



## **Senate Bill 163 – Renewable Water Portfolio Supply**

### **SUMMARY**

Senate Bill 163 declares that dumping treated wastewater into the ocean is an unreasonable use of water in the state of California. The bill sets timelines for sanitation facilities to meet standards for 50 percent beneficial reuse by 2026 and 100 percent reuse of treated water by 2036. The reuse standards would allow for backup discharges from treatment facilities for purposes such as irrigating crops, groundwater recharge, sea water barriers and watering public lands.

### **ISSUE**

Over the last several years, California has watched as water supplies have dwindled with less snow and fewer significant rain events. The severe drought conditions that grip more than 90 percent of the state have brought the issue of water conservation to the forefront of political discussions and policymaking.

However, we in California continue to let millions of gallons of treated wastewater—water that is useable and valuable—pour into the ocean every day. It is estimated that the state of California lets more than 1.5 billion gallons of treated fresh water go out to the ocean per day. The Los Angeles area alone is responsible for some 650 million gallons per day going out to the ocean according to West Basin Municipal Water District. Even in a drought, we are letting enormous quantities of highly treated fresh water flow into the ocean.

We know that as climate change continues to shape California’s landscape, water will become an increasingly precious resource. This state must look beyond the current drought and address the totality of California’s fresh water situation. By prohibiting treated wastewater from being dumped into the ocean and instead encouraging it’s use for irrigating public land or groundwater recharge, California can more wisely use every gallon of this state’s precious fresh water.

In 2013, the California State Water Resources Control Board adopted objectives for water recycling across the state. The Board established a mandate to increase the use of recycled water by 200,000 acre-feet per year by 2020 and to substitute “as much recycled water for potable water as possible by 2030.” Senate Bill 163 sets a course for California’s future and for a sustainable water supply for the state.

### **SB 163 (HERTZBERG)**

This bill would require wastewater treatment facilities to reuse 50 percent of treated wastewater for beneficial purposes by 2026 and 100 percent of treated wastewater by 2036. It allows the federal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit holders to apply to the state water board for partial exemptions from the reuse requirements provided they have a detailed plan, including infrastructure needs and financing, for meeting the reuse requirements in the future.