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Mission Statement

Unite agencies, groups, and individuals whose interests include protecting and enhancing Mountain County water resources.

Vision Statement

To strengthen members' regional leadership, collaboration, information sharing, issue awareness, education, advocacy, and potential legislative action or legal support.

Statewide Benefits of Healthy Headwaters

California's headwaters account for the majority of the state's overall water supply, yet the region cannot solely fund proper forest management. Through education and advocacy, MCWRA will continue to promote policies and funding of programs and projects that protect Sierra Nevada's forested watersheds, and support the following:

- Improved water quality and quantity
- Enhanced habitats, ecosystems, recreation, and watersheds
- Lower risks to rural communities, public safety, and infrastructure
- Reduced impacts of wildfire and climate change
- Creation of resilient forests and communities
- Increased carbon sequestration

Key Priorities

The health of Sierra Nevada's watersheds and water resources are of value and critical importance to all Californians. MCWRA is committed to working to advance the following priorities on behalf of MCWRA Members:

- Protection of Water Rights and Preservation of Regional Water Supplies
- Increased Investment in California's Headwaters
- Science-Based Forest Management Plans and Actions
- Increased Statewide Collaboration Regarding Water Resources
- Additional Water Storage Capacity
- Educating Target Audiences on Statewide Need of Protecting California's Headwaters

Water Policy Principles

- 1. MCWRA supports legislation and regulation that protect its members' existing water rights, water-rights priority, area-of-origin rights, and local agencies' ability to use water resources for their present and future economic, social, and environmental well-being.**
 - MCWRA opposes any legislative or regulatory actions that could violate or weaken county of origin and watershed of origin laws (e.g., Water Code Sections 10505 and 11460), or reallocate water supplies subject to those laws, or deny areas of origin sufficient water supplies reasonably necessary to meet present and future beneficial uses.
 - MCWRA opposes any claim that a diminution of water rights results from conservation efforts, recycled water development, conjunctive uses, and/or water transfers (e.g., Water Code Sections 1011, 1011.5, 1014).

- 2. MCWRA supports proactive, science-based forest management practices, and robust State and federal investment in the watershed and headwaters of the Sierra Nevada.**
 - Resilient forests are vital to maintain adequate quality and quantity of source water supply for local, regional, and statewide needs.
 - Ongoing drought and catastrophic wildfires continue to threaten California's headwaters. Immediate action is needed to address these threats, including improved forestry, land management, and protection to better serve multiple ecological and water supply objectives.
 - Investment is needed in industries and infrastructure to support integrated forest management plans and programs.
 - Watershed health, watershed resources (including adequate water and financial resources for fire suppression), and sustainable watershed management should be priorities to achieve statewide goals to reduce fuels and enhance watershed protection.

- 3. MCWRA supports State, federal and local legislation, regulation, and policies that acknowledge that MCWRA members are uniquely positioned to help develop and implement significant regional and statewide solutions critical to California's water supply, water quality, flood management, and drought resiliency needs.**
 - Local knowledge and experience best qualifies MCWRA Members for developing regionally appropriate policies.

- 4. MCWRA supports new water storage in appropriate locations and as regionally determined necessary for the reliability of water supplies.**
 - Surface storage is an essential element of comprehensive water supply management.
 - A rising elevation and shortened season for the Sierra Nevada snowpack 'reservoir' will increasingly require replacement storage to maintain existing water supply reliability.
 - Arrangements are encouraged with downstream water systems to recharge groundwater basins when it benefits the region and the statewide water system as a whole.

- 5. MCWRA supports water-use efficiency legislation and regulation that respects and acknowledges existing and ongoing efforts, including: prior investment in water supply, regional diversity and conditions, gives credit for existing local and regional water efficiency efforts, including recycled water use and conservation achieved on raw water conveyance systems, appropriately accounts for unique local circumstances, and appropriately analyzes and considers the cost-benefits of the legislation and/or regulation at the local and regional level.**
 - The imposition of inflexible state-wide, “one size fits all” approaches is not reasonable or practical for regulating urban water use throughout California.
 - Requiring a uniform reduction in use by all water suppliers will have the unfair result of penalizing suppliers (and their customers) who may be already meeting or exceeding conservation goals under existing programs.

- 6. MCWRA supports legislation and regulation that is consistent with and coordinated with the California Water Plan (CWP), the Public Water Coalition of California Report, and the Water Resilience Portfolio.**
 - Any proposed legislation or regulation should be consistent with the CWP Mountain Counties Regional Report that will create more resilient, reliable water systems, and that will restore critical ecosystems in the watersheds within the Mountain Counties Overlay area.

- 7. MCWRA supports regional and statewide climate resilience initiatives and renewable energy expansion.**
 - The MCWRA region continues to experience the effects of catastrophic climate impacts resulting from wildfires, drought, and diminished snowpack.
 - MCWRA supports science-based planning and adaptive measures that will prepare and accommodate for future climate change conditions and promote climate resilience.
 - MCWRA supports legislation, regulation, and funding to make better use of the region’s potential for alternative energy production, including carbon-free hydropower, and waste products from fuels management projects such as biomass, among others.

- 8. MCWRA supports an integrated approach to water management that addresses costs and benefits and uses the best available science to prioritize and balance water supply and demand for people, agriculture, and the environment.**
 - The State should always adhere to the water right priority system and the Co-Equal goals set forth in the Delta Reform Act of 2009 to provide a more reliable water supply for all uses and sustain watershed ecosystems for the long-term.

- 9. MCWRA supports legislation and regulation that reward water suppliers who demonstrate:**
 - a) Reduced reliance on water supplies conveyed through the Delta
 - b) Investment in local and regional water supplies
 - c) Improved regional self-reliance for water supplies

- d) Investment in water use efficiency and reuse
- e) Investment in advanced water technologies

MCWRA opposes legislation and regulation that ignores or disincentivizes these activities.

10. MCWRA opposes any legislation or regulation that is inconsistent with locally or regionally developed projects or plans that may result in a conflict in regional cooperation.

- Fostering local, regional, and statewide cooperation can only exist when participants have certainty that such cooperation will not expose them to increased risks of their own resources.

11. MCWRA opposes any legislation or regulation that unreasonably imposes restrictions on uses, or levies fees, on diverters of water upstream of the Statutory Delta.

- MCWRA opposes any legislation or regulation that attempts to define upstream areas, including the Mountain Counties overlay region, as beneficiaries of Bay-Delta water conveyance facilities.
- Only those users who receive water from conveyance facilities constructed in the Statutory Delta should be subject to operational regulations or costs related to such facilities.

12. MCWRA opposes State and/or federal legislation or regulation that will eliminate or reduce any of the following values and beneficial uses: local control, agriculture, recreation, tourism, historical value, and public safety or quality of life in the wildland/urban interface (WUI).

- Local jurisdictions and their communities are best positioned to weigh environmental, economic and quality-of-life considerations within their boundaries.

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