

Salinas Valley Water Coalition



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5 April, 2023

The Honorable John Laird
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 8720
Sacramento, CA 95814
Senator.Laird@senate.ca.gov

The Honorable Anna Caballero
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 7620
Sacramento, CA 95814
Senator.Caballero@senate.ca.gov

The Honorable Robert Rivas
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 5110
Sacramento, CA 95814
Assemblymember.Rivas@assembly.ca.gov

The Honorable Dawn Addis
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 5350
Sacramento, CA 95814
Assemblymember.Addis@assembly.ca.gov

Re: Nacimiento and San Antonio Dams Capital Asset Management Program (CAMP) Funding

Dear Senators Laird and Caballero, and Assemblymembers Rivas and Addis:

The Salinas Valley Water Coalition is a non-profit organization comprised primarily of agriculture and ag-related business and individual members, whose members own and/or manage approximately 150,000 irrigated acres and land mass and water right holders within the Salinas Valley. The SVWC has operated for almost 30 years to specifically address our local water issues.

On behalf of Board of Directors, we respectfully urge that you support requests for funding in the FY 23/24 State Budget for critical operational and safety upgrades at the Nacimiento and San Antonio Dams located in Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties. Nacimiento and San Antonio dams provide flood control, drought resiliency, water supply, groundwater recharge, recreational, and other benefits to the California Central Coast. The Nacimiento and San Antonio Dams Capital Asset Management Program (CAMP) projects include a series of subprojects to fully rehabilitate the original dams, built in the 1950's and 1960's to ensure their continued service for Salinas Valley flood control and to provide critical water supplies to cities and over-drafted water basins in Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties. The estimated cost for the CAMP projects is \$160 million.

The Monterey County Water Resources Agency owns and manages the dams and identified subprojects comprising the CAMP in compliance with Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and California Department of Water Resources, Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD) regulations and to ensure long- term operability and safety of these facilities. The proposed high priority subprojects were identified based on three goals: (1) compliance with federal and state regulatory requirements; (2) restoring full operational functionality; and (3) public and employee safety.

Mission Statement: The water resources of the Salinas River Basin should be managed properly in a manner that promotes fairness and equity to all landowners within the basin. The management of these resources should have a scientific basis, comply with all laws and regulations, and promote the accountability of the governing agencies.

Both Dams are designated by the State as Extremely High Hazard Dam facilities providing critical flood protection to the greater Salinas Valley and mitigating downstream flooding including regions where flooding could cut off the Monterey Peninsula and its member cities. In Monterey County, the reservoirs recharge groundwater basins that serve over 200,000 residents in five cities and unincorporated areas that utilize wells for their primary drinking water supply. The reservoirs support more than 418,000 acres of highly productive farmland known as the “salad bowl of the world” that exports across the globe to 13 major trading partner countries. The agricultural industry is the foundation of Monterey County’s economy generating an estimated \$11.7 billion annually and sustaining over 63,900 jobs critical to supporting disadvantaged communities in the region.

In San Luis Obispo County, water from Nacimiento is delivered through a 45-mile pipeline to five participating agencies and cities. The City of San Luis Obispo has a contractual entitlement to 5,482 acre-feet per year of water from the project. The City of Paso Robles is one of the participants in the Lake Nacimiento Water Project with a 6,488 acre-feet per year water entitlement to reduce its dependency on the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin and provide a reliable long-term water supply for the city.

These reservoirs provide a buffer against drought conditions in both Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties, mitigating seawater intrusion in critically over-drafted groundwater basins and facilitating implementation of Groundwater Sustainability Plans. These reservoirs also serve as regional recreational watersports and camping destinations for central coast and southern California counties residents and visitors.

We appreciate your leadership and continued support to our residents and communities in the central coast region and appreciate your consideration of funding these critical flood control and water supply infrastructure projects. Should you have any questions regarding this request please contact the County of Monterey’s Public Policy Advisor, Ashley Walker of Nossaman LLP at (916) 442-8888.

Sincerely,

Nancy Isakson
Salinas Valley Water Coalition Board

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