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Karla Nemeth Now Leading Association of California Water Agencies

SACRAMENTO — Former California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Director Karla Nemeth today started her new role as Executive Director of the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), bringing more than two decades of water policy experience to the largest statewide coalition of public water agencies in the nation.

As the top staff member, Nemeth oversees a team of more than 40 people based in Sacramento and Washington, D.C., and leads the association's day-to-day operations on behalf of approximately 470 member agencies responsible for 90 percent of the water delivered to cities, farms and businesses across California.

Nemeth's immediate priorities include advancing ACWA's strategic plan and its [Vision for Our Water Future initiative](#), a member-driven effort to elevate water as a top policy priority for California's next governor and state leaders. The initiative focuses on building a resilient and reliable water system, protecting affordability, investing in infrastructure and modernizing water management and permitting.

"This water year promises to be yet another story of weather extremes. A vision for ensuring a strong California economy, safe communities and a healthy environment must come from all of us. And we must work to make it affordable for all people in all parts of the state," Nemeth said. "Solutions not only require thoughtful planning and collaboration, but a willingness to act and invest, too. I look forward to working with ACWA staff and the Board of Directors to build upon the association's extraordinary foundation and strengthen our collaborative voice on behalf of our members."

ACWA's 37-member Board of Directors selected Nemeth for the position in May following a nationwide recruitment process. She is the first female executive director in the association's 116-year history.

Nemeth brings a breadth of experience in California water policy, management and planning to the association. She was appointed DWR Director by Gov. Jerry Brown in 2018 and re-appointed by Gov. Gavin Newsom the following year. DWR manages and protects California's water resources and supports the reliability of the state's electrical grid.

ACWA is a statewide association of public agencies whose approximately 470 members are responsible for about 90% of the water delivered in California. For more information, visit www.acwa.com

In 2024, Gov. Newsom appointed her to also serve as advisor on the Administration's water priorities and to lead implementation of key water projects, including modernizing California's water conveyance infrastructure, executing Agreements to Support Healthy Rivers and Landscapes, and stabilizing Colorado River supplies.

Prior to joining DWR, Nemeth worked at the California Natural Resources Agency as Brown's deputy secretary and senior advisor for water policy. She also served as Bay Delta Conservation Plan project manager from 2009 to 2014.

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