



SIERRA CLUB

LOMA PRIETA CHAPTER

SAN MATEO, SANTA CLARA & SAN BENITO COUNTIES

November 8, 2021

Tony Estremera, Chair
Santa Clara Valley Water District Board of Directors
5750 Almaden Expressway
San Jose, CA 95118
Via email to: board@valleywater.org; clerkoftheboard@valleywater.org

Re: November 9, 2021, Item 7.1 WSIP Funding Commitment for Pacheco Reservoir Project

Dear Chair Estremera and Board Members,

The Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter appreciates this opportunity to submit comments on the record about the Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project (PREP). This agenda item is an opportunity for the Board and members of the public like us to reflect and ask questions.

We would like to request at least a 90-day review period for the PREP Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) when it is made available for review later this month. This is a very complicated project with extensive environmental impacts and the review period will cover the winter holidays when many of us try to take a little break. This should not impact the project schedule since the latest plan is to complete the Final EIR in November of 2023. There is plenty of time to allow for a generous public review period.

Given that we are in the middle of COP 26, we would also like to bring attention to carbon intensity of PREP which is one of the most concerning impacts of the project. There will be impacts on so many levels including construction materials, mining, transportation, and deforestation, and then during operation there will be pumping of water into Pacheco Reservoir from San Luis Reservoir and there will be significant surface water methane releases. The Board and the public should be as concerned about these impacts as we are. We are in a climate emergency and this project will take us in the wrong direction when it comes to mitigating climate change.

We would also like to re-iterate the areas where more transparency is needed to help the public understand the PREP in relation to Valley Water's overall water supply planning efforts, as follows.

- The public needs more information about the BF Sisk Dam Raise and San Luis Reservoir expansion. Will Valley Water participate in this project and what level of participation (how many additional acre-feet storage)? What is the estimated cost per acre foot? Also, how can the San Luis Reservoir project contribute toward achieving the water supply reliability goals of the Water Supply Master Plan?
- The public needs more information about the San Luis Low Point Project. What is the status of this project? Is there a final EIR/EIS and if not when will that be completed? Why was the PREP selected as the preferred alternative instead of the San Luis Reservoir expansion project?
- Lastly, the public needs more information about the expectation of increased imported water deliveries from the Delta in wet years, which will be necessary to make the PREP a viable project. Is Valley Water expecting more than the current maximum deliveries under our CVP and SWP contracts, or just getting closer to the maximum allowed under those contracts? If the District is expecting to get more, what approvals are needed such as updated contracts or updated water rights?

The question will continue to be, is this project really necessary, especially since we have the opportunity to participate in the San Luis Reservoir expansion project. We all know the cost trajectory for this project and water rate impacts on low-income residents is only going up.

Sincerely,



Katja Irvin
Water Committee Co-Chair
Loma Prieta Chapter Sierra Club

Cc: James Eggers
Executive Director
Loma Prieta Chapter Sierra Club

Gladwyn d'Souza
Conservation Committee Chair
Loma Prieta Chapter Sierra Club