

**BAY AREA WATER SUPPLY AND CONSERVATION AGENCY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**June 7, 2024**

Correspondence and media coverage of interest between May 17, 2024 and June 6, 2024

**Correspondence**

From: Info@losvaquerosjpa.com  
To: Stakeholders  
Date: May 28, 2024  
Subject: Los Vaqueros Reservoir Joint Powers Authority Update

From: Stephanie Glatt  
Joslyn Baxter  
Gary Goetz  
Nancy Berman  
Alan Schwartz  
Patrice Wallace  
Nancy Havassy  
Greg Dinger  
Darrell Trombley  
Basey Klopp  
Gabrielle Swanberg  
Marilyn Shepherd  
To: BAWSCA Board Members  
Date: May 23, 2024 – May 25, 2024  
Subject: Restore Remote Participation at BAWSCA

**Press Release**

From: Maven's Notebook  
Date: June 6, 2024  
Subject: Conservation groups undaunted by court ruling: Sites Reservoir is a bad deal for rivers, for fish, and for California

From: California Department of Water Resources  
Date: May 23, 2024  
Subject: Sate Water Project Advances Efforts to Prepare for Future Droughts Amid a Changing Climate

**Water Supply Conditions:**

Date: May 17, 2024  
Source: SF Chronicle  
Article: Drought conditions have mostly disappeared in California. It's a first in more than a decade

**Water Management:**

Date: May 30, 2024  
Source: AgNetWest  
Article: Long-Term Drought Plan for the State Water Project

Date: May 20, 2024  
Source: The North Bay Business Journal  
Article: Solano County faces 75% water supply cut under Bay-Delta plan

**Water Infrastructure:**

Date: June 4, 2024  
Source: Sacramento Bee  
Article: California's largest reservoir project in decades clears environmental court challenge

Date: May 31, 2024  
Source: Maven's Notebook  
Article: California judge weighs injunction for Delta Conveyance Project

Date: May 28, 2024  
Source: SF Gate  
Article: State Of The Estuary Conference Drives Into Restorations In The Era Of Climate Change

Date: May 28, 2024  
Source: Valley Water News  
Article: Aging Infrastructure and Effects of Climate Change Lead to Need for Critical Investment

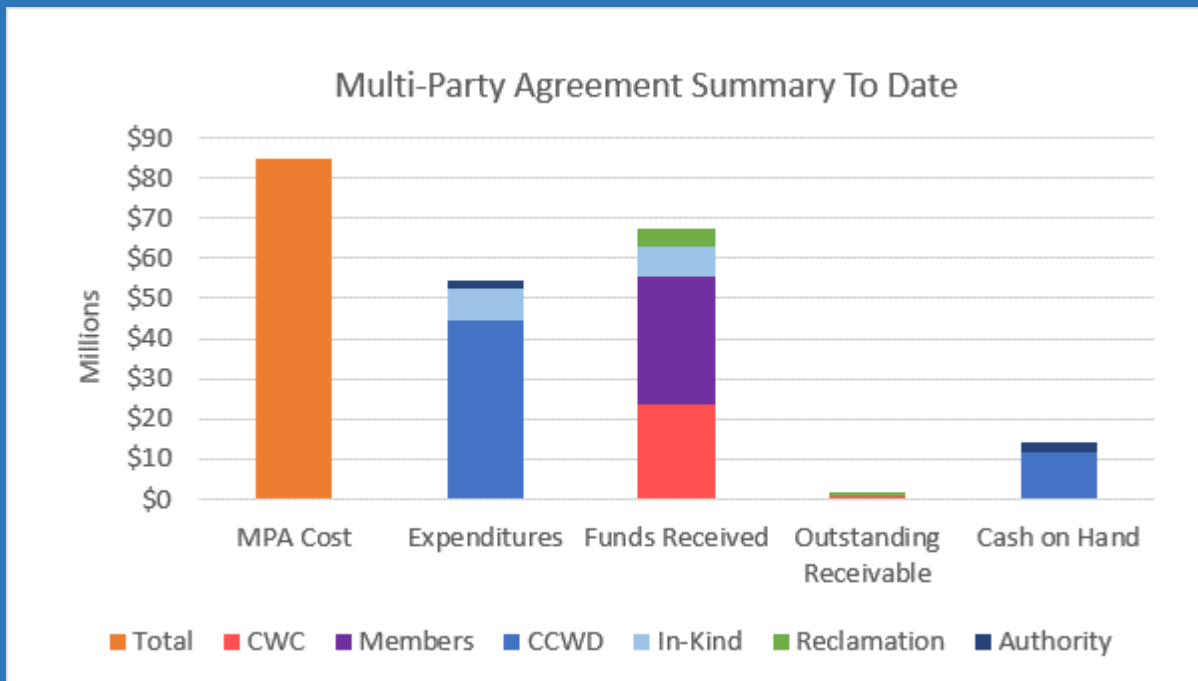
May 28, 2024

# Los Vaqueros Reservoir Joint Powers Authority Update



## UPDATE ON MULTIPARTY COST SHARE AGREEMENT

The following chart provides an overview of the MPA expenditures through April 30, 2024, as well as in-kind services, funds received, outstanding receivables, and cash on hand.



## MAY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING RECAP

On May 3, the JPA Board of Directors met in person at Zone 7 Water Agency. Action items included the adoption of a resolution approving Amendment Number 6 to the Multi-Party Cost Share Agreement. Discussion items included the Draft Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget Book and a program management update. The next JPA Board Meeting is scheduled for June 12 at Zone 7 Water Agency. In accordance with the Brown Act, the meeting agenda packet will be posted on the [JPA website](#) in advance of the meeting.

## **JPA AND CCWD CONTINUE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTRACT FOR ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC BENEFITS**

The JPA continues to coordinate and meet regularly with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) on the development of the ecosystem Contract for Administration of Public Benefits (CAPB). JPA and CCWD representatives also met with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) in April to review initial comments on the CAPB for emergency response and recreation. Once the JPA receives drafts for review, subsequent briefings will be held with Member Agencies.

## **KEY PROJECT MILESTONES ACHIEVED IN FY 2023-2024**

The JPA achieved a number of project milestones in the 2023-2024 fiscal year, including the following:

- Strengthened the JPA's foundational governance structure by adopting necessary fiscal and administrative policies and procedures
- Transitioned administrative and financial services to the JPA from Contra Costa Water District (CCWD)

- Procured a program management team, accounting firm, independent audit firm, and bond counsel
- Received \$10 million allocation in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding
- Developed and submitted Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) loan application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Acquired an indicative credit rating from Standard & Poor, positioning the JPA for financing
- Supported CCWD in its efforts to finalize permitting
- Updated Plan of Finance and Proforma model
- Established Ad Hoc Committees for CCWD Design and Construction Agreement and CCWD Facilities Use Agreement
- Developed models and tools to support Member Agency allocation methodology
- Established monthly leadership meetings with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation California–Great Basin Office to facilitate issue resolution around federal investment
- Developed and strengthened relationships with federal and state administration and legislative representatives in Washington, D.C. and Sacramento
- Conducted monthly meetings of the Member Agency general managers
- Convened regular monthly JPA Board meetings as well as Finance, Communications and Outreach, and Engineering and Operations Committee meetings

Looking ahead to the 2024–2025 fiscal year, the JPA anticipates reaching the following additional milestones:

- Complete Project permitting
- Execute Project contracts and agreements, including Contract for Administration of Public Benefits, CCWD Design and Construction Agreement, CCWD and EBMUD Facility Usage Agreement, and Authority and Member Agency Service Agreements

- Participate in final funding award hearing with the California Water Commission (CWC)
- Receive Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) loan approval
- Complete dam design and obtain approval from the California Department of Water Resources Division of Safety of Dams
- Complete 30% design for Transfer–Bethany Pipeline
- Complete 90% design for Pumping Plant 1
- Continue identification of lands needed for right of way and mitigation

