the use of biosolids on land.	Moderate
Brown Act – Monitor proposed changes to the Brown Act that could impact IRWD costs including new requirements for local agency.	Moderate
CECs and PFAS – Engage with stakeholders, industry associations, and regulatory agencies on establishing better processes for identifying and regulating contaminants of emerging concern (CECs). Engage with stakeholders, industry associations, and regulatory agencies on microplastics and PFAS, and the regulatory actions proposed by state agencies including regulatory actions that would restrict land application or other uses of Class A and Class B biosolids due to PFAS.	Moderate
Climate Change Adaptation – Engage in policy discussions related to climate change adaptation within the water and wastewater sectors.	Moderate
General Plan Updates – Engage in policy discussions related to general plan guidelines updates, specifically as it relates to the proposed additional of water element.	Moderate
Groundwater Clean-up – Support efforts to obtain State funding to clean up groundwater contamination in the Orange County Basin, and funding for basin replenishment.	Moderate
Groundwater Management & Water Banking – Engage productively in discussions of groundwater management in California to protect IRWD’s interests. Promote greater water banking opportunities to benefit IRWD banking programs.	Moderate
Groundwater Recharge Incentives – Work to develop State incentives for property owners to make their property available for groundwater recharge during “wet years” to enable California to capture water, which would otherwise be lost, for storage and beneficial use during drier years.	Moderate
Homelessness – Within the larger discussions on addressing homeless, ensure that the impacts of homeless on water and wastewater agencies is recognized, and that agencies continue to retain adequate authority to secure their facilities.	Moderate

DRAFT Expected 2026 Legislative and Regulatory Issues	Proposed Allocation of IRWD Resources
Ocean Acidification and Ocean Discharges – Engage productively in discussions surrounding proposals to eliminate substantially change the regulations surrounding ocean discharges to protect the District’s interests while addressing ocean acidification.	Moderate
Public Fleets –Engage in the implementation of regulations and other policy discussion concerning the zero emission public fleet regulations and advocate for appropriate exemptions for the public fleets of water and wastewater providers that consider the constraints of certain technologies on the provision of essential public services during or after an emergency.	Moderate
Public Records Act – Monitor proposed changes to the Public Records Act that could impact IRWD costs including new requirements for local agency websites, data production and reporting.	Moderate
Safe Drinking Water- Engage on the implementation of the Safe and Affordable for Equity and Resilience Program (SAFER) to ensure that the program is implemented in a way to effectively move communities to sustainable access to safe drinking water.	Moderate
State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) Climate Change Resolution – Engage with the State Board on its update of the Board’s Climate Change Resolution.	Moderate
State Board Water Resources Control Board – Engage with the State Board on policy, regulatory and permit issues of concern to IRWD.	Moderate
State Lead and Copper Rule Changes – Monitor developments and proposed revisions to State lead and copper rules, advocate for changes that effectively protect public health while limiting the annual testing burden on water agencies (e.g. seek modification to the proposed school and childcare facility testing schedule).	Moderate
Water Efficiency – Engage with the Legislature, State Board and Department of Water Resources (DWR) on legislation related to water efficiency and changes to the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance.	Moderate
Water Transfers and Markets – Engage with the California Department of Water Resources, in coordination with IRWD’s Water Banking partners, in advocating for expedited processes to facilitate water transfers/exchanges and streamlined water marketing.	Moderate
Water Law Modernization – Monitor and engage, as appropriate, on the efforts to “modernize” California’s water law, including laws related to water rights.	Moderate
Water Supply Assessments – Monitor and engage, as appropriate, on the efforts to restore or replace the requirement for a water supply assessment on certain housing developments that was eliminated by last year’s CEQA reforms.	Moderate
Water Quality – Engage productively in policy discussions related to changes in water quality and various discharge permits in order to protect the District’s interests.	Moderate
Website – Engage productively in policy discussions related to local agency websites and requirements dictated by the State for those sites.	Moderate
Delta Conveyance Implementation – Advocate for a change in the operation of the Delta, consistent with the co-equal goals of ecosystem protection and water supply reliability. Seek the State actions necessary to implement a solution in the Bay Delta and oppose efforts to make implementation of a solution more difficult.	Low

