



March 28, 2024

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel
Chair, Assembly Committee on Budget
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: California Water Infrastructure Funding

Dear Assemblymember Gabriel:

The City of Santa Rosa wishes to express continued support for investments in water infrastructure. While I am aware the State is currently facing a budget deficit, we urge the Legislature and Governor to maintain previously committed investments for water infrastructure. In addition, we strongly support continued development of a climate resilience general obligation bond that would provide significant investments in new and aging water infrastructure.

NATALIE ROGERS
Mayor

MARK STAPP
Vice Mayor

EDDIE ALVAREZ
VICTORIA FLEMING
DIANNA MACDONALD
JEFF OKREPKIE
CHRIS ROGERS

Governor Newsom Proposed January Budget

The Governor's January budget proposes to cut or delay funding for several critical water categories including:

- Recycled Water – Reduction of \$174.4 million and delay of \$100 million.
- PFAS - Reversion of \$71.6 million and reduction of \$30 million.
- Dam Safety - Reversion of \$50 million.
- Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) — Reduction of \$6.75 million.

While we recognize the need to address the budget deficit, we encourage the Legislature to maintain as much funding for water infrastructure as possible. In recent years, public water agencies (and their customers) have generally paid for 85% of the investments in water infrastructure projects in California with the remaining 15% coming from State and Federal funding assistance. Over the last few years, the Legislature and Governor have made significant commitments to fund water infrastructure projects to help public water agencies cover the costs associated with new and aging infrastructure projects.

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) is already in the process of finalizing the Dam Safety and Enhancement Grant Program Guidelines and Proposal Solicitation Package. Many public water agencies hope to receive funding through this process to address the public safety and reduced storage capacity issues related to dam safety projects. There are also many planned recycled water and water quality projects throughout the state that are



seeking funding assistance. For these reasons we greatly appreciate the Legislature and Governor's much needed investments in climate resilience over the last few years and encourage the Legislature to maintain this funding.

2024 Climate Resilience Bond

California's changing climate creates increased risks of drought, floods, intense rain events, and sea level rise that will present unique challenges to public water agencies and their ability to reliably provide water to California's farms and cities. I support **a \$7.85 billion bond investment in water infrastructure** that focuses on a number of critical water issues including, recycled water, groundwater recharge, storage, flood protection, dam safety, conveyance, storage, safe drinking water, water quality, regional watershed resilience, State Water Project improvements, and water conservation.

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California's water management system is not currently prepared to address the impacts of a decreasing snowpack and increasing weather extremes. Adapting to climate change will require California to urgently and significantly rehabilitate and modify existing water facilities, improve operational flexibility, and make generational investments in new water infrastructure.

Additional above- and below-ground storage capacity must be developed to capture precipitation, especially in extreme weather events such as atmospheric rivers, and to mitigate disappearing snowpack. In addition, new and enhanced conveyance facilities are essential for moving collected and stored water, connecting suppliers with different supply sources, transferring water among water users, recharging groundwater, and storing water for a variety of beneficial uses, including environmental flows. State investment in water infrastructure is crucial to ensuring the reliable delivery of safe drinking water to California residents. In addition, climate resilience projects have also been shown to create jobs and stimulate local economies.

We thank you for your consideration of this issue and urge the Legislature to make the investments in California water that are needed in response to climate change, both in the State Budget process and in the development of a climate resilience bond. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Santa Rosa Water Director Jennifer Burke at jburke@srcity.org or 707-543-3359.

Sincerely,

Natalie Rogers, Mayor