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

**June 12 – 9:30 a.m.**

JPA Board Meeting (Zone 7 Water Agency)

**June 20 – 10 a.m.**

JPA Operations & Engineering Committee Meeting (Virtual)

**June 26 – 10 a.m.**

JPA Communications & Outreach Committee Meeting (Virtual)

**June 27 – 1 p.m.**

JPA Finance Committee Meeting (Virtual)



## ADDITIONAL PROJECT INFORMATION

[losvaquerosjpa.com](http://losvaquerosjpa.com)  
[ccwater.com/lvstudies](http://ccwater.com/lvstudies)

(This page was intentionally left blank)



**From:** [Stephanie Glatt \(stephanieglatt@gmail.com\)](mailto:stephanieglatt@gmail.com) Sent You a Personal Message  
**To:** [bawscaboardofdirectors](mailto:bawscaboardofdirectors)  
**Subject:** Restore Remote Public Comment at BAWSCA  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 4, 2024 2:13:41 PM

---

Dear BAWSCA Board of Directors,

Dear Board Members,

The removal of remote participation in BAWSCA Board meetings has reduced the transparency of the agency and has excluded the voices of the elderly, working-class, and caregiving community members from sharing their vital perspectives on the actions BAWSCA takes.

Remote participation became the new normal during the pandemic and remains in place in the majority of California cities. BAWSCA has made great progress by returning livestreams of Board meetings and the Agency must continue by implementing remote public comment services. As BAWSCA considers continuing its anti-environmental lawsuit against the State Water Board and chooses to support environmentally harmful voluntary agreements (VAs), the Board must remain transparent and ensure the voices of marginalized communities are heard at public meetings.

The Board must restore remote participation, including remote public comment. Thank you for recognizing the impact that remote participation has on increasing the accessibility and transparency of BAWSCA.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Stephanie Glatt  
573 Tamarind Ln  
Buellton, CA 93427  
[stephanieglatt@gmail.com](mailto:stephanieglatt@gmail.com)  
(805) 691-9063

This message was sent by KnowWho, as a service provider, on behalf of an individual associated with Sierra Club. If you need more information, please contact Member Care at Sierra Club at [member.care@sierraclub.org](mailto:member.care@sierraclub.org) or (415) 977-5673.

(This page was intentionally left blank)

**From:** [Joslyn Baxter \(joslyn.baxter@gmail.com\) Sent You a Personal Message](mailto:joslyn.baxter@gmail.com)  
**To:** [bawscaboardofdirectors](mailto:bawscaboardofdirectors)  
**Subject:** Restore Remote Public Comment at BAWSCA  
**Date:** Saturday, May 25, 2024 9:49:03 AM

---

Dear BAWSCA Board of Directors,

Dear Board Members,

The removal of remote participation in BAWSCA Board meetings has reduced the transparency of the agency and has excluded the voices of the elderly, working-class, and caregiving community members from sharing their vital perspectives on the actions BAWSCA takes.

Remote participation became the new normal during the pandemic and remains in place in the majority of California cities. BAWSCA has made great progress by returning livestreams of Board meetings and the Agency must continue by implementing remote public comment services. As BAWSCA considers continuing its anti-environmental lawsuit against the State Water Board and chooses to support environmentally harmful voluntary agreements (VAs), the Board must remain transparent and ensure the voices of marginalized communities are heard at public meetings.

The Board must restore remote participation, including remote public comment. Thank you for recognizing the impact that remote participation has on increasing the accessibility and transparency of BAWSCA.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Joslyn Baxter  
324 Sheffield Ave  
Mill Valley, CA 94941  
[joslyn.baxter@gmail.com](mailto:joslyn.baxter@gmail.com)  
(415) 889-3707

This message was sent by KnowWho, as a service provider, on behalf of an individual associated with Sierra Club. If you need more information, please contact Member Care at Sierra Club at [member.care@sierraclub.org](mailto:member.care@sierraclub.org) or (415) 977-5673.

(This page was intentionally left blank)

**From:** [Gary Goetz \(gag888@hotmail.com\) Sent You a Personal Message](mailto:gag888@hotmail.com)  
**To:** [bawscaboardofdirectors](mailto:bawscaboardofdirectors)  
**Subject:** Restore Remote Public Comment at BAWSCA  
**Date:** Friday, May 24, 2024 5:35:20 PM

---

Dear BAWSCA Board of Directors,

Dear Board Members,

The removal of remote participation in BAWSCA Board meetings has reduced the transparency of the agency and has excluded the voices of the elderly, working-class, and caregiving community members from sharing their vital perspectives on the actions BAWSCA takes.

Remote participation became the new normal during the pandemic and remains in place in the majority of California cities. BAWSCA has made great progress by returning livestreams of Board meetings and the Agency must continue by implementing remote public comment services. As BAWSCA considers continuing its anti-environmental lawsuit against the State Water Board and chooses to support environmentally harmful voluntary agreements (VAs), the Board must remain transparent and ensure the voices of marginalized communities are heard at public meetings.

The Board must restore remote participation, including remote public comment. Thank you for recognizing the impact that remote participation has on increasing the accessibility and transparency of BAWSCA.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Gary Goetz  
935 Lighthouse Ave Apt 14  
Pacific Grove, CA 93950  
[gag888@hotmail.com](mailto:gag888@hotmail.com)  
(831) 920-1581

This message was sent by KnowWho, as a service provider, on behalf of an individual associated with Sierra Club. If you need more information, please contact Member Care at Sierra Club at [member.care@sierraclub.org](mailto:member.care@sierraclub.org) or (415) 977-5673.

(This page was intentionally left blank)

**From:** [Nancy Berman \(gaiawildewoode@gmail.com\)](mailto:gaiawildewoode@gmail.com) Sent You a Personal Message  
**To:** [bawscaboardofdirectors](mailto:bawscaboardofdirectors)  
**Subject:** Restore Remote Public Comment at BAWSCA  
**Date:** Friday, May 24, 2024 12:16:01 PM

---

Dear BAWSCA Board of Directors,

Dear Board Members,

The removal of remote participation in BAWSCA Board meetings has reduced the transparency of the agency and has excluded the voices of the elderly, working-class, and caregiving community members from sharing their vital perspectives on the actions BAWSCA takes.

Remote participation became the new normal during the pandemic and remains in place in the majority of California cities. BAWSCA has made great progress by returning livestreams of Board meetings and the Agency must continue by implementing remote public comment services. As BAWSCA considers continuing its anti-environmental lawsuit against the State Water Board and chooses to support environmentally harmful voluntary agreements (VAs), the Board must remain transparent and ensure the voices of marginalized communities are heard at public meetings.

The Board must restore remote participation, including remote public comment. Thank you for recognizing the impact that remote participation has on increasing the accessibility and transparency of BAWSCA.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Nancy Berman  
11 Edgecroft Rd  
Kensington, CA 94707  
[gaiawildewoode@gmail.com](mailto:gaiawildewoode@gmail.com)  
(510) 526-8268

This message was sent by KnowWho, as a service provider, on behalf of an individual associated with Sierra Club. If you need more information, please contact Member Care at Sierra Club at [member.care@sierraclub.org](mailto:member.care@sierraclub.org) or (415) 977-5673.

(This page was intentionally left blank)



**From:** [Alan Schwartz \(aschwartz.news@bbti.us\) Sent You a Personal Message](mailto:aschwartz.news@bbti.us)  
**To:** [bawscaboardofdirectors](mailto:bawscaboardofdirectors)  
**Subject:** Restore Remote Public Comment at BAWSCA  
**Date:** Friday, May 24, 2024 1:17:35 AM

---

Dear BAWSCA Board of Directors,

Dear Board Members,

The removal of remote participation in BAWSCA Board meetings has reduced the transparency of the agency and has excluded the voices of the elderly, working-class, and caregiving community members from sharing their vital perspectives on the actions BAWSCA takes.

