



- **Board of Directors**
Legislation and Communications Committee

7/14/2026 Board Meeting

8-3

Subject

Express support for AB 1894 (Rubio – D, West Covina) Fish and Wildlife: invasive mussels: imported water; the General Manager has determined that the proposed action is exempt or otherwise not subject to CEQA.

Executive Summary

Assembly Bill (AB) 1894 prohibits public agencies from restricting imported water deliveries for groundwater replenishment due to invasive mussels that are made in compliance with a California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) approved invasive mussel control plan unless there is substantial evidence of a “proven health and safety risk as a result of the invasive mussels.”

The bill responds to a challenging situation that emerged in 2025, when quagga and golden mussel concerns affected the State Water Project (SWP) deliveries to local spreading grounds used for groundwater recharge by the City of Burbank (Burbank) and the Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (Upper Water). The issue highlights the need to balance protection against invasive species risks with continued groundwater replenishment, particularly where Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (County) facilities help convey water to recharge basins.

Imported water is critical to Southern California’s managed aquifer recharge, groundwater sustainability, and regional water supply reliability. Metropolitan’s experience managing quagga mussels in the Colorado River Aqueduct since 2007 demonstrates that invasive mussel risks can be effectively managed through coordinated planning, operational controls, monitoring, and collaboration among agencies and local partners. AB 1894 supports this type of balanced, multi-agency approach by allowing critical groundwater replenishment deliveries to continue when they comply with a CDFW-approved invasive mussel control plan with effective control measures. In addition, agencies remain responsible for complying with all applicable environmental and water quality regulations and laws.

Proposed Action(s)/Recommendation(s) and Options

Staff Recommendation: Option #1

Option #1

Express support for AB 1894 (Rubio) Fish and Wildlife: invasive mussels: imported water.

Fiscal Impact: Unknown

Business Analysis: If Metropolitan takes a support position, the bill may pass and would ensure Metropolitan can deliver SWP supplies to its member agencies for replenishment purposes so long as it is done in accordance with a state-approved invasive mussel control plan, which would include stringent control measures to mitigate risk of downstream spread.

Option #2

Take no action and maintain a watch position on the bill.

Fiscal Impact: Unknown

Business Analysis: If Metropolitan takes no action, the bill may still pass as it has garnered support from other water agencies and stakeholders.

Alternatives Considered

Not applicable

Applicable Policy

By Minute Item 49165, dated August 21, 2012, the Board adopted its Policy Principle on Source Water Quality.

Related Board Action(s)/Future Action(s)

By Minute Item 54281, dated October 14, 2025, the Board amended the Capital Investment Plan for fiscal years 2024/25 and 2025/26 to include invasive mussel mitigation and control at Metropolitan facilities; and authorized an increase of \$500,000 in the operation and maintenance budget for fiscal year 2025/26 to purchase operating equipment to control the growth of invasive mussels.

By Minute Item 54347, dated December 9, 2025, the Board adopted the Legislative Priorities and Principles for 2026, which includes a priority to support funding and policy to mitigate against the spread of golden mussels and other invasive species and a principle to support actions and funding that protect source water quality and the reduction of threats from invasive species.

Summary of Outreach Completed

Metropolitan staff worked with the sponsors of the bill and presented amendments to require a public agency to be operating under an invasive mussel control plan approved by CDFW. The author adopted these amendments into AB 1894 on May 28, 2026.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA determination for Option #1:

The proposed action is not defined as a project under CEQA because it involves proposals for legislation to be enacted by the State Legislature. (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(1)).

CEQA determination for Option #2:

None required

Details and Background

Background

Invasive golden mussels were first detected at the Port of Stockton in October 2024 and have since spread through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and south through the California Aqueduct, including to Pyramid Lake in Los Angeles County and Silverwood Lake in San Bernardino County. Because Metropolitan receives SWP water from these reservoirs, its supplies and infrastructure are directly affected. In 2025, the County restricted SWP deliveries for groundwater replenishment to prevent invasive mussels from entering portions of the County's flood control system. This interrupted Metropolitan deliveries for Upper Water and Burbank, which rely on County facilities to convey SWP supplies to recharge basins.

These delivery interruptions led to ongoing discussions between affected water agencies and the County regarding appropriate control measures. As part of these efforts, Metropolitan recently worked with Burbank and the County to secure a CDFW-approved control plan for Burbank's replenishment deliveries, although deliveries have not yet resumed. Negotiations have included discussions around pilot projects to treat water for invasive mussels before it is moved through County infrastructure to the spreading grounds. These discussions are complicated by existing contractual agreements governing use of the flood control facilities, which provide the County discretion

to restrict deliveries of imported water if it is believed to create operational or maintenance concerns. The issue also affects the Main San Gabriel Groundwater Basin, where imported water deliveries are used to help manage the basin consistent with the adjudication judgment and prevent overdraft. While discussions have continued, the issue remains unresolved, with agencies concerned about future restrictions on imported water spreading for groundwater replenishment.

