



**AGENDA REQUEST**  
**Regular Meeting, October 9, 2024**

**TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Rebecca Guo, P.E., General Manager *RG*

**DATE:** October 4, 2024

**SUBJECT: 2024 Water Resources Development and Management Plan and E-1001 Policy Update**

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**BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:**

The Water Resources Development and Management Plan (WRDMP) documents the Agency's strategy and progress toward long-term water resources planning. It advances countywide water management to realize the vision of the General Plan as adopted by the County of El Dorado for economic development, environmental protection, and quality of life for all residents. Agency staff will provide a detailed presentation on the 2024 update to the WRDMP for the Board to provide guidance to staff regarding the WRDMP. After the presentation, the Board will consider adoption of amended Board Policy E-1001 which provides guidelines to allow the Agency staff to implement elements of the WRDMP.

Attachments: Attachment 1 - Water Resources Development and Management Plan 2024 Update; Attachment 2 – Board Policy E-1001; Attachment 3 – Resolution WA-8-2024

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Board: 1) hear the presentation; 2) provide comments, input and direction to staff; and 3) receive and file the Water Resources Development and Management Plan. Furthermore, pending Board deems any comments are sufficiently reflected in proposed Policy E-1001 amendments, it is recommended that the Board: 4) Adopt Resolution WA-8-2024, which amends the Water Resources Development and Management Plan Policy E-1001; and 5) Authorize the Board Chair to sign the resolution.

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**ACTION OF AGENCY ON:**

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**VOTE:**

Unanimous \_\_\_\_\_ or

Ayes:

Noes:

Abstentions:

Absent:

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an action taken and entered into the minutes of the Board of Directors, El Dorado County Water Agency.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Attest:

By \_\_\_\_\_  
 Clerk of the Agency

## **Background:**

The Water Resources Development and Management Plan (WRDMP) is the cornerstone document for the Agency's actions and investments and is subject to periodic updates in years ending in 4 and 9 per Agency Board Policy E-1001. The WRDMP was formulated to be a policy document with durable policies and guidance for long-term implementation to support sustainable and responsible water resources planning and economic prosperity in El Dorado County per the Agency's authorizing act, 1959 El Dorado County Water Agency Act (Act). It is also the countywide water plan that satisfies the requirements of Ordinance 5096 adopted by the County of El Dorado (County).

Specifically, the objectives of the WRDMP are to:

- Support the vision of the County General Plan for economic development, environmental protection and quality of life;
- Promote an integrated water management approach that provides countywide benefits and resilience; and
- Provide policy guidance on the Agency's investments and collaborative actions while respecting roles and responsibilities of other local agencies.

Thus, the Agency can support the implementation of the County General Plan, which lays out a vision that encourages a strong economy and preserves the rural-agricultural way of life. Imbedded in that vision is the protection of El Dorado County's rich natural resources for future generations. Additionally, the WRDMP aligns the Agency with the authorities to address water resources as provided by the 1959 El Dorado County Water Agency Act (Act).

## Previous WRDMP Updates

The 2007 and 2014 versions of the WRDMP focused on the water supply and demand analyses. These plans were largely based on the water supply evaluations prepared by the water purveyors within the County to comply with a County ordinance for that required the Agency and County to document and state the water availability for planned development projects.

The 2019 WRDMP reflected a major change of the Agency's priorities to refocus the actions and investment of the Agency to be consistent with its countywide charges provided by the 1959 Act. It followed the same objectives as those listed above. The resulting WRDMP was a policy document with durable resource management strategies and flexible implementation with periodic updates to reflect changed conditions. To support long-term and stable implementation, the Agency Board adopted specific policies and guidance (E-1001), as well as streamlined its business practices for consistent investments in five programs: Governance and Partnership, Water Security, Watershed Management, Assistance and Innovation, and Communication and Advocacy.

The success of 2019 WRDMP development rested on a collaborative approach and transparency, which were carried forward in subsequent collective implementation and coordinated advocacy for our unique conditions. The Countywide Plenary for Water is a part of the Agency's WRDMP implementation. This plenary further strengthened partnerships and the extent of our collaboration, shaping our common future. In 2023, the Agency also facilitated the completion of the Programmatic Watershed Plan (PWP) for the upper American River watershed through the Upper American River Watershed Group. The PWP provides an

important support to the WRDMP implementation as the successful and sustainable water resource management is not possible without a healthy watershed and resilient community.

