

Top Hat Consulting

<u>Team Member Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Major</u>
Audrey Berlie	2024	Environmental Business
Jaylen Walton	2024	Communications & Media Studies
Emma Simonis	2025	Marketing

Advisor(s): Dr. John Tichenor & Mackenzie Nalven

Topic: Wonderful, Wasteful, or Wishful Thinking: The Kern Water Bank

Audience: The Kern Water Bank Authority

Sustainable Development Goals

SDG #2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

SDG #6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

SDG #16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Executive Summary

The megadrought that has gripped the Western United States over the past two decades demonstrates that water is a scarce and precious resource. The Kern Water Bank is a storage facility that was initially acquired to serve as an emergency water supply. In 1995, the controversial Monterey Amendments transferred the Kern Water Bank out of the public domain and into the hands of privately owned corporations, which became known as the “Kern Water Bank Authority” (KWBA). Once a public asset designed to benefit all of California, the Kern Water Bank now serves private interests instead of stakeholders and the environment.

Top Hat Consulting will advise the KWBA’s board of directors on the actions they can take to protect the future access of clean water for all stakeholders. We recommend that the KWBA reevaluates their obligations to the public and environmental interest of California. We will present a plan for stewarding the Kern Water Bank that adopts privatization in a manner that supports all stakeholder needs. Overall, we advise that the KWBA should revise the policies of the Kern Water Bank to consider every relevant stakeholder since clean water is a basic human right and a public resource that belongs to all.

