PLANNING AND CONSERVATION LEAGUE

September 13, 2007

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State Water Resources Control Board
Office of Research, Planning and Performance
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Re: Recommendations regarding the Incorporation of Global Warming into Activities of the State Water Resources Control Board

The Planning and Conservation League (PCL) commends the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and the Department of Water Resources (DWR) for convening the August 23, 2007 "Water Policy through a Carbon Lens" workshop and appreciate this opportunity to provide recommendations regarding the incorporation of Global Warming into the activities of the SWRCB.

Fulfilling the mandate of AB 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, and avoiding the unmanageable impacts predicted to occur in the absence of such actions internationally, requires the full commitment of every state agency as well as all regional and local governments. Each governmental entity must take immediate and long-term actions to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the activities that it undertakes and regulates.

The use of water in California contributes significantly to the state's greenhouse gas emission crisis. In *California's Water-Energy Relationship* (2005), the California Energy Commission (CEC), concluded that the water sector is the largest user of electrical energy in the state, accounting for 19 percent of all electricity consumed in California, 30% of non-power plant–related natural gas use, and 88 million gallons of diesel burned every year. In 2005, Governor Schwarzenegger's Climate Action Team estimated that the energy used to move and treat water in California results in the release of approximately 44 million tons of CO2 emissions annually.

Fortunately, opportunities to reduce these greenhouse gas impacts abound, and more efficient use of California's water resources could substantially reduce the state's greenhouse gas emissions. The Climate Action Team noted that accelerating investment in Water Use Efficiency to meet the *2005 California Water Plan Update* 2030 water conservation goals by 2010 would result in a cumulative reduction of 40 million tons of emissions by 2030.

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Unfortunately, many of the effects of global warming are now present or unavoidable, including alternations of the timing, intensity, and duration of precipitation in California, which in turn affects the quantity and quality of California's water resources.

For example, in areas and time periods of increased rainfall, more pollution and sedimentation will be produced due to runoff. Likewise, reductions in precipitation may alter lake levels and stream flow, thereby increasing concentrations of pollutants. Additionally, more frequent and intense rainfall can overwhelm various "wet weather" pollution control facilities that are designed to reduce sewage overflows and stormwater runoff under historical rainfall patterns further reducing the quality of water (IPCC, 2001).

These water resource impacts complicate the regulatory activities of the SWRCB, especially in the establishment of water quality standards, permitting of water treatment facilities, and determination of water rights and beneficial uses.

And failing to achieve substantial greenhouse gas emission reductions in California would not only violate AB 32, it would also likely exacerbate the effects of global warming, causing additional strain on the resources regulated by the SWRCB.

We therefore propose that the SWRCB undertake the following activities:

1) Help Integrate Climate Change into California Water Planning

Advocate for the adoption of the provisions of AB 224 (Wolk) into all major water planning documents in California, including the California Water Plan Update, State Water Project Delivery Reliability Report, Urban Water Management Plans, and Integrated Regional Water Management Plans, as well as all FERC re-licensing, flood plans, surface storage studies, and CEQA/NEPA documents.

The SWRCB and the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs) have a particularly strong opportunity to ensure this incorporation of global warming into water planning through the submission of agency comments on Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) and Environmental Impact Statements (EISs).

For example, when reviewing and commenting on an EIR/EIS for a new water treatment facility, the SWRCB and the appropriate RWQCB should ensure that the environmental review includes alternatives analysis of various pollution prevention measures and compares the greenhouse gas emissions associated with each alternative. Likewise, for major development projects, the SWRCB and the appropriate RWQCB should ensure that the EIR/EIS adequately analyzes any deterioration to water quality resources from the emission of climate disrupting emissions.

The office of the California Attorney General and the California Coastal Commission could both provide substantial guidance on how an agency should raise global warming concerns in their CEQA and NEPA comments.

2) Require Certification of Best Management Practices that Reduce GHG Emissions

Partner with the Department of Water Resources to create a certification program that ensures implementation of Urban Water Conservation Best Management Practices contained in the MOU of the California Urban Water Conservation Council (CUWCC). Require water agencies to demonstrate certification as a minimum standard to receive grant funds from Proposition 84 and other funding sources. Prioritize funding for those projects that will demonstrably decrease water and energy demand, increase water and energy efficiency, and reduce GHG emissions. Work with DWR, CUWCC, CEC, and other Climate Action Team members to improve Urban Water Conservation BMPs to specifically target GHG emission reductions.

3) Transition to a Carbon-Neutral Energy Portfolio for California's Water

Ensure that DWR and other water agencies across the state aggressively develop a carbon-neutral energy portfolio and tie these new sources to the divestment and decommissioning of high GHG emitting power supplies. For example, partner with DWR to ensure that DWR enters into contracts to develop large-scale solar generation projects on lands owned by DWR (e.g. Sherman Island) and provides a clear schedule for divestiture of the Reid-Gardner coal power plant by January 1, 2010.

Actively participate in planning efforts between the CPUC and the CEC regarding appropriate locations for large-scale renewable energy development in California.

In all surface storage studies, ensure that all GHG emissions directly and indirectly induced from the construction and operation of the facility have been properly quantified.

4) Reduce Consumptive Water Use and Related GHG Emissions

Partner with other agencies to fund and implement aggressive water conservation and water recycling to reduce consumptive water use. Ensure that these activities are tied to reductions in pumping of surface and groundwater and the resultant GHG emission reductions are properly quantified. Partner with DWR in the preparation of the California Water Plan Update to articulate the steps necessary to achieve the 3.1 MAF from urban water use efficiency described in the 2005 CWPU.

The SWRCB should also take the lead in preparation of a package of measures to present to the California Air Resources Control to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of water use in California as part of the AB 32 Early Action Measure and Scoping Plan processes. In addition, the SWRCB should prepare a bold series of Early Action Measures, for example, partnering with DWR to create a series of graduated "caps" on annual pumping from the Harvey O. Banks Pumping Plant and the Edmonston Pumping Plant that demonstrate these agencies' commitment to achieving immediate GHG reductions.

5) Accurately Measure California Water Use and Related GHG Emissions

Assist DWR in the creation of a statewide water use database and a system for reporting water deliveries and diversions. Ensure that the database includes the GHG emissions that result from each water delivery and, where feasible, from each phase of water use—storage and diversion, conveyance, treatment, local distribution, end use, wastewater treatment, and disposal. Implement administrative actions identified by the CALFED staff proposal on water measurement and by the AB 2717 Landscape Task Force, including measuring crop water use consumption via remote sensing, better assessment of net groundwater usage, and upgrading the California Irrigation Management Information System (CIMIS).

6) Undertake a Full Stakeholder Process to Reassess Beneficial Uses and Water Rights through a Carbon Lens

These fundamental issues of water use in California deserve careful attention and public input. For example, in consideration of the constraints imposed upon global warming on California's water resources, the SWRCB should re-examine whether to permit the irrigation of selenium laden lands as a beneficial use of California water.

As Governor Schwarzenegger has said, "the time for action is now." We look forward to working with the SWRCB as they consider these recommendations and devise a series of actions that address our global warming crisis.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Planning and Conservation League over the coming months.

Sincerely,

Matt Vander Sluis
Climate Change Program Manager