



April 26, 2022

Senator John Laird
Senator Anna Caballero
Assemblymember Robert Rivas
Assemblymember Mark Stone

VIA: E-Mail

RE: Water Infrastructure Funding

Dear Senator Laird, Senator Caballero, Assemblymember Rivas, and Assemblymember Stone:

Salinas Valley Water Coalition, Salinas Basin Water Alliance, Monterey County Farm Bureau, Grower-Shipper Association of Central California, and Monterey County Vintners & Growers Association (Organizations), whose collective membership comprises the entire Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin agricultural acres along with many associated businesses and their employees, request your assistance related to our water infrastructure projects.

On behalf of these Organizations and their members, we request your consideration and support for a budget funding allocation in the 2022 May Budget Revision process for critical dam and reservoir repair and maintenance projects of Monterey County Water Resources Agency's (MCWRA) Nacimiento and San Antonio facilities, for their future safe, reliable, and sustainable operations.

These two dam and reservoir facilities, constructed in the 1950s and 1960s, are of the same general construction as the Oroville Dam that suffered a near structural failure. The dams have been classified as high risk due to the intensive populations downstream that would be affected by any breach of the dams. As a result of additional regulations and requirements for these types of dams, there are significant upgrades required to ensure that structural integrity is maintained.

Originally constructed for water storage and flood control management, these two facilities are now a primary source of water in the Salinas Valley by providing extensive groundwater recharge during our irrigation season, as well as providing water for quality habitat within the Salinas River watershed. Monterey County is unique in that it does not import water from any of the State or Federal projects. Without the ability to store the maximum allowable water capacity in these reservoirs should dam improvements not be accomplished, there will be significant impacts to flood control measures and drought management resources for multiple beneficial uses within the region.

It is necessary and critical that the deferred maintenance of the two reservoirs is completed and properly maintained in the future as they are the foundation for all projects and management actions undertaken by MCWRA, but also for any groundwater management practices and projects the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA) may initiate in the future. The SVBGSA and their adopted Groundwater Sustainability Plans rely on the continuing operation and maintenance of the two reservoirs as key to our water resources for the entire Salinas Valley.

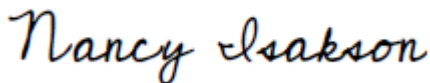
The funding of the deferred maintenance of the two reservoirs is necessary to ensure that the dams and reservoirs can continue to operate voter-approved water projects, as intended, including the Salinas Valley Water Project. Salinas Valley landowners have invested wisely in projects to enhance water supplies over the past eight decades; the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project delivers reclaimed water supplies to nearly 12,000 acres in the coastal zone area of Monterey County which combats seawater intrusion. Diminished capacity for storage in the two reservoirs will also impact the ability to operate the reclaimed water delivery system fully and as designed.

Monterey County Agriculture is the strength of our local economy, and without water resource infrastructure operating at optimal peak performance, the impacts will be significant to our communities.

We are at a critical point with the safety of these two dams and reservoirs, and request your assistance to support a funding allocation in the State budget to help our community maintain important water infrastructure.

Thanks for your thoughtful consideration of this request for our community.

Sincerely,



Nancy Isakson, President
Salinas Valley Water Coalition



George Fontes, President
Salinas Basin Water Alliance



Norman C. Groot, Executive Director
Monterey County Farm Bureau



Christopher Valadez, President
Grower-Shipper Association of Central California



Kim Stemler, Executive Director
Monterey County Vintners & Growers Association

cc: Mary Adams, Monterey County Water Resources Agency Board of Supervisors Chair
Luis Alejo, Monterey County Water Resources Agency Supervisor
Christopher Lopez, Monterey County Water Resources Agency Supervisor
John Phillips, Monterey County Water Resources Agency Supervisor
Wendy Root Askew, Monterey County Water Resources Agency Supervisor
Brent Buche, General Manager, Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Donna Meyers, General Manager, Salinas Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency