

COVID-19 Economic Recovery: Principles to Ensure a Safe and Sustainable Water Supply

May 2020



The California Municipal Utilities Association (CMUA), has identified six key principles the Governor, Legislature and the state Task Force on Business and Jobs Recovery should consider when contemplating the future of the state's water supply and its COVID-19 economic recovery.

Principle #1

California must maintain strong and financially viable water agencies to deliver a safe and reliable supply to customers.

Economic recovery efforts should recognize water utilities are anchor institutions in their communities, providing an essential public health service.

Principle #2

Recovery efforts should not impact water rates and customer bills.

Recovery efforts should recognize that water agencies are truly not-for-profit, and they can only charge for the cost of providing water. The affordability of water already is a concern and an increasing number of the state's residents and businesses will struggle to pay their water bills due to the severe economic downturn.

Principle #3

California should focus on investments in water and wastewater infrastructure.

The state should support local investments by facilitating infrastructure projects that promote safety and water efficiency, creating jobs and generating significant economic output. Closing the water infrastructure investment gap would create more than 1.5 million jobs nationwide and generate over \$260 billion in economic activity annually. These efforts also would build climate resilience, a critical part of long-term sustainability in California.

Principle #4

Cost-effectiveness and feasibility should be embedded in state and local water policies.

Economic recovery efforts should consider cost-effectiveness and technological feasibility and should support implementation flexibility based on local conditions.

Principle #5

Recovery efforts should balance the sustainability of water agencies with new regulatory requirements.

Water agencies are complying with an already significant number of new and upcoming regulatory requirements. As recovery efforts continue, the state should review opportunities to provide flexibility and avoid layering additional requirements that will hamstring basic activities and strain agencies' ability to fulfill their mission of providing safe drinking water to all Californians.

Principle #6

Water quality and water supply reliability should be maintained and protected.

Economic recovery efforts should recognize that providing a safe and reliable water supply is paramount. Key to the economic recovery is a water delivery system that provides water around the clock, 365 days a year.

CMUA's members are California's not-for-profit, publicly owned water agencies that serve nearly 75 percent of Californians. Operating without private funding or profits, our members are community-focused, and support local businesses and residents in a cost-effective, environmentally sustainable manner.