



**Procedure for Eminent Domain**

**Overview**

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) may acquire property for constructing, maintaining, or operating State Water Project facilities but it may not commence an eminent domain proceeding until its governing body has adopted a resolution of necessity. The governing body is the California Water Commission. Code of Civil Procedure section 1245.210.

California Water Code Section 11575 gives DWR the authority to acquire land for the purpose of constructing, maintaining or operating the State Water Project.

*CWC §11575. For the purpose of constructing, maintaining, and operating the project and for the purpose of providing and substituting new facilities for facilities to be taken or destroyed, the department may acquire for and in the name of the state, by gift, exchange, purchase, or eminent domain proceedings, within or without the state, any and all water, water rights, rights-of-way, easements, land, electric power, power resources and facilities, and property or appurtenances thereto of every kind and description and any appurtenances to any such property as the department determines to be required and necessary for the proper construction, maintenance, and operation of the project and for effectuating the purposes and objects to be accomplished by the construction, maintenance, and operation of the project, and for providing and substituting new facilities for facilities taken or destroyed.*

Water Code Section 11580 gives DWR the ability to exercise the power of eminent domain if DWR cannot acquire the necessary property through an agreement with the owner and if the project for which the property is being acquired has been authorized and funds are available.

*CWC §11580. When the department cannot acquire any necessary property by agreement with the owner, the department may exercise the power of eminent domain to acquire the property in the name of the state if the project for which the property is being acquired has been authorized and funds are available therefore.*

Before DWR may commence any eminent domain proceeding, it must obtain a resolution of necessity from the California Water Commission:

*CCP 1245.220. A public entity may not commence an eminent domain proceeding until its governing body has adopted a resolution of necessity that meets the requirements of this article.*

*CCP 1245.210. As used in this article, "governing body" means: (h) In the case of a taking by the Department of Water Resources, the California Water Commission.*

**Procedures for Consideration of Resolution of Necessity**

This document describes the California Water Commission's procedures for considering a resolution of necessity. It is the intent of the Commission to provide a transparent and well-defined process in order to ensure all legal requirements have been met, and affected and interested parties are provided due process.

**1. Notification of Commission Consideration of a Resolution of Necessity**

DWR shall inform the Commission it intends to request a resolution of necessity. The Commission will notice the item on its meeting agenda and send a notice to the landowner of the property for which the resolution of necessity is being considered at least 21 days prior to the meeting. The notification to the landowner will include the date, time, and location of the Commission meeting, information about the proposed resolution of necessity, a copy of the Commission's procedures, and an explanation of opportunities to provide written and oral public comments.

**2. Consideration of Evidence in support of Resolution of Necessity**

At a public meeting, the Commission will consider evidence in support of the specific findings required for a resolution of necessity pursuant to Section 1245.230, which states:

*In addition to other requirements imposed by law, the resolution of necessity shall contain all of the following:*

*(a) A general statement of the public use for which the property is to be taken and a reference to the statute that authorizes the public entity to acquire the property by eminent domain.*

*(b) A description of the general location and extent of the property to be taken, with sufficient detail for reasonable identification.*

*(c) A declaration that the governing body of the public entity has found and determined each of the following:*

*(1) The public interest and necessity require the proposed project.*

*(2) The proposed project is planned or located in the manner that will be most compatible with the greatest public good and the least private injury.*

*(3) The property described in the resolution is necessary for the proposed project.*

*(4) That either the offer required by Section 7267.2 of the Government Code has been made to the owner or owners of record, or the offer has not been made because the owner cannot be located with reasonable diligence.*

DWR will prepare and provide a Staff Report to the Commission for the agenda that includes the information necessary in order ensure that all four requirements for a resolution of necessity have been met (CCP 1245.230). The report shall include the following:

- A description of the project.
  - An explanation of why the project is necessary and in the public interest.
  - An explanation of the legal authority for the project and the availability of funds for the project.
  - The status of other parcels required for the project: Total parcels; number of parcels acquired; number or parcels under right of entry; number of other owners expected to request appearance before the Commission.
  - Detailed Parcel Description.
  - Maps (index map, project title sheet, appropriate plan sheets and parcel maps) covering the project and its relationship to the full parcel must be provided.
  - A listing of the owner's primary concerns (compensation, design features, timing of the acquisition, lack of replacement housing, etc.).
  - A description of any design or right of way modifications suggested by the owner, including DWR's opinion on the feasibility of these suggestions and the basis for DWR's opinion (why they are or are not feasible).
  - A description of alternatives to the proposed taking that have been considered by DWR.
  - A description of official contacts or attempted contacts with the property owner (or representative) involving acquisition and formal offers, as well as a summary of each of the owner's concerns.
  - Identification of the appropriate contact persons within DWR that can provide additional detailed information.
- Copy of Notice to Landowner
  - Copy of CEQA Compliance
  - Copy of correspondence between the Department of Water Resources and the landowner only if provided by the landowner to the Commission

All affected landowners and any other members of the public may appear and speak to the Commission. Written comments may also be submitted to the Commission prior to the meeting or at the meeting.

The Commission will consider all information and comment provided. The Commission will not take action on the proposed resolution of necessity at this meeting, but will schedule potential action for a subsequent meeting as described in No. 5 below. The Commission may also request additional evidence or information from DWR for consideration.

### **3. Consideration of Authority**

As part of its deliberations, the Commission shall consider the authority of DWR to exercise eminent domain for the project, as specified in California Water Code Section 11580. If the Commission determines that DWR has not provided sufficient information to make a finding of the facts, it may request further evidence or legal analysis.

#### **4. Site Visit**

Commission staff may contact the landowner to request a site visit for one or more members of the Commission to view the property in question. This visit will only take place if agreed to by the landowner. However, a site visit is not required prior to Commission consideration of the matter or prior to action on the resolution of necessity.

#### **5. Consideration of Action on Resolution of Necessity**

The Commission will schedule action on the proposed resolution of necessity for a subsequent Commission meeting and will notify the affected landowner at least 21 calendar days prior to the meeting. Code of Civil Procedure §1245.235. The Commission will consider additional information, if any, and determine if there is enough evidence to satisfy section 1245.230.

At this Commission meeting, DWR staff will provide responses to questions and review the Staff Report. Staff will provide the following additional materials in the agenda packet:

- Copy of Proposed Resolution
- Deed
- Proposed Commission Notice of Determination
- Relevant CEQA Document

The Commission will accept public testimony from the landowner and any other member of the public who appears at the hearing.

The Commission may choose to take action at this meeting. To adopt a resolution of necessity requires a two-thirds vote of all members, which is a minimum of six votes in favor of the resolution of necessity regardless of the number of Commission members present at the meeting.