



# Flood or Drought? A Discussion of the Election's Potential Legislative Impacts on the Water Sector

December 3, 2020

# Before We Begin...



Handouts are available in the side panel



We will send you the recording and the slide deck



Submit your questions anytime in the side panel



Please complete the evaluation survey

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- During the webinar:
  - Participants will be asked periodic polling questions
  - MCLE credit for California will be issued to participants that attend the full presentation (time-in and time-out is captured)
- Following the webinar:
  - You will receive a completion certificate via email within a week

# Today's Presenters



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# Agenda

- California water lobbying in a pandemic
- Wastewater tests as early COVID-19 outbreak warning
- Likely focus of Congressional legislation and policy

**Which of the following do you work for or most closely identify with?**



A low-angle photograph of the California State Capitol building in Sacramento, California. The image shows the grand neoclassical facade with its portico supported by tall columns, the pediment with its sculptures, and the large dome topped with a lantern and an American flag. The sky is a clear, bright blue with a few wispy clouds.

# CALIFORNIA WATER LOBBYING IN A PANDEMIC



# CA Statewide Election Results

- CA's interactions with President-Elect Biden and new administration will impact public policy making
- Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris gives CA a direct line of communication to DC
- Gov. Newsom will appoint the next U.S. Senator
- Voters rejected several of the more progressive statewide ballot propositions presented to them
- Democrats still have a supermajority in both the CA Senate and Assembly, and picked up seats in both







# Impact of COVID-19 on CA Public Policy

- Legislature will be sworn in December 7, 2020 and can introduce legislative proposals
- The Governor's January State Budget proposal will be released around January 10, 2020
- A lower number of legislative proposals means higher stakes and priorities
- Unplanned legislative recesses makes it more important than ever to focus legislative advocacy efforts and start early
- Consensus among the water industry, and a proactive approach, will help advance legislative goals under tight timeline pressures

# COVID-19 Financial Pressures on Water Suppliers

- The Governor's Executive Order issued on April 2, 2020 restricts water shutoffs to homes and small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic
- The State Resources Water Control Board is currently gathering information about the financial impacts of the EO on water suppliers, through a statewide voluntary survey
  - Meant to inform the legislature and administration of the financial burdens water suppliers are faced with
- The CPUC is also collecting information from investor-owned water utilities about arrearages, customer participation in assistance programs and other data related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

# Anticipated Water Industry Issues for 2021

- Addressing Customer Debt
- Climate Change Impacts
- Continued SB 998 Implementation
- Investment in Water Infrastructure
- Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)
- Social Inequities and Economic Hardships from Pandemic
- Water Affordability
- Wildfires and Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS)



**What water-related issue do you want to see the state and federal government try to address further in 2021?**



A worker in a red hard hat and orange safety vest is writing on a clipboard at a wastewater treatment plant. The worker is wearing a green jacket and yellow safety glasses. The background shows a large body of blue water with aeration equipment. The scene is outdoors under a clear blue sky.