Remote participation became the new normal during the pandemic and remains in place in the majority of California cities. BAWSCA has made great progress by returning livestreams of Board meetings and the Agency must continue by implementing remote public comment services. As BAWSCA considers continuing its anti-environmental lawsuit against the State Water Board and chooses to support environmentally harmful voluntary agreements (VAs), the Board must remain transparent and ensure the voices of marginalized communities are heard at public meetings.

The Board must restore remote participation, including remote public comment. Thank you for recognizing the impact that remote participation has on increasing the accessibility and transparency of BAWSCA.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Alan Schwartz  
1529 Reliez Valley Rd  
Lafayette, CA 94549  
[aschwartz.news@bbti.us](mailto:aschwartz.news@bbti.us)  
(925) 999-9999

This message was sent by KnowWho, as a service provider, on behalf of an individual associated with Sierra Club. If you need more information, please contact Member Care at Sierra Club at [member.care@sierraclub.org](mailto:member.care@sierraclub.org) or (415) 977-5673.

(This page was intentionally left blank)

**From:** [Patrice Wallace \(patricewallace@cruzio.com\) Sent You a Personal Message](mailto:patricewallace@cruzio.com)  
**To:** [bawscaboardofdirectors](mailto:bawscaboardofdirectors)  
**Subject:** Restore Remote Public Comment at BAWSCA  
**Date:** Thursday, May 23, 2024 10:35:44 PM

---

Dear BAWSCA Board of Directors,

Dear Board Members,

The removal of remote participation in BAWSCA Board meetings has reduced the transparency of the agency and has excluded the voices of the elderly, working-class, and caregiving community members from sharing their vital perspectives on the actions BAWSCA takes.

Remote participation became the new normal during the pandemic and remains in place in the majority of California cities. BAWSCA has made great progress by returning livestreams of Board meetings and the Agency must continue by implementing remote public comment services. As BAWSCA considers continuing its anti-environmental lawsuit against the State Water Board and chooses to support environmentally harmful voluntary agreements (VAs), the Board must remain transparent and ensure the voices of marginalized communities are heard at public meetings.

The Board must restore remote participation, including remote public comment. Thank you for recognizing the impact that remote participation has on increasing the accessibility and transparency of BAWSCA.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Patrice Wallace  
5498 Coast Rd Apt 3  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
[patricewallace@cruzio.com](mailto:patricewallace@cruzio.com)  
(831) 227-1121

This message was sent by KnowWho, as a service provider, on behalf of an individual associated with Sierra Club. If you need more information, please contact Member Care at Sierra Club at [member.care@sierraclub.org](mailto:member.care@sierraclub.org) or (415) 977-5673.

(This page was intentionally left blank)

**From:** [Nancy Havassy \(n.havassy@att.net\) Sent You a Personal Message](mailto:n.havassy@att.net)  
**To:** [bawscaboardofdirectors](mailto:bawscaboardofdirectors)  
**Subject:** Restore Remote Public Comment at BAWSCA  
**Date:** Thursday, May 23, 2024 10:16:19 PM

---

Dear BAWSCA Board of Directors,

Dear Board Members,

The removal of remote participation in BAWSCA Board meetings has reduced the transparency of the agency and has excluded the voices of the elderly, working-class, and caregiving community members from sharing their vital perspectives on the actions BAWSCA takes.

Remote participation became the new normal during the pandemic and remains in place in the majority of California cities. BAWSCA has made great progress by returning livestreams of Board meetings and the Agency must continue by implementing remote public comment services. As BAWSCA considers continuing its anti-environmental lawsuit against the State Water Board and chooses to support environmentally harmful voluntary agreements (VAs), the Board must remain transparent and ensure the voices of marginalized communities are heard at public meetings.

The Board must restore remote participation, including remote public comment. Thank you for recognizing the impact that remote participation has on increasing the accessibility and transparency of BAWSCA.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Nancy Havassy  
5940 Thornhill Dr  
Oakland, CA 94611  
[n.havassy@att.net](mailto:n.havassy@att.net)  
(510) 339-3043

This message was sent by KnowWho, as a service provider, on behalf of an individual associated with Sierra Club. If you need more information, please contact Member Care at Sierra Club at [member.care@sierraclub.org](mailto:member.care@sierraclub.org) or (415) 977-5673.

(This page was intentionally left blank)

**From:** [GREG DINGER \(greg@greybearddesign.com\)](mailto:greg@greybearddesign.com) Sent You a Personal Message  
**To:** [bawscaboardofdirectors](mailto:bawscaboardofdirectors)  
**Subject:** Restore Remote Public Comment at BAWSCA  
**Date:** Thursday, May 23, 2024 6:01:39 PM

---

Dear BAWSCA Board of Directors,

Dear Board Members,

The removal of remote participation in BAWSCA Board meetings has reduced the transparency of the agency and has excluded the voices of the elderly, working-class, and caregiving community members from sharing their vital perspectives on the actions BAWSCA takes.

Remote participation became the new normal during the pandemic and remains in place in the majority of California cities. BAWSCA has made great progress by returning livestreams of Board meetings and the Agency must continue by implementing remote public comment services. As BAWSCA considers continuing its anti-environmental lawsuit against the State Water Board and chooses to support environmentally harmful voluntary agreements (VAs), the Board must remain transparent and ensure the voices of marginalized communities are heard at public meetings.

The Board must restore remote participation, including remote public comment. Thank you for recognizing the impact that remote participation has on increasing the accessibility and transparency of BAWSCA.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

GREG DINGER  
1525 Highland Dr  
Mount Shasta, CA 96067  
[greg@greybearddesign.com](mailto:greg@greybearddesign.com)  
(530) 926-1192

This message was sent by KnowWho, as a service provider, on behalf of an individual associated with Sierra Club. If you need more information, please contact Member Care at Sierra Club at [member.care@sierraclub.org](mailto:member.care@sierraclub.org) or (415) 977-5673.

(This page was intentionally left blank)



**From:** [Darrell Trombley \(trillionairechrist@gmail.com\)](mailto:trillionairechrist@gmail.com) Sent You a Personal Message  
**To:** [bawscaboardofdirectors](mailto:bawscaboardofdirectors)  
**Subject:** Restore Remote Public Comment at BAWSCA  
**Date:** Thursday, May 23, 2024 5:02:40 PM

---

Dear BAWSCA Board of Directors,

Dear Board Members,

The removal of remote participation in BAWSCA Board meetings has reduced the transparency of the agency and has excluded the voices of the elderly, working-class, and caregiving community members from sharing their vital perspectives on the actions BAWSCA takes.

Remote participation became the new normal during the pandemic and remains in place in the majority of California cities. BAWSCA has made great progress by returning livestreams of Board meetings and the Agency must continue by implementing remote public comment services. As BAWSCA considers continuing its anti-environmental lawsuit against the State Water Board and chooses to support environmentally harmful voluntary agreements (VAs), the Board must remain transparent and ensure the voices of marginalized communities are heard at public meetings.

The Board must restore remote participation, including remote public comment. Thank you for recognizing the impact that remote participation has on increasing the accessibility and transparency of BAWSCA.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Darrell Trombley  
252 Ridge Rd  
Palm Springs, CA 92264  
[trillionairechrist@gmail.com](mailto:trillionairechrist@gmail.com)  
(760) 409-3324

This message was sent by KnowWho, as a service provider, on behalf of an individual associated with Sierra Club. If you need more information, please contact Member Care at Sierra Club at [member.care@sierraclub.org](mailto:member.care@sierraclub.org) or (415) 977-5673.

(This page was intentionally left blank)

**From:** [Basey Klopp \(bklopp@gmail.com\) Sent You a Personal Message](mailto:bklopp@gmail.com)  
**To:** [bawscaboardofdirectors](mailto:bawscaboardofdirectors)  
**Subject:** Restore Remote Public Comment at BAWSCA  
**Date:** Thursday, May 23, 2024 4:30:55 PM

---

Dear BAWSCA Board of Directors,

Dear Board Members,

The removal of remote participation in BAWSCA Board meetings has reduced the transparency of the agency and has excluded the voices of the elderly, working-class, and caregiving community members from sharing their vital perspectives on the actions BAWSCA takes.

