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Petitioning Sites Joint Project Authority Mr Rob Thompson Sites JPA

# No New Dams in NorCal: Stop Sites Reservoirs

[Save California Salmon CA](#)



668

668 have signed. Let's get to 1,000.

### [Save California Salmon CA](#)

Help us oppose the new 4.7 billion dollar proposals to build up to 11 new dams and two new large reservoirs on 14,000 acres off of the Sacramento River. The new Sites and Holthouse Reservoirs (from the Sites and Golden Gate Dams) in Northern California could store up to 1.8 million acre feet of water, making them almost half the size of Shasta Reservoir and twice the size of Folsom reservoir. They would be owned by the Sites Project Authority, which is made up mainly of State Water Project (SWP) water contractors and irrigation districts. The authority is already offering new water rights in watersheds where five times more water is allocated than exists to powerful water districts, such as the Metropolitan Water District. A previously filed water rights application for the Sites project asked for 3 million acre feet of water a year.

MWF has stated it's reluctant to invest in Sites if it can't be assured it will be able to pull its water out of the reservoir when it wants to. This has lead many to believe the reservoirs would be used to fill Governor Brown's twin tunnels.

The proposal includes inundating four creeks and building a new 2000 cfs diversion on the Sacramento River, a new 109 megawatt powerhouse, and two new diversion pumps in Red Bluff. It does not include protections for the Trinity River or Upper Sacramento River salmon, or for the Tribes and fishermen that depend on them despite the fact it will lower flows and impact water quality some years. Water rights held by Tribes and counties, and flows to advert fish kills in the Klamath River, are currently not protected in the Sites proposal.

In theory these dams are supposed to mainly divert and store "surplus" water in winter and summer months, but they would also increase diversions and warm river temperatures in other times of the year.

In truth, there is no "extra" water in this part of California, where up to 75% of the salmon habitat has been blocked by dams. Fisheries science has now proven that high flows during winter and spring are needed if salmon are to survive in California.

High flows have many benefits. Flushing flows in high water years inundate floodplains, help out migrating salmon, scour out sediments and algae, move spawning gravel, and reduce fish diseases, all of which greatly increase salmon numbers. In fact, new flow science coupled with extremely low salmon returns has led the state water board to create plans to restore winter and spring flows in the Sacramento River. In the Klamath watershed, the Trinity Management Council, which the Hoopa Valley and Yurok Tribes are members of, is recommending higher winter flows in the Trinity River and a recent lawsuit has forced higher spring flows in the Klamath River to combat the C. Shasta fish disease, which killed the majority of juvenile salmon in recent years. Steps have also been taken to use Trinity River reservoir water for fall cold water releases to prevent large scale adult fish kills in the Klamath River during droughts.

Restoring flows are needed to bring back salmon. The Sites Proposal threatens all of these actions, and it could not come at a worse time. A recent report from U.C. Davis shows that over 45% of California salmon are facing extinction. Furthermore, the Klamath River is facing the worst salmon returns in history and wild Spring Chinook returns in the Klamath, Trinity and Sacramento Rivers last year numbered in the hundreds.

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[Three years ago, during the depths of California's historic drought, state voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 1, a \\$7.5 billion bond measure to pay for new water projects, including building more dams and reservoirs. Hoping to get some of that money, water districts drew up plans and submitted lengthy applications to the state to usher in a new era of dam-building in California.](#)



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