

Sustainable Agriculture Water Policy Needs

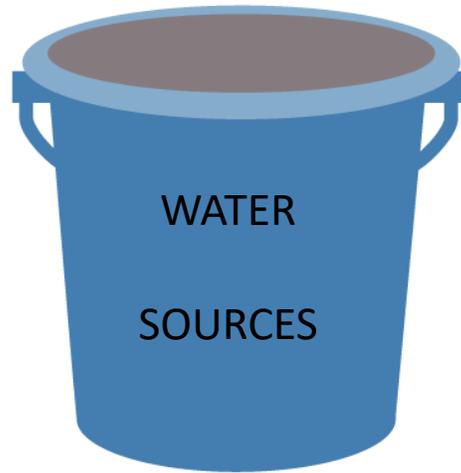
Developing a Process to Meet Current and Future Changes

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Water Policy Challenges



Headwaters Management
Land Uses and Impacts
Climate Change Adaptation



Water Delivery Systems
Water Requirements
Conservation



Discharges
Impacts of Diversions

Water Policy Analysis

- The analysis for each bucket is the same
- The questions include what the needed:
 - Laws, rules and regulations
 - Institutions and governance
 - Management plans; strategic, financial and most importantly natural resource management

Analysis results should include findings, gaps and recommendations for developing the right solutions for the future

Shared Gaps

- Water Sources – most headwater lands are federally owned and operated.
 - USDA Forest Service land management plans are constantly challenged = devastating fires, yet provide a substantial portion of water for rights governed by the States
 - What policies and institutional changes can we develop to support optimum headwater management?
- Water Uses – water management strategies need careful review for sustainability, benefits and impacts
 - CA example = Sustainable Groundwater Management Act has consequences, projected loss of up to 1,000,000 acres of productive farmland in San Joaquin Valley, loss of farmland will impact already stressed small farm communities and there are no clear institutional candidates that can manage the retired lands

GAPS cont'd

- Water Use Impacts – discharge and diversion impacts also need ongoing review
- Discharges
 - Both CA and Arizona must deal with wastewater recycling and agricultural return flows that increase salinity in groundwater basins
 - Discharges to qualified recharge areas must be controlled to avoid causing quality exceedances
- Diversion impacts
 - Surface water diversions have been challenged with claims for instream needs, policy adoption needs to choose the plans that optimize **conditions** and avoid unreasonable goals and objectives

Policy Summary

- Policy analysis needs to become **a routine** in each of the areas of need and agriculture needs to play a prominent role in the process
- The questions that always need to be answered include:
 - Do we have the right laws and rules, the right institutions and governance mechanisms and the right management plans to be able to sustain uses of water and manage the impacts of use, but most importantly to protect the source, the natural environment
- The process is not necessarily solely in the purview of legislative bodies but they have to pass any needed legislation so their experts should be involved early and often