



April 3, 2023

The Honorable Anna Caballero
California State Senate
1021 O Street Suite 7620
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 23 (Caballero) Water supply and flood risk reduction projects: expedited permitting – Support (As Introduced March 30, 2023)

Dear Senator Caballero:

On behalf of the City of Santa Rosa, I am writing to express support for SB 23, which would streamline the regulatory permitting of water supply and flood risk reduction projects. SB 23 would reform the application process for a Section 401 Water Quality Certification, enact strict timelines for the approval of an application, eliminate unnecessary duplicative requirements and allow for agencies to contribute resources to state agencies to meet deadlines established in your bill.

The City of Santa Rosa Water Department (Santa Rosa Water) is a municipal utility in Sonoma County that delivers approximately six billion gallons of drinking water, each year, to over 53,000 customer accounts with a population of 175,000. Santa Rosa Water also operates the Santa Rosa Regional Water Reuse System, which services approximately 230,000 residents in Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Cotati, Sebastopol, and unincorporated portions of Sonoma County. The hub of the reuse system is the Laguna Wastewater Treatment Plant (the Plant), which was built in 1968 and is in need of urgent investment and modernization.

Like countless municipalities, many critical components of Santa Rosa's infrastructure are concurrently needing repair or replacement to avoid catastrophic failure. SB 23 provides important reform to streamline the permitting process of many critical infrastructure projects, including flood protection.

The City's Laguna Wastewater Treatment Plant is located near the Laguna De Santa Rosa (the Laguna), the largest freshwater wetlands complex on the Northern California Coast, which forms the largest tributary to the Russian River. The Laguna De Santa Rosa provides an important overflow area for the Russian River during periods of heavy winter rain.

Due to the Plant's proximity to the Laguna, the surrounding area is prone to flooding during

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intense rain events, such as atmospheric rivers. To prevent floodwaters from entering the Plant, Santa Rosa Water has been working on building a flood protection levee to enclose the Plant and an on-site storm water diversion system. This effort began in 2018 when Santa Rosa Water applied for state and federal funding; however, we are still working with our regulatory partners to secure committed funds and begin construction on this critical project to protect regional operations. A streamlined approach to permitting, as proposed in SB 23, would help expedite similar projects and expand our capacity to replace aging infrastructure to protect the health and safety of our community and environment.

SB 23 is critical for Santa Rosa to further our capital investment in flood protection and drought resiliency projects, while preserving established environmental protections.

For these reasons, the City of Santa Rosa fully supports SB 23. Should you have any questions please contact our legislative advocate, Sharon Gonsalves, with the Renne Public Policy Group, at (916) 974-9270.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "N. Rogers", with a long, sweeping underline.

Natalie Rogers, Mayor

CC: Senator Mike McGuire
Assemblymember Jim Wood
Assemblymember Damon Connolly