

DOUG LAMALFA

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NATURAL RESOURCES

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

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April 13, 2015

Joseph Byrne, Chair
California Water Commission
P.O. Box 942836
Sacramento, California 94236-0001

Dear Chairman Byrne,

Thank you for conducting public meetings regarding Proposition 1 and the Water Storage Investment Program. In this time of intense drought, California's voters were clear in their decision to invest in new surface storage facilities to ensure that our cities and farms have adequate water supplies for decades to come. In light of the over two-thirds of voters who supported Proposition 1 and its primary component of water storage investment, it is imperative that the California Water Commission ensure that these funds are directed toward real, lasting infrastructure like the surface water storage voters were promised.

The most competitive surface storage proposal, Sites Reservoir in Colusa and Glenn Counties, meets all of Proposition 1's criteria for investment and provides greater statewide benefits than any other proposed project:

- The California Department of Water Resources recently reported that Sites would increase the state's water supplies by 900,000 acre-feet during drought years, enough water for over 7 million people.
- The Governor's recent mandatory water rationing order is intended to save 1.5 million acre-feet of water. Were Sites in place today, the state's 25% reduction in water use would instead be a less painful 10% reduction.
- The project provides direct improvements to the Delta by increasing operation flexibility throughout Northern California reservoirs and allowing re-use of water. Water released from Shasta for salmon habitat could be recaptured at Sites, then used to protect Delta water quality during dry periods.
- As an off-stream reservoir, Sites does not negatively impact salmon or steelhead migration, and groups like Ducks Unlimited support it due to the habitat benefits it provides.

- The Sites Joint Powers Authority, made up of local governments, stakeholders, and state agencies, has already begun securing private funds for construction, ensuring matching funds for Prop. 1 funding will be available. No other proposed project has reached such a stage of development.

Additionally, Sites Reservoir has strong bi-partisan support in Congress. Legislation promoting the project has been passed by the House of Representatives and stand-alone legislation has again been introduced in Congress with equal support from Republicans and Democrats. Sites Reservoir is widely recognized as the lowest environmental impact for the most water and the most achievable water storage project in the state.

Between 1996 and 2006, Californians approved about \$11 billion in bonds described as water bonds, none of which directly increased the state's water supply in the way that new surface storage facilities would. After years of drought, California's voters have spoken loudly in favor of new surface storage. The time to invest in our state's water storage infrastructure is now, and Sites Reservoir is the most viable project available.

Again, thank you for visiting our region and taking the time to consider our state's most significant challenge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Doug LaMalfa". The signature is stylized with a large initial "D" and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress