

# On Tap: Water Transfer Information Online

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This paper explains the On Tap project purpose and structure:

- Background
- Responsible Agencies
- Goals of On Tap
- Web Site Sections
- Audience
- Communication

## Background

On Tap is an online information source for California water market transactions, being developed as part of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. CALFED recognized early that an effective water market is one of several water management tools needed to improve the State's water supply reliability. CALFED also recognized that a functioning water market already exists. The existing market has raised concerns regarding adverse impacts to other users, rural economies, and the environment. Past water transfers have highlighted inconsistent interpretations of state water law, the need for reliable conveyance access for cross-Delta transfers, and a complex approval process.

CALFED has identified several actions aimed at improving the market, including actions to 1) increase conveyance availability, 2) lower transaction costs, and 3) increase information sharing. CALFED believes improved information sharing will reduce conflict and help streamline the process.

On Tap is the primary tool to improve information sharing. CALFED has authorized \$350,000 of federally appropriated "non-ecosystem" funds to help develop On Tap. In addition, the three agencies with water transfer jurisdiction responsibility have committed staff and resources to develop this valuable resource tool.

## Responsible Agencies

Three CALFED agencies---the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), California Department of Water Resources (DWR), and State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) hold responsibility for reviewing most water market transaction proposals. These agencies have committed to collaborate in developing and maintaining this online resource. Key agency staff have been and will continue to clarify processes and policies and integrate current protocols into the site. Changes or clarification in agency policies and procedures may result, requiring direct high-level management involvement.

## Goals of On Tap

The web site goals include:

- Disclose agencies' approval policies and procedures
- Streamline approval process for applicants and reviewers, thereby reduce costs
- Improve responsible agency coordination
- Create a public forum for the water market
- Disseminate up-to-date information on transfer activities

## Web Site Sections

The web site is expected to include the following:

- Database of historic transactions and those pending responsible agency approval
- Software program to assist proponents with responsible agency approval processes
- Public forum to exchange information on water market issues
- Forecasts of conveyance availability as projected by DWR and USBR
- Related tools, links, research, and information

## Audience

The audience targeted to use this tool has a wide spectrum of needs and objectives. Users include:

- Responsible agencies (USBR, DWR, SWRCB)
- Water professionals (individual buyers/sellers, private brokers, public water districts, consultants/engineers/ attorneys)
- Third party interests (water users, environmental groups, local government)
- Public policy/research interests (legislators, advocates, researchers)

## Communication

To ensure that all partners and audience segments are represented in the development of the project, communication entails two aspects: 1) inreach, and 2) outreach. Inreach targets USBR, DWR, and SWRCB staff. Outreach will target the remaining audience groups, especially those who participate in water market transactions.

The On Tap development team will ensure targeted audiences understand the process in order to participate effectively during development. The team will provide briefings and presentations, internal memos and issue papers, as well as one-on-one discussions. The team will also facilitate usability testing with audience focus groups and continue this testing in an iterative process.