



January 26, 2023

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Toni Atkins
Senate President pro Tempore
1021 O St., Ste. 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anthony Rendon
Assembly Speaker
1021 O St., Ste. 8330
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Josh Becker
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee #2
1021 O St., Ste. 7250
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Steve Bennett
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #3
1021 O St., Ste. 4140
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: 2023-24 State Budget: Dam Safety and Climate Resilience (Item #3860-101-0001) (3)) - Support for Initial \$75 Million in Governor's Proposed Budget

Dear California Leaders:

On behalf of the public water agencies, labor organizations and local government entities listed below, we are writing to reaffirm our coalition's commitment to securing dam safety and resilience funding and to support the \$75 million in initial funding for this purpose as included in the Governor's proposed budget.

Specifically, it is our understanding that item "3860-101-0001) (3) Public Safety and Prevention of Damage" in the budget bill is intended for dam safety purposes.

We are encouraged by this initial funding for \$75 million of the \$100 million in funding identified in last year's budget agreement for Fiscal Years 2023/24 and 2024/25, as establishing this focused funding program is a key step in working to address this serious, multibillion-dollar infrastructure challenge facing California. Our coalition is also vitally interested in engaging in the development of the parameters of this program.

Additionally, given the prospect of the development of a resources bond as stated in the context of the Administration's budget presentations, we would request consideration of substantial monies in such a bond for this vital infrastructure improvement purpose.

As the past several weeks of atmospheric river storms have shown, hydrologic conditions in California can shift rapidly. Investments in existing dams can both restore water storage capacity to prepare for future droughts and protect public safety by enhancing more flexible operations of dams during periods of flood risk, including through implementation of Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO).

Moreover, as you may be aware, the California State Auditor has identified dam safety as a critical state issue for many years. While the attached fact sheet details several examples of why dam safety and resilience funding is so critically needed, a recent San Diego Union Tribune article--"San Diego Releases Water from Lake Hodges to Fix Crumbling Dam"--is the latest of many news accounts that also serve to spotlight this statewide issue.

Overall, beyond the critically important public safety aspects of dam safety and resilience funding, as explained below, the additional benefits of improving existing dams fit squarely within the purposes of the climate-related benefits by providing drought relief, water supply, and climate adaptation.

Drought/Water Supply

Because of dam safety issues (e.g., the need for seismic retrofit), many existing reservoirs, including the Anderson Dam, have been drained or forced to **operate at water levels significantly below their full design capacities, greatly reducing their ability to store water for use in times of shortage**. As a result, many of these facilities not only present public safety risks, they also cannot provide their intended water supply benefits. California is facing loss of its largest water storage, the Sierra snowpack, in most years after 2045. **California needs to be able to fully use its existing storage capacity.**

Adapting Dam Infrastructure to a Changing Climate

Public safety, climate resilience, and water supply benefits can be realized through the implementation of FIRO at certain dams throughout the state. The full implementation of FIRO often requires improvement of existing dam infrastructure with outlet capacity enhancements at lower reservoir levels to allow for earlier releases of water. This early release capacity and enhanced operational flexibility reduces the potential for large, destructive flooding by reducing peak flood flows downstream, as well as yields water supply benefits.

Again, we wish to express our thanks to the Governor for maintaining the commitment to initial funding and urge that any resources bond that may be developed also include substantial monies for this purpose.

Sincerely,

**Cindy Tuck, Deputy Executive Director for Government Relations
Association of California Water Agencies**

**Danielle Blacet-Hyden, Deputy Executive Director
California Municipal Utilities Association**

**Tim Cremins, Director - CA/NV Conference of Operating Engineers
International Union of Operating Engineers**

**Michael Quigley, Executive Director
California Alliance for Jobs**

**Paul A. Cook, General Manager
Irvine Ranch Water District**

**Jane Cirrincione, Assistant General Manager
Northern California Power Agency**

**Rick L. Callender, Esq., Chief Executive Officer
Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water)**

**Greg Thomas, General Manager
Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District**

**Ed Franciosa, General Manager
Modesto Irrigation District**

**Willie Whittlesey, General Manager
Yuba Water Agency**

**Michelle Reimers, General Manager
Turlock Irrigation District**

**Jim Abercrombie, General Manager
El Dorado Irrigation District**

**Carlos Quintero, General Manager
Sweetwater Authority**

**Mary L. Adams, Chair
Monterey County Board of Supervisors**

**Brent Buche, General Manager
Monterey County Water Resources Agency**

**Jerry Vilander, General Manager
Serrano Water District**

**David J. Guy, President
Northern California Water Association**

**Richard M. Johnson, Executive Director
Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency**

**Juan Carlos Guerreiro, Public Utilities Director
City of San Diego**

**Grant Davis, General Manager
Sonoma Water**

**Robert S. Grantham, General Manager
Rancho California Water District**

**Dennis Herrera, General Manager
San Francisco Public Utilities Commission**

**cc: Members of Senate Budget Subcommittee #2
Members of Assembly Budget Subcommittee #3**