Remote participation became the new normal during the pandemic and remains in place in the majority of California cities. BAWSCA has made great progress by returning livestreams of Board meetings and the Agency must continue by implementing remote public comment services. As BAWSCA considers continuing its anti-environmental lawsuit against the State Water Board and chooses to support environmentally harmful voluntary agreements (VAs), the Board must remain transparent and ensure the voices of marginalized communities are heard at public meetings.

The Board must restore remote participation, including remote public comment. Thank you for recognizing the impact that remote participation has on increasing the accessibility and transparency of BAWSCA.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Basey Klopp  
816 Glen Arbor Dr  
Encinitas, CA 92024  
[bklopp@gmail.com](mailto:bklopp@gmail.com)  
(541) 647-0008

This message was sent by KnowWho, as a service provider, on behalf of an individual associated with Sierra Club. If you need more information, please contact Member Care at Sierra Club at [member.care@sierraclub.org](mailto:member.care@sierraclub.org) or (415) 977-5673.

(This page was intentionally left blank)

**From:** [Gabrielle Swanberg \(g\\_swanberg@hotmail.com\) Sent You a Personal Message](mailto:g_swanberg@hotmail.com)  
**To:** [bawscaboardofdirectors](mailto:bawscaboardofdirectors)  
**Subject:** Restore Remote Public Comment at BAWSCA  
**Date:** Thursday, May 23, 2024 4:24:41 PM

---

Dear BAWSCA Board of Directors,

Dear Board Members,

The removal of remote participation in BAWSCA Board meetings has reduced the transparency of the agency and has excluded the voices of the elderly, working-class, and caregiving community members from sharing their vital perspectives on the actions BAWSCA takes.

Remote participation became the new normal during the pandemic and remains in place in the majority of California cities. BAWSCA has made great progress by returning livestreams of Board meetings and the Agency must continue by implementing remote public comment services. As BAWSCA considers continuing its anti-environmental lawsuit against the State Water Board and chooses to support environmentally harmful voluntary agreements (VAs), the Board must remain transparent and ensure the voices of marginalized communities are heard at public meetings.

The Board must restore remote participation, including remote public comment. Thank you for recognizing the impact that remote participation has on increasing the accessibility and transparency of BAWSCA.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Gabrielle Swanberg  
1707 Marylyn Cir  
Petaluma, CA 94954  
[g\\_swanberg@hotmail.com](mailto:g_swanberg@hotmail.com)  
(707) 483-8247

This message was sent by KnowWho, as a service provider, on behalf of an individual associated with Sierra Club. If you need more information, please contact Member Care at Sierra Club at [member.care@sierraclub.org](mailto:member.care@sierraclub.org) or (415) 977-5673.

(This page was intentionally left blank)

**From:** [Marilyn Shepherd \(marilynshepherd@gmail.com\)](mailto:marilynshepherd@gmail.com) Sent You a Personal Message  
**To:** [bawscaboardofdirectors](mailto:bawscaboardofdirectors)  
**Subject:** Restore Remote Public Comment at BAWSCA  
**Date:** Thursday, May 23, 2024 4:11:11 PM

---

Dear BAWSCA Board of Directors,

Dear Board Members,

The removal of remote participation in BAWSCA Board meetings has reduced the transparency of the agency and has excluded the voices of the elderly, working-class, and caregiving community members from sharing their vital perspectives on the actions BAWSCA takes.

Remote participation became the new normal during the pandemic and remains in place in the majority of California cities. BAWSCA has made great progress by returning livestreams of Board meetings and the Agency must continue by implementing remote public comment services. As BAWSCA considers continuing its anti-environmental lawsuit against the State Water Board and chooses to support environmentally harmful voluntary agreements (VAs), the Board must remain transparent and ensure the voices of marginalized communities are heard at public meetings.

The Board must restore remote participation, including remote public comment. Thank you for recognizing the impact that remote participation has on increasing the accessibility and transparency of BAWSCA.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Marilyn Shepherd  
PO Box 715  
Trinidad, CA 95570  
[marilynshepherd@gmail.com](mailto:marilynshepherd@gmail.com)  
(707) 677-3277

This message was sent by KnowWho, as a service provider, on behalf of an individual associated with Sierra Club. If you need more information, please contact Member Care at Sierra Club at [member.care@sierraclub.org](mailto:member.care@sierraclub.org) or (415) 977-5673.

(This page was intentionally left blank)





## Press Release

June 6, 2024

Contact: Friends of the River



### **Court gives Sites Reservoir green light to degrade the environment**

This week, a coalition of conservation groups, including Friends of the River (FOR), California Sportfishing Protection Alliance (CSPA), Center for Biological Diversity, California Water Impact Network, and Save California Salmon (plaintiffs) received a ruling on their challenge to the proposed Sites Reservoir's faulty environmental impact report (EIR). The court found the EIR to be legally adequate, however, conservation groups stand firm that the EIR has major legal deficiencies because it failed as an informational document, and doesn't account for major environmental harms and liabilities. This is unsurprising, because the Sites Water Authority itself prepared and approved the EIR.

#### **Of key interest, The EIR:**

- Doesn't consider an alternative that would protect fish and wildlife. It only considers a single operational alternative that takes too much water from the Sacramento River, and did not consider alternatives that would reduce or avoid degrading fish and wildlife resources. CEQA requires and EIR consider a reasonable range of alternatives.
- Relies upon an inaccurate environmental baseline by inappropriately using Trump-era regulations that were remanded by the courts. An accurate baseline is legally required by CEQA and is essential to best understand potential impacts.

Meanwhile, communications from Sites Project Authority (Authority) continue to greatly overstate any alleged environmental benefits and exaggerate water supply benefits.

#### **Statements from plaintiffs:**

Keiko Mertz, Policy Director, Friends of the River: "Sadly, the court found that the Sites FEIR was a legally adequate document. We still think there were significant flaws, including that the FEIR doesn't provide an alternative that protects fish and wildlife."

Chris Shutes, Executive Director, California Sportfishing Protection Alliance: “The Court allowed Sites to reject as “infeasible” any alternatives that would better protect fish and wildlife. The diverters get to divert and the fish get to suffer. This project should not be built.”

Frances Tinney, Attorney, Center for Biological Diversity: “An enormous reservoir with enormous consequences should be planned with care, so it’s extremely disappointing that this damaging project is so rushed. We face a serious extinction crisis and I fear Sites will put an end to the vulnerable fish and wildlife that make the Sacramento River ecosystem one-of-a-kind.”

Kasil Willie, Attorney, Save California Salmon: “We are disheartened by this ruling and what it means for culturally significant salmon that are facing extinction and the Tribal communities that rely on having healthy river flows. The Sites FEIR remains inadequate and the Project is still a threat to the health of the Sacramento River and Bay Delta watersheds and communities. After this ruling and subsequent press release from Governor Newsom, we question this administration’s commitment to Truth and Healing for California Tribes and California’s Human Right to Water.”

The ruling of the court does not change the fact that the proposed Sites Reservoir is a boondoggle that will harm communities, Tribes, culture, and degrade the environment. It also does not validate the Authority’s claims on environmental issues. In practice, the ruling means business as usual for expensive and damaging 20th century infrastructure projects. Sites pretends to address climate change and water scarcity, while itself demonstrating that the reservoir would only produce water at the expense of fish and wildlife. Moreover, Sites will funnel benefits to a few investors.

**FOR and other plaintiffs are currently considering appealing this ruling. Due to the Governor’s streamlining, an appeal will likely need to be filed sometime next week.**

FOR and other plaintiffs are continuing their other work to stop the proposed Sites Reservoir.

**What’s next:**

- Any appeal would be decided on a short turnaround.
- Sites water rights hearings will occur through 2024.

