FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
January 29, 2026

CONTACT:
Evan Swerdfeger
(949) 933-4428
ESwerdfeger@fionahuttonassoc.com

State Water Contractors Respond to Increase in State Water Project Allocation from December Storms and Encourage Responsive Water Management

Sacramento, CA — Today, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) increased the State Water Project's allocation to 30% of contracted water supplies, following the initial allocation of 10% that was announced in December 2025.

Statement from Jennifer Pierre, General Manager of the State Water Contractors:

"The State Water Contractors welcome the allocation increase to 30% of contracted water supplies. We are grateful for the early-season storms and the infrastructure we've invested in to move and store the water they provided to the benefit of the state.

"While December's rain and snowfall allowed California to store water in reservoirs and divert excess Delta flows, precipitation in January has been limited, and forecasts point to a dry start to February. The storms of the 2026 water year may very well be in our rear view.

"That said, there were opportunities earlier this month to support greater Delta diversions without impacting fish and their habitats, and meaningful course corrections that would optimize water capture and storage in the future remain possible.

"First, water managers and regulators should rely on science-driven, adaptive management strategies to ensure the water we do have is used as efficiently and effectively as possible. Given the real-time fish and environmental conditions, had we been allowed to explore opportunities for water diversions during the wettest days so far this winter, an additional 5% allocation could have been warranted. In a state where every drop counts, this potential additional allocation could prove meaningful, depending on the unknown future hydrology. State officials demonstrated the capacity for that flexibility during recent storms, which triggered "First Flush" conditions from December 25 to January 7, yielding some important water supply. That same flexibility should be applied at every available opportunity. Rather than assuming more storms will come, we should always operate on the information before us in real time. If it's wet and impacts to fish are within our permit limitations, we should be moving and storing that water. We cannot take an uncertain future for granted.

"California's continued delay in critical water infrastructure investments and reluctance to flex water diversion rules is hampering our drought-resiliency efforts, putting the state's water future at risk.

"The State Water Contractors pay for 100% of the system's operation and maintenance, regardless of the amount of the allocations from DWR. That is money that ultimately comes from the public: residents, business owners and farmers who all count on these supplies. Our mission is to ensure that our members can continue to reliably deliver water to more than 27 million Californians and 750,000 acres of farmland under increasingly variable hydrology."

###

The State Water Contractors is a statewide, non-profit association of 27 public agencies from Northern, Central and Southern California that purchase water under contract from the California State Water Project. Collectively the State Water Contractors deliver water to more than 27 million residents throughout the state and more than 750,000 acres of agricultural land. For more information on the State Water Contractors, please visit www.swc.org.