

AB 1323 (WEBER): SUSTAINABLE WATER USE AND DEMAND REDUCTION: STAKEHOLDER WORKGROUP

POSITION: The Chamber's Energy & Water Committee voted to SUPPORT AB 1323 on April 6, 2017.

STATUS: AB 353 was introduced by Assemblymember Shirley Weber on February 17, 2017. The bill was referred to the Assembly Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife on March 13, 2017.

AT-A-GLANCE

AB 1323 establishes a stakeholder group that would work on creating recommendations for the development of long-term water use efficiency standards as well as performance measures in the state of California.

SUMMARY

On November 30, 2016, the Department of Water Resources and State Water Resources Control Board released a draft regulatory framework for long-term water use efficiency standards. The final framework will be released by Governor Brown very soon, and is expected to include proposed legislative concepts to modify statutes for imposing and implementing long-term standards. It is unclear how the recommendations within the final framework will be developed, and whether or not the efforts by water agencies to build drought-resilient water supplies will be recognized.

Numerous bills have recently been introduced to address the issue of long-term water use efficiency. These bills include perspectives from specific industries and groups, however, it is unclear how these different visions for long-term water use efficiency will be reconciled. AB 1323 would establish a stakeholder workgroup that would propose recommendations for the development of long-term water use efficiency standards as well as performance measures in the state of California. The formation of this workgroup will seek to develop recommendations and legislative fixes as a coalition, instead of having numerous different bills that are trying to address the regulatory framework separately.

ANALYSIS

If passed, AB 1323 would provide for a deliberate and meaningful process for a wide range of stakeholders. The group would be able to hear from varied perspectives and work through issues for one calendar year, and develop recommendations for implementation of the long-term water use efficiency standards. This coordinated effort has the ability to maintain control at the local level.

Once the final framework is released, water agencies and businesses need to be at the table to discuss how to best address cost issues associated with long-term water use. Water agencies, like the San Diego County Water Authority, that have taken the necessary steps to diversify its water supply portfolio and investing in water recycling as a method for conserving water should be recognized. The investments the San Diego region has made in water use efficiency and recycling need to be accounted for when regulations are being set at the state level.

SUPPORT

San Diego County Water Authority

OPPOSITION

None known