

FACT SHEET: SB 565

(AS INTRODUCED)

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RECYCLING WATER CURRENTLY DISCHARGED TO THE OCEAN

THE PROBLEM

Each year, urban California discharges approximately 3½ - 4 million acre-feet of wastewater into the ocean. Unlike discharges into rivers or streams that can be recaptured downstream and then be reused, ocean discharges are lost to additional use. This water is truly wasted.

At the same time, urban California continues to grow. The California Department of Finance projects California's population to reach almost 60 million people by 2050, adding over 25 million since the 2000 decennial census. These new Californians are going to need water. It is critical that California finds new ways to accommodate growth, with its resultant increase in water demand, in as an environmentally benign as possible.

BACKGROUND

Water Recycling has long been recognized as a cost-effective and drought proof method of helping to meet California's water needs.

The Water Recycling Act of 1991 established a statewide goal to recycle a total of 700,000 acre-feet of water per year by 2000, and one million acre-feet of water by 2010.

Subsequently, the Urban Water Management Planning Act was amended to require urban water management plans to include, to the extent available, information on recycled water and its potential for use as a water source in the service area.

Similarly, the law governing the California Water Plan was amended to require the state plan to include current and projected supplies of water provided by water recycling and reuse.

PREVIOUS LEGISLATION

The most recent attempt to address recycled water was 2008's AB 2270 (Laird). Among other things, AB 2270 would have:

- Required DWR to update the statewide water-recycling target every five years, based on consideration of all relevant information.
- Required DWR, beginning in 2013, to include the revised targets in the California Water Plan.
- Required urban water suppliers to include in their urban water management plans information on recycled water and its potential for use as a water source in the service area of the urban water supplier.

In his veto Statement of AB 2270, the Governor expressed support for recycled water, but stated he was vetoing the bill because this bill also includes provisions that go too far in limiting residential use of water softeners.

THE SOLUTION

SB 565 would require the State Water Resources Control Board to develop a plan to ensure that at least 50% of wastewater that is annually discharged into the ocean, as of the year 2009, is recycled and put to beneficial use by the year 2030. The bill would fund the development and implementation of that plan by requiring the state board to impose a fee on each person discharging wastewater into the ocean.

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