

Mr. Jim Watson
Sites Project Authority
P.O. Box 517
Maxwell, CA 95955

Mr. Mike Dietl
Bureau of Reclamation
2800 Cottage Way, W-2830
Sacramento, CA 95825

Dear Mr. Watson and Mr. Dietl:

I am commenting on the Sites Reservoir Project DEIR/S and Feasibility Report.

The document is so basically flawed that it should be withdrawn. The assessment of impacts is based on the false assumption that current flow and water quality standards for the river are adequate, when in fact they are inadequate to stop the ongoing degradation of the river's ecosystem and the decline of at-risk fish and wildlife. Mitigation of the project's impacts on water quality downstream and on the Delta, cultural resources, and of course the natural resources that would be drowned by Sites reservoir, needs to be far better assessed than in this document.

Since the Sites DEIR/S must prove that Sites will avoid adverse environmental impacts and be of net public benefit under Prop. 1, it is important that the benefits touted for the project be real, not just more political smoke. Water interests promoted past dams as enhancing and protecting the environment. Decades later, the overall result has been salmon and other fish species declining towards extinction, extensive loss of wetlands and riverside habitat, and degradation of water quality. Sites promises to follow this pattern,

The project will depend on coordinated operation with Trinity, Shasta, Oroville, and Folsom dams on the Trinity, Sacramento, Feather, and American Rivers to "benefit" endangered salmon downstream of these dams. The idea is that consumptive water supplies will be stored in Sites to allow the other dams to retain cold water for fish downstream. But according to the DEIR/S, coordinated operations between Sites and other dams will on average "improve" salmon runs by a paltry 2-4 percent, at a cost to the taxpayers of at least \$1.6 billion.

Although a major chunk of "environmental" water allegedly produced by Sites is allocated to maintain Delta water quality, there is little evaluation in the DEIR/S as to whether this allocation will successfully restore a river and estuary already degraded by major water diversions. The State Water Board estimates that the Delta needs somewhere between 35-75 percent of its previously unimpaired flows, primarily from the Sacramento River. There is no information in the Sites DEIR/S as to how project diversions and releases will achieve this standard. Further, I believe that the DEIR/S fails to adequately assess the impact of climate change and reservoir evaporation on project yield.

This entire project is based on the false premise that there is "excess" water in the Sacramento River not needed for the environment. I urge that this entirely inadequate DEIR/S be withdrawn and a new environmental document developed and released for public review that fully addresses the impacts of this project on the Sacramento River, Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, threatened and endangered fish and wildlife that depend on the river and estuary, as well as on water quality.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Melinda Wright

PO Box 225
Groveland, CA 95321
melindawright@juno.com