

# WATER TRANSFER PROGRAM

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## Background/Introduction

The last update provided to the Policy Group on the water transfer program was at the June 4 - 5 meeting. Attached is the current work-in-progress *Water Transfer Policy Framework* white paper. Though the water transfer element is still under development, the scope and direction have been well established. This element of the Bay-Delta solution will “help resolve constraints in the existing water transfer market, providing necessary protections for third party and source area interests while facilitating a more active transfer market”.

In the revised draft Programmatic EIR/S, the Water Transfer element will have recommended solutions for each of the issues presented in Section 4. The solutions will vary in form between discrete actions and defined processes.

## Program Description

The Water Transfer Policy Framework is designed to:

- achieve improvements in the efficiency of the water transfer process,
- to facilitate the further development of a statewide water transfer market, and
- provide protection from third party impacts (those not directly involved in the transaction) and local groundwater or environmental impacts

## Key Issue

Many of the past months have been focused on developing a solution to resource protection issues raised by third party and source area interests. Originally, the concept of a “clearinghouse” entity was discussed to perform the following:

- collect baseline data and perform baseline analysis on data important to understanding potential impacts from water transfers;
- collect data on specific water transfer proposals prior to approval of the transfer;
- make all data and baseline analysis publically available so that decision could be made with all parties in possession of complete and accurate information; and,
- perform additional analysis as a condition of permit approval or facility access, including: 1) local groundwater impacts; 2) cumulative impacts when viewed in context of other transfers from the same source area; and 3) third party socio-economic impacts.

More recently, working with the BDAC Water Transfer Work Group, we have refined the functions of a “clearinghouse” and divided their responsibility into two areas:

- informational, data collection, and public participation functions performed by a “clearinghouse” entity,
- under the existing authorities of the SWRCB, DWR, and USBR, additional impact analysis for specific transfer proposals would be required prior to transfer approval or facility access.

More discussion is presented in Section 6.

Working with the BDAC Water Transfer Work Group, the Transfer Agency Group and through other forums, we will continue to formulate the various proposed solutions for the identified issues.