Key Provisions

AB 1894 adds Fish and Game Code Section 2302.5 to establish a narrow framework for continuing imported water deliveries for groundwater replenishment while managing invasive mussel risks. Below are the key provisions:

- Declares that the regulation, control, management, and eradication of invasive mussels, including quagga, zebra, and golden mussels, is a matter of statewide concern
- Prohibits public agencies from restricting imported water deliveries for groundwater replenishment due to invasive mussels when those deliveries comply with a CDFW-approved invasive mussel control plan
- Allows a public agency to prohibit such deliveries only if there is substantial, documented evidence of a proven health and safety risk resulting from the invasive mussels
- Defines “imported water deliveries for groundwater replenishment” to include water imported from outside a region’s local watershed or natural boundary, primarily from the State Water Project, Colorado River, or Eastern Sierra
- Applies to imported water used for managed aquifer recharge, groundwater injection, spreading, percolation, or other groundwater replenishment activities
- Clarifies that covered water may be conveyed by aqueduct, canal, pipeline, or other conveyance
- Applies statewide, including to charter cities and charter counties

AB 1894 would apply to water imported into Metropolitan’s service area, including replenishment deliveries to Burbank and Upper Water.

Invasive Mussel Control Measures

Fish and Game Code Section 2301 states that it is illegal to “possess, import, ship, or transport” invasive mussels in “any water of the state.” However, Section 2301(d) allows water system owners and operators to move invasive mussels in their supplies if they have control plans to address potential downstream infestation that are approved by CDFW. Water systems are required to obtain control plans for their operations if their system contains invasive mussels and where water may reach waters of the state. Approved control plans provide a regulatory pathway for water systems to continue essential operations while managing invasive mussel risks and maintaining compliance with CDFW requirements.

In a complex and interconnected water system, full eradication of invasive mussels may not be feasible; however, effective control measures can significantly reduce operational and downstream risks. Metropolitan has managed quagga mussel risks in the Colorado River Aqueduct since they were first discovered in 2007, using control measures, monitoring, infrastructure protection, and coordination with partner agencies. That experience provides an important foundation, but the discovery of quagga and golden mussels in the SWP presents additional complexity because the SWP involves a greater number of facilities, agencies, and delivery purposes, including groundwater replenishment.

To address these broader challenges, staff initiated a multi-disciplinary task force to investigate and address the impacts of invasive mussels on Metropolitan’s operations and facilities. This effort supports regulatory compliance, addresses short-term mitigation and control of invasive mussels, and develops a strategy to protect Metropolitan’s critical infrastructure exposed to SWP supplies. In October 2025, the Metropolitan Board amended the Capital Investment Plan to address invasive mussels. The task force has made progress in the invasive mussel control program and is working with member agencies and regulatory authorities to develop control plans for

water deliveries, while also enhancing monitoring, conducting research and feasibility studies, performing pilot tests, and initiating critical infrastructure projects.

Staff is continuing to monitor Metropolitan's system to assess the spread of invasive mussels, evaluate appropriate control measures, and coordinate with member and partner agencies to implement invasive mussel control strategies and projects, including efforts to resume groundwater replenishment operations as soon as possible. Staff is also expediting projects to install infrastructure protection measures and facilities to support comprehensive mussel control solutions.

Support

According to the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee analysis (committee analysis), several agencies (listed below) have registered support for AB 1894. Supporters emphasize that invasive mussel management should be addressed through a consistent statewide framework to protect water supply reliability, support emergency response needs, and uphold California's commitment to the human right to water. They also argue that the bill clarifies compliance with state law and regulatory guidelines and helps protect the sustainability of the Main San Gabriel Basin Groundwater Adjudication, which relies on imported water deliveries to offset overdraft.

Organizations in Support:

- San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (co-sponsor)
- Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (co-sponsor)
- Azuza Light and Water
- California Municipal Utilities Association
- San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership
- San Gabriel Valley Water Association
- Three Valleys Municipal Water District

Opposition

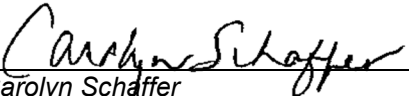
According to the committee analysis, several agencies have registered an oppose-unless-amended position on AB 1894. The coalition argues that the bill could limit the authority of groundwater recharge facility owners to control and protect their facilities by requiring acceptance of water from infested sources. It also raises concerns that broad preemption of local authority could increase risks to water supply reliability by introducing invasive mussels into areas that are not currently infested. In addition, the coalition argues that the bill could shift responsibility and costs for invasive mussel control from the entity importing the water to the operator of the receiving water system. Finally, the coalition notes that because golden mussels may not pose a direct human health threat, the bill's health and safety exception may be difficult to apply even where significant infrastructure or safety risks exist.

Organizations Opposed Unless Amended:

- Kings River Conservation District
- Kings River Water Association
- Valley Ag Water Coalition

Conclusion

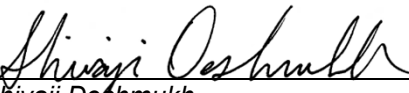
Staff recommends taking a support position on AB 1894 (**Attachment 1**) because the bill provides an important framework to maintain critical imported water deliveries for groundwater replenishment while ensuring that invasive mussel risks continue to be managed through CDFW-approved control plans and associated mitigation measures in place. The bill is consistent with Metropolitan's ongoing efforts to protect infrastructure, support regulatory compliance, coordinate with member and partner agencies, and preserve regional water supply reliability.



Carolyn Schäffer
Group Manager, External Affairs

6/25/2026

Date



Shivaji Deshmukh
General Manager

6/25/2026

Date

**Attachment 1 – AB 1894 (Rubio). Fish and wildlife: invasive mussels: imported water
(as amended May 28, 2026)**

Ref# ea12713535

AMENDED IN SENATE MAY 28, 2026

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 16, 2026

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 16, 2026

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2025–26 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1894

Introduced by Assembly Member Blanca Rubio

February 12, 2026

An act to add Section 2302.5 to the Fish and Game Code, relating to fish and wildlife.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1894, as amended, Blanca Rubio. Fish and wildlife: invasive mussels: imported water.

Existing law, until January 1, 2030, generally prohibits a person from possessing, importing, shipping, or transporting in the state, or from placing, planting, or causing to be placed or planted in any water within the state, invasive mussels, and authorizes the Director of Fish and Wildlife, or the director's designee, to engage in various enforcement activities with regard to invasive mussels. Existing law, until January 1, 2030, requires a public or private agency that operates a water supply system to cooperate with the ~~department~~ *Department of Fish and Wildlife* to implement measures to avoid infestation by invasive mussels and to control or eradicate any infestation that occurs in a water supply system. Existing law requires any person, or federal, state, or local agency, district, or authority that owns or manages a reservoir, where specified activities are permitted, except as specified, to develop and implement a program designed to prevent the introduction of invasive mussel species, as provided. Existing law requires any entity that

discovers invasive mussels within the state to immediately report the discovery to the ~~Department of Fish and Wildlife~~. *department*.

This bill would prohibit a public agency from prohibiting imported water ~~deliveries, as defined, deliveries~~ for groundwater ~~replenishment~~ *replenishment, as defined*, due to invasive mussels *if the importation complies with a specified invasive mussel control plan and unless there is substantial, documented evidence of a proven health and safety risk as a result of the invasive mussels.*

The bill would include findings that changes proposed by this bill address a matter of statewide concern rather than a municipal affair and, therefore, apply to all cities and counties, including charter cities and charter counties.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 2302.5 is added to the Fish and Game
- 2 Code, to read:
- 3 2302.5. (a) The Legislature finds and declares that the
- 4 regulation, control, management, and eradication of invasive
- 5 mussels, including, but not limited to, *Dreissena rostriformis*
- 6 *bugensis*, commonly known as quagga mussels, *Dreissena*
- 7 *polymorpha*, commonly known as zebra mussels, and *Limnoperna*
- 8 *fortunei*, commonly known as golden mussels, is a matter of
- 9 statewide concern.
- 10 (b) Imported water deliveries for groundwater replenishment
- 11 *made in compliance with an invasive mussel control plan approved*
- 12 *by the department pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 2301* shall
- 13 not be prohibited by a public agency due to invasive mussels unless
- 14 there is substantial, documented evidence of a proven health and
- 15 safety risk as a result of the invasive mussels.
- 16 (c) For purposes of this section, “imported water deliveries for
- 17 groundwater replenishment” means deliveries of water imported
- 18 from outside a region’s local watershed or natural boundary,
- 19 primarily originating from the State Water Project, the Colorado
- 20 River, or the Eastern Sierra, where the water is to be used for
- 21 managed aquifer recharge, groundwater injection, spreading,
- 22 percolation, or other activities intended to replenish groundwater
- 23 supplies. For purposes of this definition, “water” includes, but is

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1 not limited to, surface water conveyed by an aqueduct, canal,
2 pipeline, or other conveyance.
3 SEC. 2. The Legislature finds and declares that Section 1 of
4 this act adding Section 2302.5 to the Fish and Game Code
5 addresses a matter of statewide concern rather than a municipal
6 affair as that term is used in Section 5 of Article XI of the
7 California Constitution. Therefore, Section 1 of this act applies to
8 all cities and counties, including charter cities and charter counties.

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