For more than a half-century, Friends of the River (FOR) has been dedicated to protecting and restoring California’s rivers, streams, and watersheds, while advocating for sustainable water management and water solutions that protect the environment. Healthy rivers are a critical component of a sustainable water future in California and FOR rejects the notion that the state must choose between healthy river ecosystems and having enough water.

The California Sportfishing Protection Alliance (CSPA) has been an advocate for fish, habitat, and water quality for 40 years. A leader in efforts to improve fisheries and fishing opportunities, CSPA is also one of California’s major water policy organizations, with decades of consistent and effective advocacy before the State Water Board and regional water quality control boards.

For more information on Sites Reservoir, visit <https://www.friendsoftheriver.org>.

###



## News Releases

Published: May 23, 2024

### **State Water Project Advances Efforts to Prepare for Future Droughts Amid a Changing Climate**

Sacramento, Calif. – The California Department of Water Resources has finalized its first comprehensive, public-facing Long-term Drought Plan for the State Water Project as part of an expanded effort to prepare for future droughts and extreme dry conditions.

Specifically, the Long-term Drought Plan includes an assessment of the potential impacts of drought on the State Water Project, including the possibility that California’s shift to a hotter, drier future may result in more severe droughts and reduced water availability. This is an important step for the State Water Project which supplies water to 27 million Californians, two-thirds of the State’s population.

“While California is coming off of two straight years of above average precipitation and adequate reservoir levels across the state, we need to plan for the next drought because it is right around the corner,” said DWR Director Karla Nemeth. “The State Water Project’s Long-term Drought Plan keeps us on a path to ensuring continued access to a clean, reliable water supply in the future.”

The Long-term Drought Plan compiles information and actions taken by the State Water Project during previous droughts, outlining how those actions have informed current operations and highlighting actions taken by the State Water Project to prepare for future droughts. Previously, this information was spread across multiple organizational practices, processes, and reports. It has now been combined into a comprehensive report available to the public. The plan outlines multiple actions that improve long-term drought resilience and add flexibility, efficiency, and capacity to the system.

The actions include:

- Advancing the Delta Conveyance Project to modernize State Water Project infrastructure in the Delta to improve the ability to capture and store more water during high flow events.
- Identifying and investigating water storage opportunities throughout the state to allow for more water storage in wet years for use in dry years.



Construction crews remove Emergency Drought Salinity Barrier on the West False River near Oakley in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The rock barrier was placed to help deter the tidal incursion of saltwater from San Francisco Bay into the central Delta. Photo taken Nov. 2, 2022.

- Further planning for the use of drought salinity barriers on the West False River in extreme dry years and expansion of the program to locations in the North Delta to protect water quality during severe drought.
- Continued advancement of DWR's Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) along with improved seasonal forecasting to maximize water supply management while improving flood protection at Oroville Reservoir.
- Investing in environmental resiliency through habitat creation, restoration of tidal wetlands, floodplains, and rearing habitat for juvenile salmonids.

The plan will be reviewed and updated every five years and after major drought events to ensure the State Water Project continues to adapt to dry conditions exacerbated by climate change.

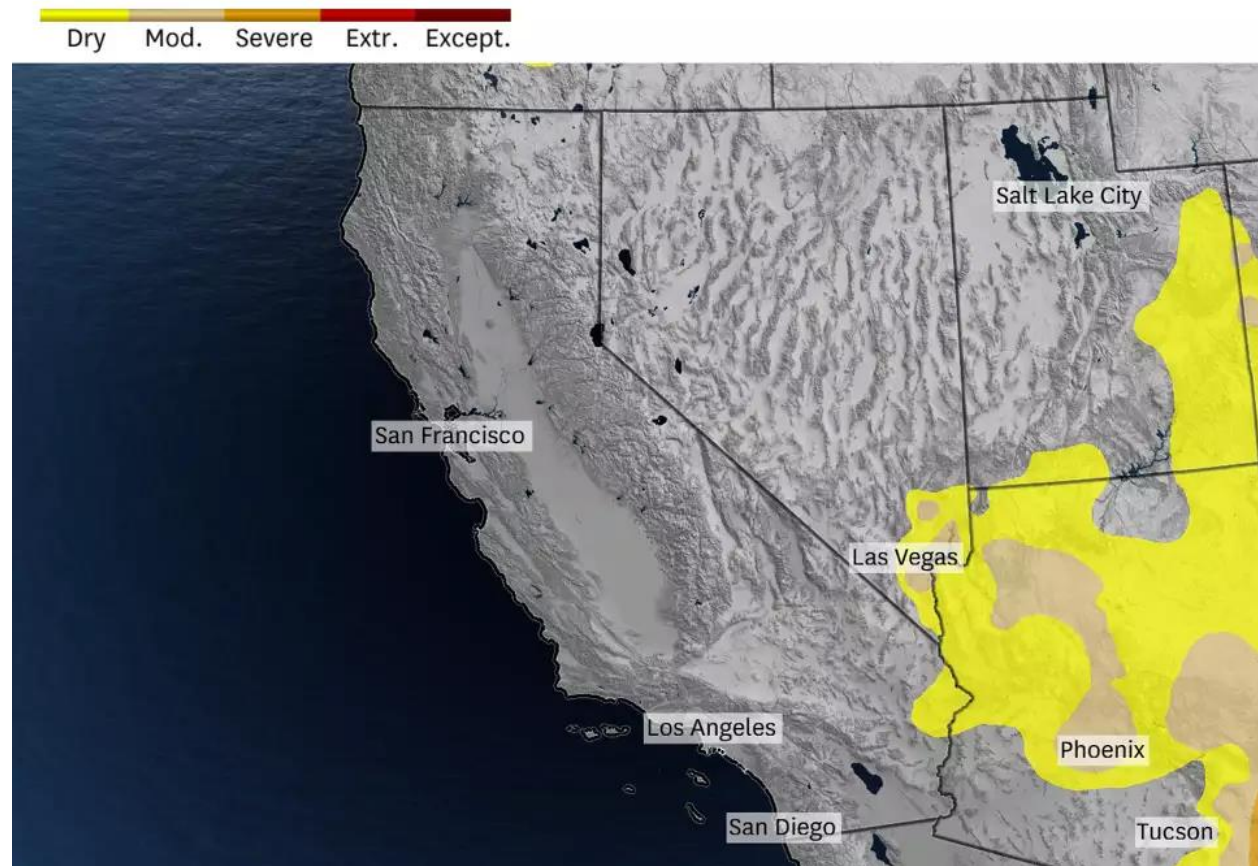
**Additional Information:**

- State Water Project [Long-term Drought Plan](#)
- [Elevate to '28: State Water Project Strategic Plan](#)
- [Delta Conveyance Project](#)
- Latest Water Supply Conditions on [California Water Watch](#)

## Drought conditions have mostly disappeared in California. It's a first in more than a decade

SF Chronicle | May 17, 2024 | Jack Lee

### Drought monitor



The May 16 release from the U.S. Drought Monitor shows normal conditions across much of California. Abnormally dry conditions were removed from Northern California, but still remain in southeastern parts of the state.

For the first time in more than four years, all of Northern California is free of drought or abnormally dry conditions, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor data released on Thursday. California now has its lowest amount of drought conditions since 2011.

“Considering how long they were in some form of abnormal dryness or drought, it’s pretty significant,” said Lindsay Johnson, a climatologist with the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

It’s the first time all of Northern California is free of abnormally dry or drought conditions since October 2019. Parts of Siskiyou and Modoc counties that were previously a stronghold of dry conditions are now classified as normal for the first time since Nov. 19, 2019.

Drought conditions have improved across the country in the past month, according to a briefing Thursday by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s National Center for Environmental Information.

“Approximately 14% of the contiguous U.S. is currently in drought,” said NCEI monitoring section chief Karin Gleason. “This is the smallest contiguous U.S. drought footprint since the week of May 24 of 2020.”