# WASTEWATER TESTS AS EARLY COVID-19 OUTBREAK WARNING

**What sources of funding does your organization currently receive or is interested in?**



# LIKELY FOCUS OF CONGRESSIONAL LEGISLATION & POLICY





# Three Areas of Legislation to Consider

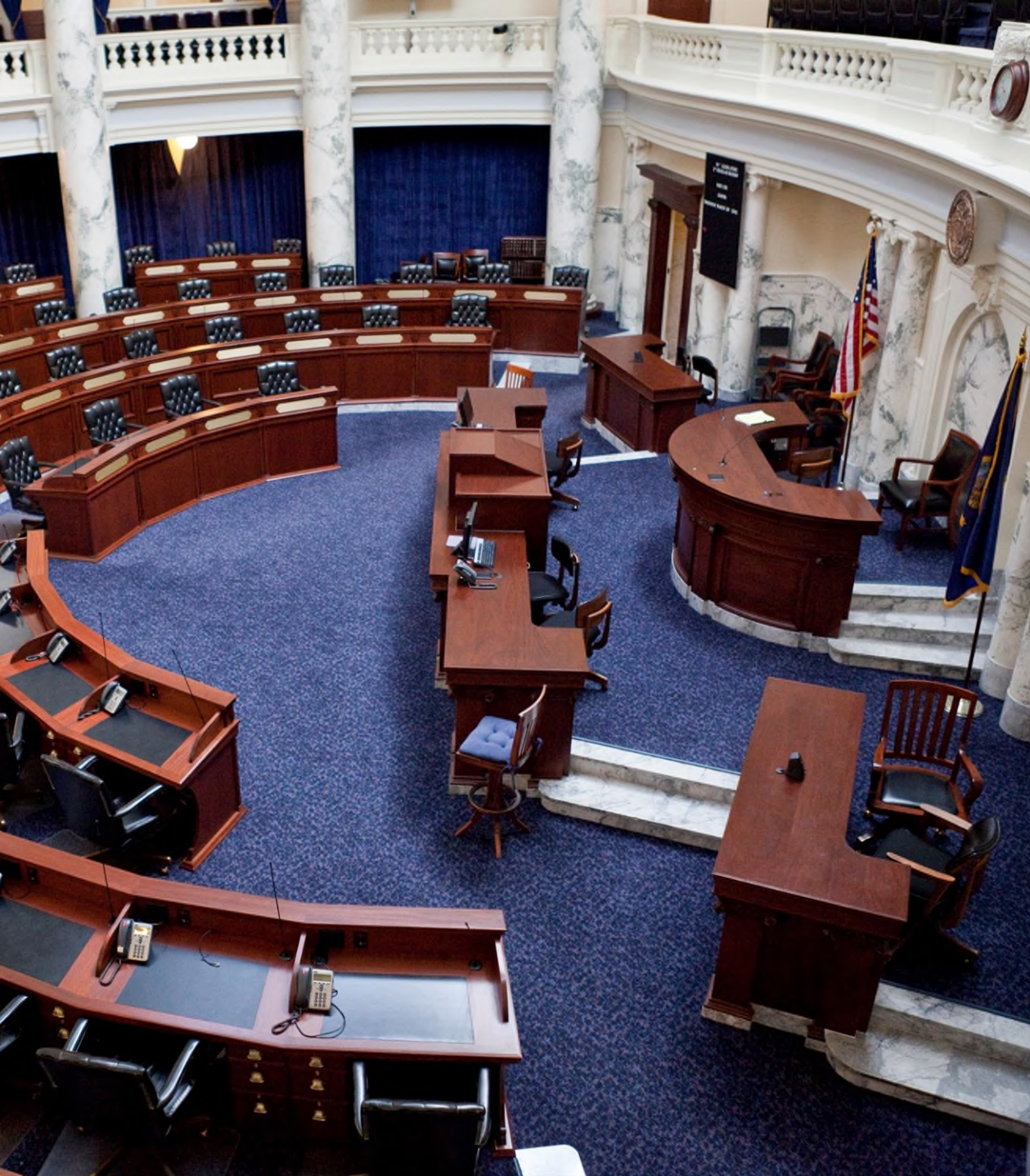
1. Coronavirus-specific legislation (i.e., COVID Relief v.2.0)
2. Lame Duck legislation (i.e., Congressional funding bill, WRDA, others)
3. Future legislation (i.e., 117th Congress Priorities)



# COVID Relief

- CARES Act v.2.0
  - Likely increase or replenishment of small business loans
  - Funding for unemployment
- Issues for the Water Sector
  - Forgiveness for customers
  - Status of shutoffs
  - Potential use of new technologies to help





# Lame Duck Legislation

- Appropriations to fund the federal government
- Water Resources Development Act
- National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)



# Future Legislation

- Additional relief sought for individual taxpayers
- Decreased State revenues, how to make up for those
- Infrastructure needs (i.e., longer-term sustained recovery)
  - Water infrastructure
  - Energy infrastructure



# Future Legislation

- Unfinished business could advance
  - Water Infrastructure
  - Surface Transportation Legislation
- Next round of appropriations funding





**Do you need government relations and lobbying help with securing federal or state funds?**

# Government Relations Strategies for Funding

- Effective government relations strategies, including coordinated Federal and State actions, can impact outcomes for municipal entities
  - Competition is fierce for limited federal funds for a growing national need
- While facts and outcomes vary by project, client and many factors, the role of government relations is crucial to secure funding and support for projects and project funding
  - Case Studies



# Questions?



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Up Next...

# The New NEPA Regulations: A Practical Guide to What You Need to Know

December 10, 2020

10:30 – 12:00 p.m. PT

[noss.law/NEPA](https://www.noss.law/NEPA)