

PARTICIPANTS

Grant Davis is general manager of Sonoma Water, which provides drinking water and wastewater management services. He and his team also maintain nearly 100 miles of streams and detention basins for flood protection and manage a nationally recognized Russian River Watershed Restoration Program for the benefit of three federally listed fish species. Prior to joining Sonoma Water, he was executive director of the Bay Institute, a science-based nonprofit, dedicated to protecting the San Francisco Bay–Delta Watershed and improving water management in California. He has served as director of the California Department of Water Resources under Governor Brown. He is past president of WaterReuse California and is currently a member of the University of California President’s Advisory Commission on Agriculture and Natural Resources. He holds a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of California, Berkeley.

Alvar Escrivá-Bou is a research fellow at the [PPIC Water Policy Center](#). His research explores integrated water, energy, and environmental resources management. Since joining PPIC in 2015 his research has explored the options and consequences of transitioning to groundwater sustainability in the San Joaquin Valley, analyzed California’s water accounting system, studied urban drought resilience, and investigated energy and climate policies related to water use, among others. Previously, he worked as a civil engineer, managing and developing large infrastructure projects for local and regional governments and consulting firms in Spain. He holds a PhD and MS in water and environmental engineering and an MS in agricultural and resource economics from the University of California, Davis.

Laurel Firestone is a member of the State Water Resources Control Board, appointed by Governor Gavin Newsom in February 2019. Prior to joining the board, she co-founded and co-directed the Community Water Center, a statewide nonprofit environmental justice organization based in the Central Valley and the Central Coast. Her career has focused on ensuring that all Californians have access to safe, clean, and affordable drinking water, and building increased diversity, equity, and inclusivity into water decision-making. She has received a variety of awards and recognitions for her work, including the James Irvine Foundation’s Leadership Award in 2018, and the Gary Bellow Public Service Award from Harvard Law School in 2013. She holds a BA in environmental studies from Brown University and a JD from Harvard Law School.

Ellen Hanak is vice president and director of the [PPIC Water Policy Center](#) and a senior fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California, where she holds the Ellen Hanak Chair in Water Policy. Under her leadership, the center has become a critical source of information and guidance for natural resource management in California. She has authored dozens of reports, articles, and books on water policy, including [Managing California’s Water](#). Her research is frequently profiled in the national media, and she participates in briefings, conferences, and interviews throughout the nation and around the world. Her other areas of expertise include climate change and infrastructure finance. Previously, she served as research director at PPIC. Before joining PPIC, she held positions with the French agricultural research system, the President’s Council of Economic Advisers, and the World Bank. She holds a PhD in economics from the University of Maryland.

Josué Medellín-Azuara is an associate professor in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of California, Merced, and an adjunct research fellow at the [PPIC Water Policy Center](#). He is also an associate director at the UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences, and an associate director at the UC Agricultural Issues Center. His research explores agricultural drought adaptation, water resources management, regional economic impact analysis, and consumptive water use in agriculture. He has investigated the economic impacts of the recent California drought on agriculture and climate adaptation using hydro-economic models. He is a member of the Delta Science Advisory Committee, and has served as the convener of the California Water & Environmental Modeling Forum. He holds a PhD in ecology-environmental policy analysis and an MS in agricultural and resource economics from the University of California, Davis. He also holds a bachelor’s degree in engineering and an MBA from the Tecnológico de Monterrey in Mexico.