The U.S. Drought Monitor combines multiple indicators of short- and long-term drought to provide a snapshot of drought conditions across the country. The lowest “abnormally dry” category highlights locations that could be entering or recovering from drought. Four additional categories reflect increasingly intense drought.

The state’s only remaining patch of abnormally dry conditions is in the easternmost parts of San Bernardino and Riverside counties in Southern California. California was free of drought on Oct. 17, 2023, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor, though there were still areas considered abnormally dry.

The U.S. Drought Monitor doesn’t address all the impacts of California’s extensive droughts, such as deficits from years of groundwater overdraft and land subsidence.

An experimental method known as the drought severity and coverage index combines information about the U.S. Drought Monitor categories to provide a single value describing drought over a region. The score goes from 0 to 500, with the lowest score indicating complete erasure of abnormally dry or drought conditions from an area.

### California drought severity and coverage index

The latest value of 1 is the lowest since 2011.

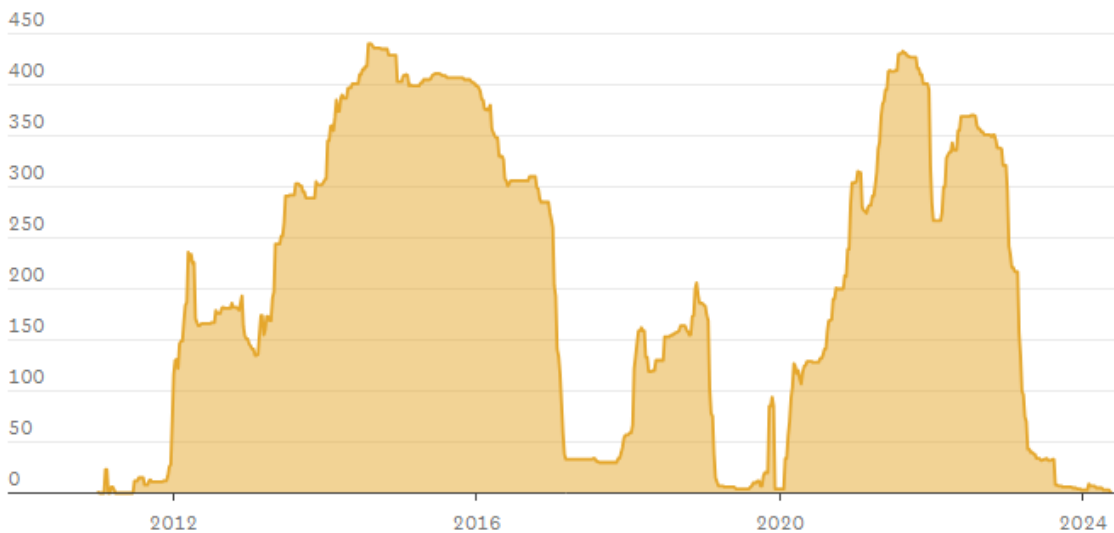


Chart: Jack Lee / The Chronicle • Source: [U.S. Drought Monitor](#)

California’s latest score is 1. The last time it was that low was June 21, 2011.

###

## Long-Term Drought Plan for the State Water Project

AgNetWest| MAY 30, 2024 | Brian German



The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has released its first comprehensive Long-term Drought Plan for the State Water Project (SWP). This plan addresses the potential impacts of future droughts on the SWP, which supplies water to 27 million Californians. Despite recent years of adequate rainfall and reservoir levels, the plan aims to ensure continued access to clean water amid increasingly severe droughts.

“While California is coming off of two straight years of above average precipitation and adequate reservoir levels across the state, we need to plan for the next drought because it is right around the corner,” DWR Director Karla Nemeth said in a press release. “The State Water Project’s Long-term Drought Plan keeps us on a path to ensuring continued access to a clean, reliable water supply in the future.”

Key elements of the plan include modernizing infrastructure through the Delta Conveyance Project to capture and store more water during high-flow events, exploring additional water storage opportunities statewide, and planning for drought salinity barriers in critical areas to protect water quality. Additionally, the plan advances Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations and improves seasonal forecasting to enhance water supply management and flood protection at Oroville Reservoir. It also invests in environmental resiliency through habitat creation and restoration projects. The Long-term Drought Plan consolidates previously scattered information into a single public report and will be updated every five years or after major droughts to ensure continued adaptability.

###

Listen to the report below.

[Long-Term Drought Plan for the State Water Project \(agnetwest.com\)](https://www.agnetwest.com/long-term-drought-plan-for-the-state-water-project)

(This page was intentionally left blank)



## Solano County faces 75% water supply cut under Bay-Delta plan

The North Bay Business Journal | May 20, 2024 | Jeff Quackenbush



Putah Creek flows out into Solano County from Montecito Dam on Lake Berryessa just inside the Napa County line on March 15, 2020. (Photo\_Time / Shutterstock)

Solano County is one of the fastest growing counties in San Francisco Bay Area. But its water supply faces uncertainty because of proposed changes to California's long-running conservation plan for the watershed that supplies the neighboring Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

County, city and agricultural district water managers are concerned about how a draft update to the Bay-Delta Plan could impact local water reliability, housing growth and the economy. They are working with the State Water Resources Control Board to address the concerns.

### Bay Delta plan key links

[Bay Delta Conservation Plan overview](#)

[Proposed voluntary agreements](#)

[Comprehensive review of the plan](#)

Most of Solano County's water comes from Lake Berryessa in Napa County via Putah Creek. It flows out from Montecito Dam and along the Solano-Yolo county line past Winters until it feeds into a canal and slough in the delta.

The state's draft Bay Delta Plan update proposes maintaining 55% unimpaired flows in Bay-Delta tributaries like Putah Creek to protect fish and wildlife in the delta by lowering waterway temperatures for key protected species such as steelhead trout and Chinook, and preventing spawning creeks from running dry.

Solano County Water Agency Assistant General Manager Alex Rabidoux said such a change for Putah Creek would mean keeping the Lake Berryessa reservoir above 1 million acre-feet.

*Solano cities like Fairfield and Vacaville could be at risk of imposing building moratoriums without sufficient reliable water supplies during prolonged years of little rainfall and less Berryessa water available.*

However, Rabidoux noted this threshold represents about 65% capacity and would lock up a significant amount of the county's water supply during drought periods. With evaporation from the large reservoir, the county estimates that up to 75% of its water from Lake Berryessa could be curtailed in drought years under the state's proposed regulations.

"A 75% reduction just isn't attainable for our urban and agricultural communities to function," Rabidoux said.

All seven cities in Solano County and three irrigation districts that make up the county water agency board share these concerns. Several officials from those agencies testified to that in Sacramento during a water board workshop from April 24 to 26.

Amid the testimony, Diane Riddle, assistant deputy director for the water board, told the commissioners that media coverage of the Solano situation may not be correct.

"Stats cited from the draft staff report are being perhaps not correctly interpreted," Riddle said during the recorded event. Riddle offered to meet with Solano officials to explain the possible misconceptions.

Rabidoux told the Journal that he talked with state water board staff May 10 about the Solano agency's technical data and potential alternatives from its fish-restoration projects in the lower Putah Creek over the past 15 years. Rabidoux said the board officials stressed that the 75% reductions in water from Berryessa wouldn't happen each year.

A board spokesperson said a response from the agency was coming but wasn't provided by press time.







The Putah Creek habitat restoration alternative to unimpaired flows is being floated under the state's "Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program," which promotes voluntary agreements between water agencies and the state to improve fish habitats and flows through restoration projects instead of regulatory requirements. Gov. Gavin Newsom has supported voluntary agreements. But some environmental and tribal groups have spoken out against them, pointing to failures of such measures over the past 15 years.

"For a decade, California water agencies have promised a voluntary agreement to address the deteriorating health in Central Valley rivers and the San Francisco Bay-Delta estuary. Unfortunately, the process seems less focused on creating a credible agreement than on preventing the State Water Board from actually implementing a plan that recognizes the need for increased cold-water flows," said Scott Artis, executive director of Golden State Salmon Association, in a statement during the April 25 workshop.

