

Water Management Requirements for a New Energy Policy

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Abstract. To respond to emerging energy needs requires re-evaluation of water policy because the political focus is on increasing supplies of energy, not in solving problems of water management. Currently, many water management issues are neglected, particularly in vulnerable, headwaters regions of watersheds where better water resources data and indicators are needed to facilitate decision making. With energy production on the rise, watersheds will be under greater stress. Energy-water interfaces include: water for biofuels, thermoelectric generation, nuclear energy, oil shale, oil and gas production, coal bed methane, coal production and use, air emissions, nonpoint source runoff, water utility use of energy, pumped storage, and ground water sources for heating and cooling. Looming behind these direct energy issues is the issue of global warming and climate change. This strategic issue is of enormous importance, but attention to it actually lures policy makers away from attention to the state and local level issues that will, in the end, determine success or failure of water management programs. The paper addresses needed responses by water management institutions and water researchers to meet new demands on water caused by shifts in energy policy. It discusses programmatic fault lines in water policy that are exposed by emerging energy policy, gaps in water management methods and programs, and the needed agenda for water research.

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