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Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Project Gets \$459 Million from Prop. 1

On July 24, the California Water Commission announced that \$459 million of Proposition 1 funding will be slated for expanding Los Vaqueros Reservoir in eastern Contra Costa County near Brentwood. With 15 agencies interested in potentially being part of the expansion, Los Vaqueros would expand in size and operations with broader reaching benefits.

After a multi-year process, the California Water Commission announced funding decisions for the \$2.7 billion in Proposition 1 for water storage. Through the Water Storage Investment Program, agencies statewide applied for voter approved funds for water storage projects that provide public benefits.

Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion was one of the projects that qualified for state funding with benefits including water to wildlife refuges for environmental purposes and water to cities and farms for human consumption and food production. Currently owned and operated by Contra Costa Water District, an expanded reservoir would provide benefits to additional partners, while maintaining the existing benefits for CCWD customers.

Next steps will include finalizing design, permitting and local agreements, as well as commitments from local agency partners, with phased construction starting as early as 2020. More information about the project is available at www.ccwater.com/lvstudies.

Statements from partner agencies:

Alameda County Water District

“We are encouraged by the California Water Commission’s announcement of funding for the Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Project that demonstrates a true partnership approach to water management,” said Paul Sethy, Board President of the Alameda County Water District. “It’s a project with so many wonderful facets—including improved reliability and preparedness elements that will benefit the entire bay region.”

Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency

“The Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency (BAWSCA) supports an expanded Los Vaqueros Reservoir as a potential project that could bring necessary dry year supplies to our region. BAWSCA is pleased with the California Water Commission’s recognition of the project’s value and moreover the funding they are providing in support of the project’s development.” Nicole Sandkulla, BAWSCA CEO / General Manager

City of Brentwood

“The City is excited to participate in this project as it will help secure water quality for many years. One of our strategic initiatives is to ensure water-supply resiliency by supporting local and regional projects such as the Los Vaqueros Reservoir expansion project mainly for supply and water-quality reasons.” Chris Ehlers, Assistant Director of Public Works/Operations

Contra Costa Water District

“We are pleased to see that the California Water Commission recognized the benefits an expanded Los Vaqueros Reservoir can provide,” said Lisa Borba, Board President of the Contra Costa Water District. “The Commission has conducted a thorough and transparent process to ensure funding goes to what voters approved in passing Proposition 1.”

Del Puerto Water District

“We are appreciative of the thorough work done by the California Water Commission and look forward to the successful completion of the Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Project,” said Anthea Hansen, General Manager of the Del Puerto Water District. “The Contra Costa Water District Board’s acceptance of additional partners serving various purposes is an excellent example of how the many challenges facing California water can be addressed through multi-faceted partnerships.”

East Bay Municipal Utility District

“EBMUD is pleased to see state investment in regionally beneficial water supply projects. EBMUD and our fellow Bay Area water agencies have spent many years looking at how we can best collaboratively serve the Bay Area. With interconnections between systems now in place, and following Contra Costa Water District’s project leadership efforts, the expansion of Los Vaqueros now allows us to fully examine this regional shared storage opportunity,” said Lesa McIntosh, President East Bay Municipal Utility District Board of Directors.

Grassland Water District

“This decision will significantly enhance the quality of wetland habitat on many wildlife refuges,” said Pepper Snyder, Board President of the Grassland Water District. “We are confident in Contra Costa Water District’s ability to build a project that provides multiple benefits and long-lasting partnerships.”

San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority

“We are very pleased with today’s California Water Commission’s action and to be part of the progress underway on the Los Vaqueros Reservoir Project, said Cannon Michael, chairman of the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority. Being able to convey and store supplemental water supplies from this project will help meet the water supply needs of our farmers, Silicon Valley, and our neighboring state and federal wildlife refuges. It is important to find new opportunities to meet all of California’s water supply challenges, so the flexibility that comes with expanding Los Vaqueros is important not only for growing food and fiber crops and supporting the high-tech industry, it also helps protect the environment.”

Santa Clara Valley Water District

Santa Clara Valley Water District Board Chair Richard P. Santos said, “The Bay Area has done very well in this funding process. Both the Los Vaqueros and Pacheco reservoir expansion projects could provide significant benefits to the Bay Area and beyond. Part of the proposed Los Vaqueros project is a new pipeline to connect the reservoir to the South Bay Aqueduct, which would give us more flexibility in moving water to where it’s needed.”

Westlands Water District

“Westlands Water District is pleased with the California Water commission’s announcement to support the expansion of Los Vaqueros Reservoir, a project that will benefit wildlife refuges, rural and urban communities, and agriculture. In partnership with CCWD, Westlands Water District will be able to store water during wet years to provide critical water resources to our farmers and rural west side San Joaquin Valley communities during dry years, thereby improving our water supply flexibility and reliability.” Jose Gutierrez, Assistant Chief Operating Officer of Westlands Water District