



# 2017 Year in Review

In 2017, the Pacific Institute influenced water policy through groundbreaking research and outreach, brought together diverse stakeholders to make progress on critical water issues, and catalyzed global business action on water stewardship in support of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

## Influencing Decision Makers for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Water Policies



Photo by Marilyn Nieves

Our reports—founded on detailed analysis and coupled with practical recommendations—are blueprints for creating sensible water policies. A sample of our findings this year:

### **Loss of Hydropower During California's Five-Year**

**Drought:** Due to reduced water availability for hydropower, Californians paid an estimated \$2.45 billion more for electricity, and state greenhouse gas emissions increased by 10 percent.

**Drought and Equity in California:** In California, low-income families, communities burdened with environmental pollution, and those dependent on salmon for their livelihood and traditions were highly vulnerable to water

supply shortages, rising unaffordability, and insufficient streamflows during California's recent five-year drought.

### **Drinking Fountains and Public Health: Improving National Water Infrastructure to Rebuild Trust and Ensure**

**Access:** Despite limited empirical evidence, concerns over cleanliness and potential disease transmission are contributing to the decline of public drinking fountains across the U.S. Effort is needed to rebuild trust and ensure continuance of this valuable public resource, including through proper cleaning and maintenance.

## Impact through Outreach

In the United States, the Pacific Institute collaborates with state agencies, water suppliers, and environmental and social justice organizations to advise and inform state and local policy, turning groundbreaking research into on-the-ground positive change.

In 2017, we elucidated the high cost of inaction at California's Salton Sea at a number of panels, emphasizing the economic, environmental, and public health risks of inaction. We amplified this message through media interviews and outreach—more than 100 articles featured our research and quotes on the Salton Sea.

At a forum on drought, equity, and the human right to water, we catalogued equity concerns around water affordability in California, water shortages during droughts, and the impacts of water shortages on salmon fishing communities in the state.

We worked closely with the author of California Assembly Bill 1328 on a technical background brief, provided input on the bill's language, and testified at an Assembly Natural Resources committee hearing on the bill, which aims to strengthen the authority of the California state and regional water boards to obtain information about the chemicals present in wastewater from oil and gas production. Signed into law in October, the bill was conceived in response to recommendations for greater transparency in the use of chemicals in a report co-authored by the Pacific Institute.



Photo by Daniel M. Edwards



## Progress through Collaboration

Each year, the Pacific Institute brings together a variety of stakeholders with varied interests and goals to establish common ground and find a way forward on vital water issues.

In 2017, we co-sponsored summits on the effects of the California drought on vulnerable communities, bringing together members of impacted communities, local

and state decision-makers, nonprofit leaders, and researchers to discuss strategies for building communities' resilience in the face of future droughts.

At World Water Week in Stockholm, as Co-Secretariat of the CEO Water Mandate we brought together business leaders, experts, and practitioners from around the world to discuss innovations in climate adaption, effective water risk assessment tools, and the power of multi-stakeholder collective action to improve water security at the watershed scale.

We collaborated with a variety of experts and practitioners to develop pioneering water-related impact metrics, aimed to help businesses, governments, and organizations better understand and communicate the impact of water stewardship partnerships on freshwater sustainability.

## Guiding Businesses Towards Sustainable Water Management

We use our unique role as the Secretariat of the UN Global Compact's CEO Water Mandate to leverage the power of the private sector to successfully manage water-related challenges around the world.

In 2017, we co-authored a report calling on leading businesses to take a context-based approach to water stewardship, and to develop water-related metrics and targets that take into account water conditions in the basins in which companies operate.

We co-hosted capacity-building workshops around the world demonstrating the business case for water stewardship and inspiring business leaders to collaborate with civil society to scale solutions that improve water and sanitation access, essential components of achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal on water.

We revamped and significantly upgraded the CEO Water Mandate website, an organizational water match-making instrument, as well as the Water Action Hub and Water Stewardship Toolbox online platforms, which feature guidance, best practices, reports, and tools to help companies advance water stewardship in their direct operations and supply chains.



## Making a Splash: Shaping Water Debates

THE HUFFINGTON POST

San Francisco Chronicle

The New York Times

grist

WIRED

THE HILL

- **The Huffington Post:** Water and Conflict: Fighting Wars Over a Precious Resource
- **The New York Times:** Survey: Business Water Management Efforts are Still a Drop in the Bucket
- **Grist:** The U.S. Could Have Avoided Puerto Rico's Water Crisis
- **Wired:** A Wet Year Won't Beat California's Never-Ending Drought
- **The Hill:** Oroville Dam Crisis Shows Why We Can't Take Water Infrastructure for Granted
- **San Francisco Chronicle:** How California Can and Must Stop Wasting Its Storm Water