



## **\$56 Million Package for 2016-17 Budget to Advance the Human Right to Water**

Over one million Californians are impacted by unsafe water annually, and almost 13,000 Californians have completely run out of water during this drought. Over the last two years, the state has committed significant resources through Proposition 1 and Cleanup and Abatement to address water challenges statewide, yet California's small, disadvantaged communities continue to lack the safeguards, tools, and resources to improve their situation. An ongoing source of sustainable funding is needed to secure safe, clean and affordable drinking water and sanitation (the Human Right to Water) for all Californians. However, a substantial and immediate investment now through the 2016-2017 budget is critical to meeting those needs.

**Safe, affordable drinking water access must be a priority in the 2016-17 California budget.** The following is a proposed infusion of funding in the 2016-2017 California budget designed to increase technical assistance and financial resources to advance the human right to water for all Californians, targeting communities with no water, communities and schools with contaminated drinking water, and other highly vulnerable communities, including those served by domestic wells.

**1) BUDGET PROPOSAL: \$20 million (General Fund)** in addition to proposed funds in the Governor's Budget to adequately provide for permanent, interim and emergency solutions to deliver safe drinking water to small disadvantaged communities (DACs) and low-income households.

- Includes community water systems, schools, state small systems and private well owners. Supports connecting homes currently on wells and failing public water systems to sustainable community systems, drilling new wells or providing interim contaminant treatment. Identifies funds that may be directed to low-income households without safe water as emergency supplemental relief benefits.
  - Includes technical and operations assistance for emergency needs, and further ensures that existing Proposition 1 technical assistance can be used to address DAC and tribal needs beyond capital improvement projects to address critical water and wastewater needs.
- **NEED:** Water in the homes of more than 1 million Californians failed to meet safe drinking water standards in 2014. At the same time, thousands of Californians -- the majority of whom are living in rural small and disadvantaged communities -- are already living in crisis, experiencing complete water loss, or extreme and acute impacts due to increasing water scarcity and groundwater contamination. In the worst cases, communities have run out of water completely. The Governor's

***\$56 Million Package for 2016-17 Budget to Advance the Human Right to Water***

2016-17 budget outlines increased funding for OES, DWR, State Water Board, and other agencies for emergency drought programs; however, the Governor's proposal does not include sufficient funding for permanent drinking water solutions.

**2) BUDGET PROPOSAL: \$10 million (General Fund) to address the lack of drinking water access and water quality issues in schools**

- Funds water bottle filling station installations, with point of use filtration when necessary, to deliver safe, fresh drinking water to hundreds of thousands of students who do not currently have access to it.
- Depending on the need for filtration, \$10 million would provide funding for roughly 2,000 water bottle filling stations, which would serve approximately 400,000 students.
- **NEED:** In many rural California communities and schools, inadequate infrastructure and contaminated water are commonplace. Schools throughout California have been impacted by unsafe drinking water at the tap, and many schools face recurring challenges to providing safe water. Preliminary research suggests an estimated 813 –1,522 schools were impacted by unsafe drinking water from 2003-2014.

**3) BUDGET PROPOSAL: \$25 million (Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund) for water metering, onsite wellhead leak detection & repair, appliance replacement, and other water efficiency investments / technologies in DACs and Low Income households to reduce energy and water use and waste, and to promote water affordability and system sustainability**

- Target 50% of this DAC / LI household set-aside to small communities and small community water systems.
- Prioritization should also be given to small communities located in critically over-drafted groundwater basins based on the degree of severity of the overdraft conditions.
- Ensures that use of water metering systems for customers does not trigger the loss of tax exemption status of non-profit mutual water companies.
- **NEED:** Inefficient water delivery systems, leaking plumbing and outdated appliances in small, disadvantaged communities throughout the state, taxes our water supply, creates unnecessary energy use, and contributes to unaffordable drinking water rates. At least 9 public water systems serving small, disadvantaged communities sought financial assistance from the 2015-16 Drinking Water State Revolving Fund for water metering and efficiency projects. The cumulative need for those systems, which are not, promised funding through DWSRF totals approximately \$31.5 million. This is a minute representation of the need for water metering and efficiency investments in DACs located in over-drafted groundwater basins that are most at-risk of experiencing insufficient water supply or complete water loss.

**4) BUDGET PROPOSAL: \$1 million (General Fund) for data collection and management to track access to safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation (wastewater) in CA, including schools and residents served by state smalls and private wells.**

- **NEED:** There is a tremendous need for ensuring SWRCB, DWR, and OEHA are developing and sharing data necessary to track human right to water implementation in California. The SWRCB Drinking Water Program is critically understaffed, and there is virtually no identification of private well owners and schools' risks to lacking access to safe, affordable water. In particular SWRCB needs more resources for data collection, management, and tracking to improve transparency and targeting of resources to state small and private well communities and schools without safe drinking water.

***For questions related to this fact sheet, please contact:***

Asha Kreiling: 916-706-3346; [asha.kreiling@communitywatercenter.org](mailto:asha.kreiling@communitywatercenter.org)

Ari Neumann: 916-447-2854 x 1032; [aneumann@rcac.org](mailto:aneumann@rcac.org)

# \$10 Million for School Water Access and Quality

(No. 2 Budget Proposal in the \$56 Million Package)

An estimated 25 percent of California schools do not provide free, fresh drinking water to students at meal times every day; despite state and federal laws that require it. Even worse, according to the most recent state survey nearly 500 small community water systems and schools haven't supplied safe drinking water to their communities and schoolchildren for years, or even decades. We know these numbers underestimate the problem, because no state agency regularly maps this data.

Adequate water consumption is critical to basic health. If children and youth do not drink water, they often drink sugary beverages instead which can lead to diseases like type-2 diabetes and childhood obesity. There also is a strong correlation between educational achievement and hydration. Without water, learning is impaired. However, if the available water is contaminated, children should not drink it.

Contaminated water is associated with cancer, impaired development, cardiovascular disease, neurotoxicity and diabetes. California's drought makes the need for access to safe drinking water even more urgent. Students in hundreds of California communities cannot drink the water in their homes; either the wells have gone dry or the available water is contaminated, and

low-income families are disproportionately impacted.

We can do something about this. With a state budget allocation we can ensure the human right to water by installing safe, inviting water fountains and water bottle filling stations in California schools to provide an ongoing source of safe drinking

water for hundreds of thousands of children and youth. Delivering fresh water in school, combined with education to dispel negative tap water perceptions can help increase overall water consumption and improve student health.

State and federal laws require that schools provide access to drinking water at school during meal times.

But schools that are just beginning to recover from the past few years' dire funding circumstances don't have the resources to install fountains or water bottle filling stations to deliver reliable water to students. Instead many are struggling to meet this important mandate by providing stopgap measures such as bottled water to students only during lunch time. Students drink less, schools spend more and it adds to our overburdened waste streams.

## Solution

A \$10 million funding commitment administered by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to fund point-of-use filtration and water bottle filling stations will help provide immediate safe drinking water to an estimated 400,000 schoolchildren in California who lack safe, clean drinking water. Often these schools are located in high poverty, high needs communities. For many of these children, school access is the only option for free safe drinking water, which is a vital component to successful learning and healthy physical development.