"Yet, during all this inaction, there's been massive water diversions from our rivers, plummeting salmon populations, closed fishing seasons, and lost jobs. People and our rivers are suffering. It's unacceptable."


# Tributaries to the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers

### Legend

-  Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers
-  Other Major Rivers and Streams
-  Reservoirs
-  Cities
-  Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta
-  San Francisco Bay

0 12.5 25 50 75 100 Miles  
Scale 1 : 2,250,000

Source: CA SWRCB; National Marine Fisheries Service; ESRI  
Map By: CA SWRCB Division of Water Rights 5/15/13, NDeLaMora




Rabidoux explained the county water agency is working toward a voluntary agreement for Putah Creek. After a legal battle in 2000 between water agencies in Yolo and Solano counties, they

reached the Putah Creek Accords, which resulted in Solano County Water Agency's hiring of a streamkeeper to monitor and improve fish habitat. The accords committee meets monthly to assess progress and consider improvements.

## **Bay Delta plan key links**

---

[Bay Delta Conservation Plan overview](#)

[Proposed voluntary agreements](#)

[Comprehensive review of the plan](#)

Max Stevenson, Ph.D., has been the agency streamkeeper for the past two years. He said restoration projects have resulted in 750 salmon counted last year and several thousand the year before that.

Before the dams on Putah Creek, which originates at Cobb Mountain in Lake County, there were few accounts of fish in the waterway and no salmon because the water levels were too low, raising temperatures, Stevenson said. Lake Berryessa helped create a cold-water pool in the watershed.

He advocates a "functional flow" approach to Putah Creek, which releases water in surges to mimic seasonal flows, but using a fraction of the water that the 55% unimpaired flow standard would require.

If the state adopts its unimpaired-flow proposal, Rabidoux warned it could have major impact on Solano County. The county is projected to see the most population growth of any North Bay county through 2060, Sonoma State University economist Robert Eyler said during regional forecast presentations in January and in June of last year.

But Solano cities like Fairfield and Vacaville could be at risk of imposing building moratoriums without sufficient reliable water supplies during prolonged years of little rainfall and less Berryessa water available, Rabidoux said.

Vacaville gets more than a third of its water supply from the Solano water project, according to Justen Cole, Vacaville director of utilities.

"The impacts of losing our Solano project water is not only the quantity of water, but it is losing one of our most reliable water sources in the region," Cole said.

The city is planning for the possible approval of the proposed changes to the Bay Delta plan by looking for other water sources, he said. One possibility is to buy more water from Solano Irrigation District, which also is a key recipient of Lake Berryessa water, but the district could be put in the same position as the city.

Another option is to increase Vacaville's groundwater resources and expanding the existing treatment facility, Cole said. Currently, the city doesn't have enough wells to supply currently forecast demand.

Previously, city utilities staff have toured Woodland's facility in neighboring Yolo County for replacing groundwater extracted in dry times by injecting treated Sacramento River water into the aquifer during ample winter and spring flows.

"It's not something we're planning for, but it's not off the table," Cole said.

The city of Santa Rosa pursued a similar aquifer recharge effort during the most recent drought.

Agriculture and industry would also struggle to survive major water cutbacks in drought years under the state's current proposal, Rabidoux said.

Solano County's cities currently have diverse water portfolios and groundwater supplies that allow for growth according to their plans. However, Rabidoux said surface water supplies like Lake Berryessa that many cities also rely on would be the most impacted. The general manager expressed cautious optimism that through ongoing collaboration, the state may refine its regulations to be less restrictive while still achieving environmental goals.

A final decision on the latest Bay-Delta plan update is not expected until 2025.

# # #

*Jeff Quackenbush covers wine, construction and real estate. Reach him at [jqackenbush@busjrn.com](mailto:jquackenbush@busjrn.com) or 707-521-4256.*

(This page was intentionally left blank)

## California's largest reservoir project in decades clears environmental court challenge

Sacramento Bee | June 4, 2024 | Ari Plachta



*Randy Pench/rpench@sacbee.com*

California is one step closer to building its largest water storage facility in nearly 50 years, after a court ruled in favor of the Sites Reservoir project following a challenge by environmental groups.

The Yolo County Superior Court issued the 65 page ruling late last week, marking a possible end to the project's environmental litigation. The relatively quick ruling stands in contrast to a typical, multi-year litigation period under the Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Gov. Gavin Newsom accelerated the project's CEQA litigation period in November under an infrastructure streamlining package passed the previous summer. He celebrated the court's ruling in a news release Tuesday.

"California needs more water storage, and we have no time to waste — projects like the Sites Reservoir will capture rain and snow runoff to supply millions of homes with clean drinking water," Newsom said.

The proposed \$4.5 billion reservoir would inundate nearly 14,000 acres of ranch lands in Glenn and Colusa counties to store water diverted from the Sacramento River through new a system of dams, pipelines and a bridge.

With a maximum capacity of 1.5 million acre-feet of water, proponents say Sites will boost storage amid unpredictable climate swings. Critics warn it will threaten river habitat for fish and other wildlife and lead to minimal water storage benefits.

The lawsuit against the project was filed by a coalition of environmental groups including Friends of the River, Center for Biological Diversity, Save California Salmon and the Sierra Club.

They argued that the project's claimed environmental impacts are underestimated and that the state failed to consider alternatives to achieving its water storage goals.

But the court found that the environmental review of the project and consideration of alternatives was sufficient, and within the jurisdiction of the Sites Reservoir Authority.

"Sadly, the court found that the Sites final Environmental Impact Report was a legally adequate document," said Keiko Mertz, policy director at Friends of the River. "We still believe there were significant flaws, including that it doesn't provide an alternative that protects fish and wildlife."

The coalition of environmental groups have 5 days to appeal the ruling issued Friday.

The court ruling marks the first time a CEQA process has been streamlined under Newsom's SB 149, which allows the governor to certify certain projects for judicial fast tracking. Under the law, courts must decide CEQA challenges within 270 days.

Sites Reservoir is currently acquiring a multitude of state and federal permits to start construction, which is expected to begin late 2026.

That includes a water rights process with the state Water Resources Control Board, which will kick off public hearings later this month. Water rights hearings are scheduled to take place over several days and extend through October.

###



## **California judge weighs injunction for Delta Conveyance Project**

*The project involves digging a massive tunnel that some detractors say would add unnecessary costs and divert water from local communities and ecosystems.*

Maven's Notebook | May 31, 2024 | Alan Riquelmy

Petitioners battling over a massive and controversial California water infrastructure project drilled into the details on Friday over what actions require specific authorization before they can occur, with local governments and water districts asking a Sacramento County judge to stop the state water resources department from making any exploratory moves.

At issue are geotechnical actions, like initial drilling and installing monitoring equipment, that the Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District — and many others — argued don't have the required green light to proceed. The state Department of Water Resources has countered that a preliminary injunction halting the project's first steps would do more harm than good.

Superior Court Judge Stephen Acquisto made no decision Friday on the preliminary injunction.

The controversial project, often called the delta tunnel project, consists of a 36-foot wide tunnel extending about 45 miles. Facilities in Sacramento would pump 3,000 cubic feet of water per second into the tunnel, enough for some 5.2 million people a year. Officials have estimated it could take 12 to 15 years to build at a cost of \$16 billion.

Arguing in favor of a preliminary injunction, attorney Louinda Lacey said that the preliminary, geotechnical actions are part of the larger project and fall under the California Environmental Quality Act, meaning that means those actions need specific authorization before they can occur.

"A project under CEQA means the whole of an action," Lacey said.

Lacey pointed to 4- to 8-inch diameter borings that must be made, along with the installation of test wells and trenches as part of the department's initial project steps.

Acquisto questioned whether those initial actions fell more into the category of design, as opposed to implementation, which would mean specific authorization for them wouldn't be needed. Lacey argued that if the word "implementation" is given its plain meaning, the department's early actions are included in that.