#### WRDMP 2024 Update

The WRDMP 2024 update (WRDMP24) follows the same principles supporting the 2019 WRDMP development and subsequent collective implementation, including respecting the role and responsibility of each responsible party and implementation agency, an efficient, concise format for policy directive, and a delineation of the Agency's role and potential actions in implementation. Attachment 1 provides the draft WRDMP24.

The WRDMP24 includes the many changes in natural resource and social conditions experienced in the county since 2019. This includes the COVID-19 pandemic, impacts from severe droughts and associated emergency regulations, and the destruction of the 2021 Caldor Fire and 2022 Mosquito Fire. Many major changes in law and regulations as responses to these disasters on a temporary or permanent basis (e.g., senior water right curtailments, efficient urban water use regulations) and state and federal climate and equity policies are also included in this update as they have significant effects on future water resource managements in El Dorado County.

The Agency established a Plan Advisory Group (PAG) to collaborate in the WRDMP24, extending the same successful approach used in the 2019 WRDMP and as consistent with Policy E-1001. The PAG consists of representatives from multiple departments of the County, Agricultural Commissioner, public water purveyors, business interests, environmental interests, and others. In addition, a subgroup to the PAG, the Water Supply-Demand Imbalance Subgroup, was organized to assist in demand projections, water supply-demand imbalance projections, and consistency. This subgroup included participation from the County planning department and Agricultural Commissioner, public water purveyors, business interests and an academic representative. The PAG and subgroup's input was invaluable to inform the WRDMP24 and foster continued alignment amongst the various local agencies and organizations.

#### Board Policy E-1001 Update

The 1959 Act provides authority for the Agency to address broad powers that include:

- §96-11 Water Supply – any/every lawful act to ensure sufficient water is available for the present and future beneficial use within the Agency
- §96-12 Power – construct, operate and maintain hydropower projects and contracts
- §96-13 Flood Control – control flood and storm waters and conserve such waters
- §96-14 Storage of Water – store water in surface or groundwater basins within or outside the County; and prevent contamination/pollution of such waters
- §96-15 Waterworks – acquire water works within or outside the County
- §96-17 Investigations – Carry out technical and other investigations, analyses, studies and inspections pertaining to water supplies or flood/storm waters for water within or entering the County
- §96-23 Sale/Lease of water or rights to Use Water – sale, lease or otherwise transfer water to a member unit of the Agency for use within or outside the County. A “member unit” is any district which enters into a contract within the Agency.

The approach for implementation of the WRDMP is fairly straightforward and allows the Agency to be flexible to adapt to changes in regulations or needs within the County. The Agency's challenges, in accordance with the authorities provided by the Act, can be focused on Water Supply, Drought Planning and Groundwater Management, Water Quality, Flood/Storm Waters, and Watershed management. Building upon these challenges, the Board adopted Board Policy E-1001 in 2019. The current Board Policy E-1001 was created and adopted to support implementation of the 2019 WRDMP.

With Policy E-1001, the WRDMP's resources management strategies (RMS) and directives can be adjusted, modified, and updated in a manner the remains consistent with the proposed Board policies, as adopted, and with the state and federal regulations. Adoption of policies and guidance statements, to support the WRDMP, allows Agency staff to proceed to develop and implement actions for long-term water security, and advance integrated water management.

After staff review of the current Board Policy E-1001, staff is recommending two amendments to the policy for Board consideration (see Attachment 2). One is to modify the WRDMP completion deadline to be based on the calendar year, not fiscal year. This provides staff with additional flexibility to convene the various WRDMP-related advisory groups and ensure their comments and input are incorporated into the WRDMP. The second is to modify the frequency of the Countywide Plenary for Water (Plenary). This amendment provides flexibility for staff to convene the Plenary when there are relevant and meaningful topics rather than holding meetings at a set required frequency. Additionally, the Plenary was intentionally organized to allow for formation of topic-specific subgroups with focused discussions and topic experts. For example, the County Drought Task Force and Upper American River Watershed Group are two subgroups to the Plenary to advance specific initiatives. Based on needs, Agency staff may hold a Plenary subgroup meeting in lieu of a larger Plenary.

### **Fiscal Impacts**

Current and planned activities are already imbedded within the RMSs identified. Current activities are included in the adopted FY20-2 Budget. Future activities will be based on the adoption of subsequent budgets by the Board.