



San Benito County Water District

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December 10, 2021

California Water Commission
P.O. Box 942836
Sacramento, California 94236-0001
Email: CWC@water.ca.gov

RE: Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project Letter of Support

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of San Benito County Water District, I write in support of the Santa Clara Valley Water District's application to receive Water Storage Investment Program (WSIP) funding for the Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project.

The 2014 voter approval of Proposition 1: Water Quality, Supply and Infrastructure Act provided Californians a vision of improved water security and environmental stewardship through strategic investment in projects and programs that deliver regional benefits. The Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project fulfills that vision and deserves full backing by the California Water Commission.

We encourage the Commission to find the project feasible and eligible for funding and provide its full financial support to the Santa Clara Valley Water District and its agency partners – the Pacheco Pass Water District and San Benito County Water District – for a project that delivers critical environmental and water supply benefits to Santa Clara, San Benito, Monterey and Santa Cruz counties.

The expanded reservoir would be filled primarily with natural inflows and, to a lesser extent, supplies from nearby San Luis Reservoir and operated to provide a variety of environmental, water supply and societal benefits. Among the benefits achieved through investment of public funds is year-round flows in Pacheco Creek that can deliver suitable water temperature for the spawning, rearing and migration of the threatened South-Central California Coast steelhead, as well as emergency water supplies for a region of 1.9 million people, and groundwater recharge towards compliance with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014. A few of the many benefits of the project are as follows:

Steelhead: Pacheco Reservoir expansion will replace intermittent seasonal flows in Pacheco Creek with year-round flows at temperatures suitable for spawning, rearing and migration of steelhead. Through this project, Pacheco Creek will now provide year-round habitat for the threatened South-Central California Coast steelhead and deliver on a Core 1 recovery objective as described in the National Marine Fisheries Service's South-Central California Steelhead Recovery Plan (December 2013).

Refuge Water: Pacheco Reservoir expansion helps address unmet water demand for South-of-Delta wetlands through dedication of a portion of Santa Clara Valley Water District's Central Valley Project

waters to Grassland Water District. Provided in below normal water years, this allocation to the Incremental Level 4 refuge water supply under the Central Valley Project Improvement Act will contribute to optimization of refuge water supply in the Central California.

Groundwater: Pacheco Reservoir expansion assists Santa Clara and San Benito counties comply with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014. The Santa Clara Valley Water District, and its predecessors, is one of the state's original "sustainable groundwater management agencies." First established in the 1929 as the Santa Clara Valley Water Conservation District, the district was established to address chronic groundwater overdraft and subsidence in Santa Clara Valley. This project increases opportunities to groundwater sustainability through the appropriate use of natural run-off and imported water supplies.

Flood Management: Pacheco Reservoir expansion increases flood protection for at-risk communities, including the city of Watsonville and the unincorporated communities of Dunneville and Pajaro, a disadvantaged community as defined by Senate Bill 535.

Water Quality: Pacheco Reservoir enlargement will help solve raw water quality issues impacting Santa Clara and San Benito counties by the San Luis Low Point problem. In the event algae blooms occur in San Luis Reservoir due to high temperature, combined with declining water levels, the two Districts can shift to Pacheco Reservoir to avoid costly treatment.

Local Control: Once established, the expanded Pacheco Reservoir provides a water storage resource separate from the operational constraints of San Luis Reservoir. This expansion advances water supply reliability and water security for Santa Clara Valley.

Economic Benefits: This project also would bolster water supply reliability for not just Silicon Valley, but the region, which supports local and regional economies of statewide significance.

We appreciate the Commission's consideration of this important project and encourage Commissioners to find the Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project feasible and eligible for WSIP funding.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please contact Jeff Cattaneo, General Manager with any questions at (831) 637 -8218.

Sincerely,



Jeff Cattaneo
District Manager/Engineer

cc: Tony Estremera, SCVWD Board Chair – District 1 (board@valleywater.org)
Rick Callendar, SCVWD Chief Executive Officer (rcallendar@valleywater.org)
Ryan McCarter, SCVWD (RMcCarter@valleywater.org)