DRAFT Expected 2026 Legislative and Regulatory Issues	Proposed Allocation of IRWD Resources
Drought Response – Continue to advocate that the State’s drought response be based on a data-driven approach and consider the reliability of urban water supplier supply portfolios by using a water efficiency standards-based approach as eliminating mandatory percent reductions for those agencies whose total water demands are below the cumulative standards.	Low*
Energy – Advocate for policies that encourage energy reliability in Orange County, and energy efficiency or reductions in embedded energy in the water and wastewater sectors, including use of energy conservation funding within the water sector, and expanded availability of direct access programs, without an increase in cost to or mandates on local entities; seek incentives for energy self-reliance projects (i.e. storage, generation, efficiency).	Low
Operators Certifications – Address inconsistent certification processes for operator certifications (treatment, distribution, and recycling). Monitor for changes in certification requirements.	Low
Political Reform Act / FPPC Issues – Monitor for changes to the Political Reform Act and FPPC regulations that could impact IRWD.	Low
Property Tax Allocations – Protect existing property tax allocations to special districts.	Low
Proposition 218 Reforms –If Proposition 218 reforms are proposed, engage in discussions surrounding the reform efforts to protect IRWD’s interests. Communicate the District’s concern over any water rate legislation which is not consistent with the California Constitution, not voluntary in nature, or that does not provide sufficient clarity or flexibility to water agencies.	Low*
Public Agency Liability and Public Contracting – Oppose efforts to impose greater liability on public agencies for work performed by its contractors. Oppose proposals that make public contracting for labor, service or public works projects more cumbersome including reductions in contract retentions or changing the criteria agencies may consider when awarding contracts.	Low
Plumbing Code Updates – Seek clarification that Chapter 15 of the California Plumbing Code does not apply to recycled water irrigation sites. Work with the Building Standards Commission, Housing and Community Development Department, and Department of Water Resources on revisions to the California Plumbing Code during code revisions.	Low*
Real Estate Investments – Engage on regulatory or legislative proposals that may impact IRWD’s ability to maintain a high return of investment on its real estate investments.	Low*
Unfunded Pension Liability – Oppose legislation or regulations that would increase IRWD’s pension liability either by making local agencies responsible for the pension liabilities of other entities (e.g. joint powers authorities) or by failing to recognize the liability reduction benefits of Section 115 Trust and other pre-funding efforts. Seek state support for refinements in the GASB rules that limit recognition of the benefits Section 115 Trust.	Low
Video Recording Retention Periods – Advocate for greater flexibility for special districts related to the required retention period prescribed by law for video recordings.	Low
Water Tax – Consistent with the Board’s adopted policy on a statewide public goods charge, oppose a statewide tax on water for Low Income Rate Assistance or to fund resiliency efforts that are sent to the State.	Low*

DRAFT Expected 2026 Legislative and Regulatory Issues	Proposed Allocation of IRWD Resources
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<u>REGIONAL ISSUES</u>	
South Coast Air Quality Management District – Actively participate in discussions with the South Coast Air Quality Management District regarding proposed amendments to rules and regulations. Advocate for reasonable changes and updates to AQMD regulations, including but not limited to achieving the Clean Air Act attainment standards in the basin, implementing reasonable and cost-effective emission reduction measures, and support locally focused and funded emission reduction projects.	Very High
Santa Ana and San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Boards –Work with the Boards on issues of concern to IRWD including adjusting storm-induced overflow protections and expanding the use of recycled water in decorative lakes.	High
Recycled Water Use Site Inspection and Testing – Work with Orange County Health Care Agency on completion of the Orange County Guidelines which include the frequencies and methods for conducting recycled water use site visual inspections and periodic cross-connection tests.	Low

*Increase allocation of resources if warranted due to legislative or regulatory activity.

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