

SITES
RESERVOIR
PROJECT

**CERTIFIED
ORIGINAL**

**RDEIR/SDEIS
VIRTUAL
PUBLIC MEETING**

Thursday, December 16, 2021

Jennifer Geraty
Certified Shorthand Reporter
License No. 13350

J.D. COURT REPORTING
30343 CANWOOD ST., STE. 208A
AGOURA HILLS, CA 91301
[818] 851-9910

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A P P E A R A N C E S

Sara Katz,
Meeting Moderator

Aly Forsythe,
Sites Environmental Planning and Permitting
Manager

Vanessa King,
Bureau of Reclamation

Sarah Rossetto,
Q&A Monitor

Mike Hendrick,
Fisheries Biologist

1 lands, also known as Lafayette, California. And I
2 really just want to say, no new dams. Our dams are a
3 problem. Part of the problem of the issues that we're
4 facing, dealing with water crisis, dealing with
5 wildfires, and I don't support any new dams or new
6 reservoirs for that matter. And so I just wanted to
7 take the time to call in and state that, and also just
8 to request from you to please support no new dams and no
9 new reservoirs in -- in the State of California.

10 Thank you.

11 SARA KATZ: Thank you, Melissa.

12 I also would like to remind participants that
13 any comments noted in the Q&A box are not considered to
14 be formal part of the record, and will either need to be
15 submitted in writing or please raise your hand so you
16 can read those comments into the record, as we do have a
17 court reporter participating in this process.

18 Our next speaker will be Dan Bacher. Dan, if
19 you could properly spell your name, any organization you
20 are affiliated with, and please go ahead and unmute
21 yourself.

22 DAN BACHER: Yes. This is Dan Bacher. I'm an
23 independent journalist that focuses on fish, water, and
24 environmental justice, and I strongly urge the -- the --
25 the Sites Authority and, again, to reject funding Sites

1 Reservoir Project at a time when California salmon and
2 other fish populations are in unprecedented collapse.

3 The fish populations in the Bay -- Delta
4 Estuary and Central Valley Rivers have collapsed with
5 many species now on edge of extinction, due to the
6 export of Delta water to agrobusiness, other water
7 diversions in Central Valley Dam operations. The
8 construction of Sites Reservoir in conjunction with the
9 Delta Tunnels and voluntary agreements supported by the
10 Newsom administration would only make a terrible
11 situation even worse, not benefit the ecosystem, as such
12 proponents argue. The 3200-acre Sites Reservoir would
13 also include new diversions from the Sacramento River
14 that would impact the Trinity River, the largest
15 tributary of the Klamath River, the Yoorakuppa
16 (phonetic) Valley, Karuk and other tribes dependent on
17 the salmon and other fish as part of their livelihood
18 and culture for many thousands of years. But the salmon
19 populations have collapsed dramatically and we -- in
20 recent years.

21 The plan includes water storage for the Bureau
22 of Reclamation, agency delivers Central Valley Project
23 water to west lands water district, which is a major
24 diverter of Trinity River water.

25 Sites could cause the Sacramento River and

1 Shasta and Trinity Rivers in Northern California to be
2 over-drafted. Sites Reservoir would be used to deport
3 more Northern California Delta water to San Joaquin
4 Valley corporate agrobusiness through the Delta Tunnel,
5 when what is needed to restore fish populations is more
6 water for fish, not less.

7 For the past three years, no delta smelt, once
8 the most abundant fish in the entire Sacramento, San
9 Joaquin River Delta have been found in California
10 Department of Fish and Wildlife Fall Midwater Trawl
11 Surveys, none have been found in the first two months of
12 the four months surveyed this year. Two others surveys
13 in the Delta turned up similar results for the delta
14 smelt. The enhanced delta smelt monitoring study caught
15 only one delta smelt in the 2200 Smelt targeted net tows
16 in 2021. That compares to 49 captured in 2020 and
17 hundreds in prior years. None were captured in the
18 Spring of Kodiak Trawl, 2020 survey. According to fish
19 marine biologist, Tom Cannon, this year's results
20 indicate that delta smelt are likely extinct in the
21 wild.

22 The virtual extinction of delta smelt in the
23 wild is part of a greater ecosystem crash caused by a
24 massive water exports to corporate agrobusinesses in the
25 San Joaquin Valley, combined with toxics declining water

1 colony and evasive species in the Delta.

2 Between 1967 and 2020, the State's [inaudible]
3 Water Trawl abundance in -- induces or striped bass,
4 delta smelt, longfin smelt, American shad, split-tailed,
5 threadfin shad have declined by 99.7, 100.98, 98.96,
6 67.9, 100 and 95 percent, respectively, the diversion
7 and export of water per Central Valley agrobusinesses'
8 interests during a drought. It's also had a huge impact
9 on imperial Sacramento River pop -- salmon populations,
10 just as it had on driving the delta smelt to become
11 virtually extinct in the wild.

12 This year, up to 98 percent of winter run
13 salmon juveniles in Sacramento River perished as water
14 was delivered to water contractors, as the Bureau of
15 Reclamation violated their own plan, the only keyhole, 9
16 -- 80 percent of winter run salmon every day. But one,
17 throughout the diversion season, not only did nearly all
18 the winter run juveniles perish due to warm water
19 conditions in the Sacramento this year, but the majority
20 of adult -- adult spring run Karuk salmon and Butte
21 Creek, over 14,500 of an estimated 18,000 fish --

22 SARA KATZ: Ben, if you could please wrap up
23 your comment --

24 BEN BACHER: -- perish before --

25 SARA KATZ: We have -- are giving you -- we

1 have given you extra time.

2 BEN BACHER: -- due to the outbreak of these
3 low and warm conditions. I strongly -- I'm wrapping it
4 up right now.

5 I strongly urge you to reject this project,
6 Sites Reservoir, at a time when salmon, delta smelt, and
7 disease --

8 SARA KATZ: Thank you, Dan. Our next --

9 DAN BACHER: Are threatened with extension.
10 We need more water for imperial fish populations. It's
11 not --

12 SARA KATZ: Thank you, Dan. Thank you, Dan.
13 Our next speaker will be Ben King.

14 Ben, if you could spell your full name and
15 unmute yourself.

16 BEN KING: Am I -- am I on?

17 SARA KATZ: You are, Ben, yes.

18 BEN KING: Yeah, sorry about that. So,
19 I'll -- I'll be quick, because I've already spoken. But
20 I just wanted to get in public record the comments I
21 submitted -- the questions I submitted before public
22 comment period began. So, I -- I like the -- I liked
23 the consideration of three state actions -- state
24 actions taken in recent -- the extra 2021.

25 One, is the implementation of the CV salts