



OUTREACH ALERT: MEMBERS URGED TO CONTACT LEGISLATORS TO OPPOSE WATER TAX LANGUAGE IN BUDGET TRAILER BILL AND AB 217 (E. GARCIA)

BY MVEEHB APR 26, 2019

The issue of funding for safe drinking water solutions for disadvantaged communities is very active at the State Capitol. SB 669 (Caballero), the Safe Drinking Water Trust bill sponsored by ACWA and the California Municipal Utilities Association, passed two Senate policy committees in April and is headed to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

At the same time, two proposals for a statewide water tax are pending. The Newsom Administration's budget trailer bill language is pending in Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 2 (with the Subcommittee vote expected on May 2) and in Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 3 (with the Subcommittee vote expected on May 8). This proposal is for a tax on local water bills. It is very possible that the funding mechanism (e.g., a trust, water tax, or another funding source) for this issue will be determined in the budget process.

Additionally, AB 217 (E. Garcia) proposes a water tax on public water systems, and that cost would need to be passed along to public water agency customers. AB 217 is pending at the Assembly Appropriations Committee and is expected to be heard on May 8.

Take Action Now

ACWA is requesting that ACWA Members take the following actions immediately:

Contact your Senator(s) and Assembly Member(s) by phone to oppose the budget trailer bill language and AB 217 (E. Garcia) unless the water tax is removed. Note that the Safe Drinking Water Trust in SB 669 is a better funding approach. Legislators' contact information can be found on the California Legislature's website, while talking points are available here.

Join the ACWA coalition letter opposing AB 217 by contacting Legislative Analyst Soren Nelson at sorenn@acwa.com. Approximately 100 organizations have already been added to the letter. This same list will be used for an Assembly Floor Alert if the bill moves to the Assembly Floor.

Send an agency representative to provide brief testimony (name, organization, position) in opposition to AB 217. We expect the Assembly Appropriations Committee hearing to be held Wednesday, May 8, at 9 a.m., State Capitol, Room 4202.

Updated Toolkit

In addition to the immediate requested actions listed above, ACWA urges its members to use the following updated materials to help educate key customers, news media, local leaders and other key stakeholders about how the proposed Safe Drinking Water Trust would work and why both versions of the proposed water tax are problematic.

Informational websites: WaterTaxFacts.org and www.SafeDrinkingWaterTrust.org

Updated Fact Sheet and Infographic

Sample social media posts

These tools and other resources have been posted on ACWA's website at: www.acwa.com/trust. Log-in is required to access members-only tools.

Questions

For questions about the proposals for a statewide water tax or ACWA/CMUA-sponsored SB 669, please contact ACWA Deputy Executive Director for Government Relations Cindy Tuck at cindy@acwa.com or (916) 441-4545.

For questions about the toolkit items, please contact ACWA Director of Communications Heather Engel at heathere@acwa.com or (916) 441-4545.

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