Summarizing the department's argument, the judge said implementation doesn't occur until the final stage. Exploratory drilling and testing occur before that, and don't fall into the final category.

"So, there may be a little bit of a gray area," Acquisto said.

Turning to attorney Elizabeth Sarine, with the state Attorney General's Office, Acquisto questioned why specific authorization for the preliminary, geotechnical work was required when

a final environmental impact report — arguably a much more detailed document — was already approved.

Sarine agreed, saying it would be unreasonable to require further approval.

However, the judge noted that drilling holes in the earth is more than mere design.

“That’s not design,” he added. “That’s doing something.”

Doing something, Lacey argued, would change or alter the physical environment — action that needs additional approval.

Sarine said the process is working. A preliminary injunction would cause harm, and the department would have to stop its exploratory work before it ever got the research it needed.

Before Friday’s hearing began, the judge said there are 10 related cases filed in Sacramento County over the delta tunnel project including the main case filed by the Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District.

The petitioners point to violations of the state’s environmental quality act, but those aren’t the only complaints raised.

The Tulare district in its suit wrote that the delta tunnel project would add costly new infrastructure to state water facilities and potentially affect the cost and amount of water it can buy from the state.

Additionally, that district said there’s an existing trend of lowered and interrupted water supplies that has led to higher costs. These issues are linked to operational conflicts over threatened and endangered species. The district is concerned that focusing on the delta tunnel project, an already challenging and expensive endeavor, won’t help ease those conflicts.

###

## **State Of The Estuary Conference Dives Into Restoration In The Era Of Climate Change**

SF Gate | May 28, 2024 | Ruth Dusseault

A long history of land engineering is to blame for the poor ecological health of the San Francisco Bay and Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary, and it is engineering that is expected to repair it.

On Tuesday, questions of how to design and fund local restoration projects in the era of climate change were brought together in the 2024 State of the Estuary Conference, which runs through Wednesday at the Scottish Rite Center in Oakland.

The conference is sponsored by the San Francisco Estuary Partnership, one of 28 National Estuary Programs created by the federal Environmental Protection Agency and Congress in 1987 to protect and restore estuaries of national significance. Each National Estuary program develops and implements comprehensive plans that identify distinct challenges and priorities based on input from local, city, state, federal, private and nonprofit stakeholders. The number of stakeholders is mind-boggling, but the national program enables them to self-organize like bees around local projects.

"The San Francisco Estuary Partnership's 1993 Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan was the first of its kind to recognize that the Bay and the Delta should be managed as a single critical estuary," said Yana Garcia with the California Environmental Protection Agency in her opening keynote.

The 2022 update to the plan, The Estuary Blueprint, is a collaborative, five-year roadmap for protecting and restoring the estuary's chemical, physical and biological health integrity, she said. It was done with the participation of the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board.

"The Bay Delta is also a vital hub of economic activity and life, supporting millions of acres of farmland and commercial and recreational fishing industries, and supplying fresh drinking water to more than 25 million Californians," said Garcia.

Many of the local community-generated restoration plans were shared through a poster exhibition at the conference. They included projects for flood management, combatting harmful algal blooms, the beneficial use of sediments and saving the salt marsh harvest mouse.

"Local groups and communities who come up with a proposal for a local water restoration project can apply for grants from multiple sources," said Evyan Borgnis Sloane with the California State Coastal Conservancy, one of the biggest funders of restoration projects.

Another large funder is the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority. Sloane said funds can be requested through many organizations, like the Bay Area Regional Collaborative and the

nonprofit Coastal Quest, who both maintain websites that track local, state and federal funds for local water restoration projects.

There is recent federal money that funnels down too. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is distributing \$132 million through 2026 to expand and accelerate the comprehensive plans created through the National Estuary Program. Each estuary program will receive about \$900,000 in annual funds, twice the amount they received previously.

Of those funds, at least 40 percent of the benefits are targeted for disadvantaged communities.

Garcia announced that there is \$6 million in County Environmental Justice grants now available through the California EPA for local restoration projects in 27 communities. She also underlined Gov. Gavin Newsom's efforts to counter a May 2023 U.S. Supreme Court decision that changed the definition of federally protected wetland to only, "wetlands with a continuous surface connection to bodies that are waters of the United States."

That decision left many wetlands no longer protected by federal laws.

"Wetlands in California make up nearly 4 million acres," she said. "The governor has set aside \$6.1 million in the budget to protect state lands. These funds will allow the State Water Board to conduct water quality permitting and enforcement work that has historically been conducted by the United States Environmental Protection Agency."

###

## **AGING INFRASTRUCTURE AND EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE LEAD TO NEED FOR CRITICAL INVESTMENTS**

Valley Water News | May 28, 2024

Since 1929, Valley Water has been dedicated to providing Santa Clara County with safe, clean water, flood protection and stewardship of streams. While our county's landscape may look different than it did nearly 100 years ago, our mission remains the same. We continue to invest in infrastructure, develop new programs and expand existing ones to ensure this mission is achieved year after year.

On May 14, 2024, the Valley Water Board of Directors adopted a \$963.6 million Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget to help provide these critical services. In addition to the new budget, the Board adopted new water charges where the vast majority of the county will see a rate increase of 12.9% (\$8.78 a month for an average household).

The budget and water rates were adopted after listening to public comments and staff recommendations during the water charge-setting process. This funding helps ensure we continue to achieve our mission for the residents and businesses in Santa Clara County. The new rates will go into effect on July 1, 2024. Most Santa Clara County residents do not pay their water bill directly to Valley Water. Find your local retailer to learn more about your property's water rates and billing information.

We are in a time of investment. The existing water supply infrastructure in our county was built decades ago. Dams such as Anderson in Morgan Hill were built in the 1930s and 50s, and water treatment plants, such as Rinconada in Los Gatos, were built in the 1960s and 80s.

Through investments in infrastructure, like the Rinconada Water Treatment Plant Reliability Project, we're increasing the amount of water treated and delivered to the region.

Once upgrades are complete, the Rinconada Water Treatment will be capable of treating 100 million gallons of water daily.

The Anderson Dam Seismic Retrofit Project will continue for the next nine years, which means our largest reservoir is unavailable while it's under construction. When the next drought arrives, we'll need to purchase more water from outside the county to meet the needs of residents, businesses, and farms. Progress has been made in the Anderson Tunnel Project. As the first part of the seismic retrofit, this large tunnel is 80% complete, with 300 feet left to excavate. Crews will finish the tunnel in early summer 2024.

New weather extremes will become more common as we continue to see the effects of a changing climate. To help prepare for future storms, Valley Water is investing in flood protection projects, including the Coyote Creek Flood Protection Project. Once both phases of the project are completed, they will provide protection from floods up to the level that occurred in February 2017.

Investing in these projects is a top priority for Valley Water, which consistently seeks funding partners to ensure it does everything possible to lower the burden on ratepayers. For fiscal years 2025-2029, Valley Water has secured nearly \$181.5 million in grants and agreements, with additional grant applications pending.

Valley Water also invests in conservation programs and rebates to help you save water and reduce your water bill. These programs help homeowners and businesses convert water-thirsty lawns to climate-appropriate landscapes and upgrade irrigation systems.

Valley Water offers up to \$3,000 for residents and \$100,000 for businesses to transform lawns into climate-appropriate landscapes. Learn more about Valley Water’s residential and commercial rebates.

Valley Water also encourages residents and businesses to use water more effectively indoors. Finding and fixing leaks inside the home and practicing water-saving best practices like taking shorter showers can make a difference.

The new budget ensures Santa Clara County continues to make a difference in the community with vital projects and programs. The water rates are equitable, with large users paying the biggest share while those who don’t use much water see minimal cost increases.

###



Valley Water Board Chair and senior staff in Washington, D.C., to discuss the ongoing federal and state support for Santa Clara County’s water infrastructure.