



PRESS RELEASE
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Regional Water Planning Subject of Bay Area Water Forum Historic Collaboration Launched

Water supply reliability, watershed management, water conservation and recycling, and water quality improvements are just some of the water issues critical to the Bay Area. A new regional water issues exchange and planning group, **The Bay Area Water Forum (BAWF)**, has been launched to bring together a groundbreaking collaboration of water resource stakeholders to explore these and other key water issues.

An open invitation to participate in BAWF has been extended to groups and individuals serving environmental, business and community interests, as well as water districts, sanitary districts, agencies and local governments. One of BAWF's first projects is collaborating on creating an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, which will let the participants tap into funding from the Water Bond (Prop 50) passed by the voters in 2002.

Marin County Supervisor Cynthia Murray and BAWF Chair, says, "The opportunity to participate in this kind of broad collaboration to address Bay Area water resource issues and programs in an interactive, consensus seeking venue is historic and pivotal." Supervisor Murray, who is the ABAG/CALFED Regional Water Task Force chair, will join Grant Davis of the Bay Institute and ABAG/ CALFED Vice Chair Greg Zlotnick of the Santa Clara Valley Water District in presiding over BAWF.

BAWF Vice Chair Grant Davis adds, "As an outgrowth of ABAG's CALFED Regional Water Task Force, this new Water Forum will improve communication and understanding about water resource issues, as well as expand opportunities for collaboration and funding important projects. BAWF will also support efforts to define and prioritize the Bay Area's needs within state water resource planning and funding processes." BAWF offers an arena to broaden the discussion on water issues beyond water districts and agencies to other community, environmental and planning stakeholders. Comprehensive and broad based water resource discussions are especially important at this time because they will help direct current state efforts to distribute CALFED and Water Bond (Proposition 50) funds within the San Francisco Bay Region.

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Action-oriented in its approach, BAWF activities will include seeking short and long-term financing for Integrated Regional Water Management Plans (IRWMPs) and promoting inclusive regional exchange. According to ABAG/CALFED Vice Chair Greg Zlotnick, who is also BAWF Vice Chair, "the ABAG/CALFED Task Force and the Bay Area Water Forum will work on issues related to the protection of water resources and improving linkages among regional water supply, quality, and supply reliability in the Bay Area." The ABAG/CALFED Task Force is comprised of designated voting representatives of local government and water districts working toward integrated regional water planning efforts and supported by the California Bay Delta Authority, the Department of Water Resources, and the Association of Bay Area Governments.

Those interested in participating in the Bay Area Water Forum are invited to discuss water issues at upcoming meetings scheduled on the 4th Monday of the month at the Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter, 101 Eighth Street, in Oakland, across from the Lake Merritt BART Station. The first three meeting dates of 2005 are January 24th, February 28th, and March 28th. For more information, recent materials and presentations can be viewed at <http://www.abag.ca.gov/cgi-bin/agendascaled.pl> or contact Kathleen Van Velsor, ABAG/CALFED Task Force Project Manager and Senior Environmental Planner, at KathleenV@abag.ca.gov.

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Founded in 1961, ABAG is the official regional planning agency for the 101 cities and towns, and nine counties of the Bay Area and is recognized as the first council of governments in California.