



February 7, 2020

Ms. Nancy Vogel  
Director of the Governor's Water Portfolio Program  
California Natural Resources Agency  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Ms. Vogel:

On behalf of the Sites Project Authority, I would like to thank the Governor and the Administration for their leadership in developing the draft Water Resilience Portfolio and for proposing to advance smart surface water storage projects that provide multiple benefits in a manner that protects and enhances fish and wildlife and provides water dedicated for environmental purposes.

As stated in the draft Water Resilience Portfolio, water is central to nearly everything we value in California. Our communities, farms, ecosystems and economies depend on a steady supply of safe and affordable water. However, as we are now beginning to experience, a reliable and affordable water supply that also protects and enhances our environment is increasingly being put at risk due to extreme drought conditions, floods, rising temperatures, depleted groundwater basins, aging infrastructure and other water management challenges magnified by the effects of climate change.

Sites Reservoir is unique for its ability to adapt to variable climate conditions in a manner that will release more water in drier periods. This was demonstrated through the Prop 1 selection process where two future climate change scenarios were used in the evaluation process. Under the more-severe scenario, releases from Sites Reservoir, in drier periods, were greater than releases from either the current conditions or the early climate change scenario. Sites Reservoir conserves stored water for later release in drier times when it's needed most by communities, farms and the environment.

To protect and enhance at risk fish and wildlife, the State's proposed investment under Prop 1 will create a proportionate share of the reservoir's storage that will be dedicated to the environment through the active management, by state resource agencies, of their share of the stored water to address their environmental priorities, which are expected to change over time. The Sites Reservoir creates a sizeable, flexible, and adaptable environmental water asset that does not currently exist.



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Another unique aspect of the Sites Reservoir Project is the level of partnerships and spirit of collaboration by a broad coalition of participants and stakeholders that are ‘breaking down the old binaries’ to advance this vital project. The local counties where the project is located, cities, water and irrigation districts from the Sacramento Valley, San Joaquin Valley, Bay Area, and Southern California are funding and actively engaged in this process; which also includes both the California Department of Water Resources and the US Bureau of Reclamation, who are working with us to develop a cooperative operations that will further improve the resiliency and reliability of both the State Water Project and Central Valley Project.

We believe strongly that Sites Reservoir offers a unique opportunity to construct and operate a surface water storage project that provides multiple benefits in a manner that protects and enhances fish and wildlife and will provide a sizable amount of water dedicated for environmental purposes over the project’s expected 100-year life.

Creating a resilient and reliable water future for California is essential to our communities, farms, ecosystems and economies. We are committed to working in collaboration with the Governor and his Administration to advance this vital project, as it embodies the principles the Water Resilience Portfolio is aggressively working to achieve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'FRITZ DURST'.

Fritz Durst  
Chair, Sites Project Authority

Cc:

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary for Natural Resources  
Jared Blumenfeld, Secretary for Environmental Protection  
Karen Ross, Secretary of Department of Food and Agriculture  
U.S Senator Dianne Feinstein  
Congressman John Garamendi  
Congressman Doug LaMalfa  
State Senator Jim Nielsen  
Assemblyman James Gallagher

