

On One-Year Anniversary of SB 200, Water Advocates Urge State to Sustain Progress and Maintain Full Funding for Safe Drinking Water

COVID-19 pandemic exposed critical need to provide safe water for all, but too many Californians still go without

SACRAMENTO, Calif. - Amidst a growing pandemic, a coalition of clean water advocates is marking the one-year anniversary of the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund and calling on the state to maintain urgency on the program's success.

On July 24, 2019, Gov. Newsom signed SB 200, a vital part of the new Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) program, ushering in a funding source of \$1.4 billion over 10 years for safe drinking water solutions for disadvantaged communities in California.

The Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund Coalition, which supported the passage of SB 200, released the following statement today from Jennifer Clary, Clean Water Action; Jonathan Nelson, Community Water Center; and Michael Claiborne, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability:

"This week, as we honor the leadership and resolve of the frontline communities who led decades of water justice advocacy and organizing to secure SB 200, we call on state agencies and our elected representatives to maintain their support and full funding during these uncertain times, and to redouble efforts to achieve California's promise of safe, clean, and affordable water for all.

"SB 200 established a historic bipartisan solution to address long-standing divestment that blocks 1 million Californians, primarily communities of color, from their basic right to water. Last year, Gov. Newsom, Speaker Rendon, pro Tem Atkins, Senator Monning, and Assemblymember E. Garcia put California on the path toward realizing the human right to water. In the past year, the State Water Board has made important progress, including the adoption of its Fund Expenditure Plan earlier this month.

"However, as California reckons with racism in its public policies, including water, and works to weather the COVID-19 pandemic, we must build on these efforts and ensure SB 200 implementation has full, consistent funding and is guided by the expertise and vision of communities living without safe and affordable water. They deserve nothing less than California's unwavering commitment to swift, equitable, and full implementation."

The State Water Board this month [announced](#) its [expenditure plan](#) for implementing the SAFER program, which was informed by an advisory group including community members Lucy Hernandez, Horacio Amezcuita, and Isabel Solorio, who are available for interviews. Recognizing the federal government's role in also funding infrastructure and water affordability programs in local communities as a necessary complement to the SB 200 SAFER program, a

number of diverse [California and national voices have come together to urge Congress to fund safe water](#) as an engine for equitable economic recovery. Dolores Huerta and Senator Kamala Harris have also echoed these calls in a [San Jose Mercury News op-ed](#) last week.

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