



## CUWA Policy Principles

### Water Accessibility

Updated November 19, 2019

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Over the last several years, CUWA has been working with the State Water Resources Control Board and others to explore workable and timely solutions for restoring access to safe drinking water in communities across California, both rural and urban, without exacerbating affordability concerns. The following policy principles summarize CUWA's views on water accessibility.

- 1. CUWA supports access to safe and reliable water for all Californians.** Nearly 1 million people in California, largely in rural areas, are unable to turn on their tap and access clean, safe drinking water. The water systems serving these communities often do not have sufficient technical, managerial, and/or financial capacity (TMF) to comply with regulations and reliably produce safe drinking water or identify alternative supplies. CUWA endeavors to make a positive contribution by understanding root causes, exploring innovative technologies and operational models, and engaging partners for lasting solutions.
- 2. Funding mechanisms must enable and prioritize long-term, sustainable solutions.** The Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund (SB 200) and other financial sources should be leveraged to ensure that systems have a sufficient rate base to support ongoing TMF capacity of the system. CUWA is committed to supporting the development of targeted solutions addressing a range of water quality, utility capacity, and financial challenges, while also being mindful of affordability challenges.
- 3. Solutions for restoring access to rural disadvantaged communities (DACs) are within reach.** CUWA, in partnership with the State and the environmental justice community, is taking steps to better define the problem so that viable solutions can be implemented. A toolbox of approaches directed at specific root causes, including consolidation, operational changes, treatment solutions, and regional partnerships, can achieve sustainable compliance with public health requirements for currently underperforming systems.
- 4. Focusing initially on systems with persistent water quality issues can accelerate progress.** Identifying systems with persistent violations for the same contaminant over multiple years can help bring early results to systems most in need of assistance. Significant progress can be made by initially targeting a subset of the most at-risk systems to restore water quality and inform next steps.
- 5. Proactive planning is essential amid growing concern around constituents of emerging concern (CECs).** Utilities face a number of ongoing concerns with water quality and maintaining compliance due to issues such as aging infrastructure, CECs, and climate change. Effective long-term planning that incorporates future challenges allows utilities to remain stewards of public health and uphold the responsibility to deliver safe, reliable, and affordable drinking water to consumers.
- 6. New water systems must be sustainably sized and have adequate TMF capacity.** Incorporating proposed new systems into a broader framework with sufficient rate base, technical capacity, and managerial capacity to be sustainable is key to ensuring long-term, consistent, high-quality service to customers. Land use agencies and others responsible for approving creation of small water systems need to support statewide efforts by better accounting for requisite success factors.

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