

ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM



The Foundation envisions a California that manages, stewards, and conserves its water and land to support a resilient environment and economy.

Water knowledge and information systems

The S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation invests in accelerating the creation and transfer of knowledge among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to ensure that science informs water management decisions.

Goal

California water management is informed by research, grounded in best practice, and enabled by sound water policy. As a result, California transitions to a sustainable water management system that meets the needs of people and nature.

Approach

- A** Mobilize leading researchers to produce relevant and high-quality research, synthesize existing knowledge, and effectively engage with policy audiences.
- B** Elevate data as a priority for water management, establish data norms, and advance information systems that promote a comprehensive understanding of water.

Intended outcomes

- ✓ Policy audiences are well informed and therefore champion sound water policy and management decisions.
- ✓ A broad, multi-disciplinary network of researchers is increasingly relied upon by policymakers.
- ✓ The water management community in California and across the West adopts more open, transparent, and complete water information systems.

Progress to date

- The Water in the West program at Stanford University developed a multi-media series to explore groundwater management in California through new research into key issues and a synthesis of existing knowledge. This work helped underpin the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014.
- Using remote sensing technology and economic modeling, the UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences analyzed the economic impacts of the drought on California's agriculture for 2014 and 2015. Results from this effort received widespread policy and media attention.

Field building and learning

- The PPIC Water Policy Center, launched in 2015, works with policymakers and diverse stakeholders to identify California's most pressing water challenges, supports a dynamic network of water policy researchers, and works with this research community to understand and develop solutions to those challenges.
- The Aspen Institute is mobilizing partners across the water community to promote the importance of open, integrated water data in supporting better decision-making and to develop a core set of principles for open, integrated water data systems.