

Ceres Connect the Drops Initiative

WHO



Project Lead: Ceres

Members: ABInBev, Adobe, Annie's, Autodesk, Ben&Jerry, Burton, Channel Islands, Clif, Danone N.A., Dignity Health, Driscoll's, Eileen Fischer, Fetzer Vineyards, Gap Inc., Genentech, General Mills, Hilton, Kaiser Permanente, KB Home, Kellogg's, Kohler, Levi Strauss & Co., PepsiCo, Qualcomm, SFO, Seventh Generation, Sierra Nevada, Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows, Symantec, Target, The Coca Cola Company, The North Face, Vans, VMWare, Xylem.

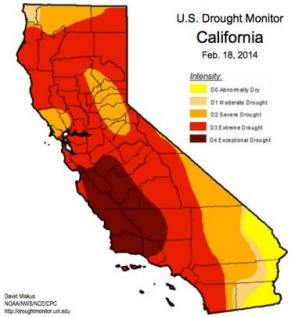
WHAT

The Ceres Connect the Drops initiative brings together 35 companies from multiple sectors including food and beverage, apparel, tech, and others, which have strong leadership in corporate water stewardship. By leveraging its expertise in water issues and policy, Ceres helps businesses to identify potential policy engagement opportunities that would drive water sustainability in California. Ceres facilitates policy engagement through advocacy tools, including face-to-face meetings, press conferences, OpEds, sign-on letters of support, and other approaches. The initiative promotes stronger policies that address water conservation and efficiency; water reuse; stormwater capture, use, and recharge; sustainable groundwater management; and funding for smart water projects in California.

WHY

In California, water issues are exacerbated by climate change, resulting in prolonged periods of drought followed by excessive rainfall. Water scarcity creates a material issue for many businesses dependent on water resources in the state, through operations, supply chains, and customers. This initiative is bringing the business voice to Sacramento, the state's capitol, to remove barriers to and accelerate adoption of improved water management practices for California.

WHERE



California

The state of California faces many water challenges, which are worsening due to climate change. It is also a critical economic region for many companies.

It's time for California to Connect The Drops

Water is the lifeblood of California. It is central to our communities, our economy and our natural resources. Our state is blessed with world-class innovation and talent, bountiful farmland, and diverse wildlife. Yet today, the water supplies that sustain these essential resources are in jeopardy. We cannot risk our state's economic future by relying on outdated water management practices, policies and infrastructure. Now is the time for fresh thinking, shared purpose and bold solutions to build a resilient water future for all Californians. And it is incumbent on us—the business community—to help lead the way. It's time to come together. To connect the drops. Between flowing rivers and economic opportunity. Between saving water and saving energy. Between clean water and healthy people. By embracing innovation and investing in smart policies and solutions that help us conserve, reuse and maximize our water supply. California has made progress—but much more can be done. We can be more water efficient. We can do more to replenish our rivers and aquifers. And we can do it while strengthening the communities and industries that make our economy strong. But we cannot do it alone.

Come and join us.



The centerpiece of the Ceres Connect the Drops initiative is a declaration signed by the business members that advocate for sustainable water management in California.

For more information visit: <https://www.ceres.org/initiatives/connect-the-drops>

CHALLENGES

- **Engaging policy makers:** State policy makers have many competing priorities and issues to address. Drawing the attention of these policy makers to water issues, especially when the state is not in a drought, can be difficult.
- **Engaging businesses:** Companies similarly have many competing priorities, of which water is only one. As such, it can be challenging to keep companies engaged and meaningfully involved in the collective action efforts of the initiative.

SUCCESSSES

- Connect the Drops is increasing the visibility of businesses speaking out for sustainable solutions in California water policy. The business voice is often seen as less progressive or seeking to impede environmental policies, but this group is sending a message to policy makers that companies want to see sustainable water management and policy that supports that.
- The advocacy and engagement of Connect the Drops corporate members contributed to the passage of Water Use Efficiency Bills AB 1668 and SB 606, the Open and Transparent Water Data Act (AB 1755), the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund (SB 200), and others.

KEY INSIGHTS

- It takes significant times and resources to keep companies engaged and interested in the initiative. It is important to maintain consistent and persistent contact and keep companies excited about the work.
- Because a multi-sector, unified, constructive business voice is often absent from policy-making processes, this initiative plays a crucial role in helping to make businesses share their water stewardship stories and vocalize why it is important to move thoughtful water policy forward. Leveraging the power of collective action and bringing together 35 companies helps make their agenda more visible and credible.

SCALING & REPLICATING

Connect the Drops started with seven company signatories and quickly scaled to 35 by educating companies around the importance of public policy engagement. Ongoing recognition of member companies' efforts and successes inspires peers to take action as well. Connect the Drops is also coordinating with the California Water Action Collaborative to identify policy barriers to innovative water projects that should be addressed. Lastly, there is growing interest and potential to bring the Connect the Drops model to other states and regions facing water challenges.

TAGS

Stewardship Strategies

Water Management
in Direct Operations

Value Chain
Engagement

Collaboration
at Watershed Scale

Nexus Approaches

SDG 6 Targets

