

# CERTIFIED COPY

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Public Meeting Regarding  
SITES PROJECT DRAFT EIR/EIS  
Thursday, December 7, 2017

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Reported by Vickey L. Benson, CSR No. 8076

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Thank you very much. ]

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[ STATEMENT BY LUCAS ROSS MERZ

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MR. MERZ: [ Good evening. I want to talk to the public as well the board or the representatives up here, because one of the main reasons that we're having this meeting is because it's our tax dollars, right, that are going to pay for a lot of this project. And we're talking about the whole California spread of how we're going to fix this.

I don't want to echo all the concerns that Steve went over very eloquently. It's kind of been stated this document is knowingly inadequate because it had to meet a timeline. Right. They had to get the document done to qualify for funds from Proposition 1.

So a lot of these surveys and other things may not have been done in time or done adequately. So we're viewing a document that's going to need more work, and it's going to need a lot of engagement. ]

At the same time, [ we're talking about the Bay Delta water quality plan, updates and how we're going manage the delta. We're also working on the new conservation strategy, the flood planning update.

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18:56:35 1 So the central valley flood planning update  
18:56:38 2 in 2017 adopted a conservation strategy. And that's a  
18:56:43 3 whole 'nother piece to this puzzle: Storing water on  
18:56:49 4 flood plains, storing water in valleys, how we create  
18:56:54 5 supply benefit for California in an already overly  
18:56:57 6 applicated system. So fixing this supply issue in  
18:57:00 7 California is much more dynamic when dealing with  
18:57:04 8 climate change and just this one project.)

18:57:08 9 And so I think when it comes to Sites, one of  
18:57:10 10 the frustrating pieces is not knowing the details. And  
18:57:13 11 we've already spent over 20 million dollars on this  
18:57:16 12 project since 1957.

18:57:19 13 And so when we've already created an  
18:57:22 14 administrative draft EIR from the Department of Water  
18:57:26 15 Resources, we've worked on this project, looked at this  
18:57:28 16 project for a very long time, it is frustrating for  
18:57:31 17 those groups, the Sacramento River Preservation Trust,  
18:57:34 18 that works for you and all of us to make sure that the  
18:57:38 19 best project is built that benefits all of us, that  
18:57:41 20 helps us have healthy streams, have productive  
18:57:44 21 agriculture and leave a better place for the next  
18:57:48 22 generation of California.

18:57:49 23 The Sites project had different alternatives.  
18:57:52 24 I've been hearing about this project since I was born.  
18:57:55 25 I was born and raised in Northern California. It was

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18:57:59 1 going to have power, maybe not have power. We finally  
18:58:01 2 now know what this project is.

18:58:03 3 So we've heard about the project for a very  
18:58:06 4 long time. This is our first time to really get our  
18:58:08 5 teeth into a document and look at different versions of  
18:58:11 6 a defined project and try to figure out what its true  
18:58:14 7 impacts will be.

18:58:15 8 And that's the hard part right now, is  
18:58:19 9 there's dollars on the table. There's other competing  
18:58:22 10 projects throughout the state that may have less  
18:58:25 11 benefit to the state of California. And we're going to  
18:58:28 12 have to work really hard as a community and as partners  
18:58:36 13 to meet.

18:58:36 14 Having a Joint Powers Authority allows for  
18:58:39 15 streamlining of a lot of different elements within this  
18:58:44 16 process, although I do feel that we have not been  
18:58:48 17 approached as much as has been talked about in the past  
18:58:51 18 with regard to trying to bring it to us ahead of time  
18:58:54 19 on this document.

18:58:56 20 And now we're going to have to really dive in  
18:58:58 21 and put a lot of time into this to try to make sure  
18:59:01 22 that the soil scientists, the rare plants concerns, the  
18:59:04 23 potential damage to our fish food run, right, our fall  
18:59:05 24 run of salmon. The Sacramento River is one of only  
18:59:09 25 five rivers in the world that has four runs of Shinook

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18:59:14 1 Salmon.

18:59:14 2 We live in one of the most beautiful valleys  
18:59:17 3 in the world. And our river is already forever  
18:59:20 4 changed. And so these flow conversations about  
18:59:23 5 instream flows -- how many of the people have been on  
18:59:26 6 the river in a boat? Jet boat, powerboat, trip boat,  
18:59:31 7 canoe, kayak?

18:59:32 8 You reduce the flow by 20 percent, some of  
18:59:35 9 those get a lot more dangerous. Some of those places  
18:59:38 10 are going to have a lot more gravel bars, a lot more  
18:59:40 11 sandbars.

18:59:40 12 The trust was formed in 1984 to defeat a  
18:59:44 13 project from Chico to Red Bluff that wanted to cut down  
18:59:47 14 the riparian lands and habitats on the outside bends of  
18:59:51 15 the river between Chico and Red Bluff. And it had an  
18:59:55 16 inadequate biological opinion. And from that has  
18:59:59 17 spurred a lot of amazing things, including the  
19:00:02 18 Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge.

19:00:04 19 So in talking dollars and trying to make  
19:00:06 20 sense and move forward and do the right thing for  
19:00:08 21 California, I think we also need to look at potential  
19:00:10 22 impacts to the millions and millions of dollars we've  
19:00:13 23 spent on acquiring public lands to allow for this  
19:00:17 24 geomorphology, this living river to move and to create  
19:00:21 25 habitats that we fish and hike and camp and hunt and

19:00:24 1 enjoy. And that's our public benefits. It also gives  
19:00:27 2 a lot to the ecosystem.

19:00:33 3 So I really want to just -- with regard to  
19:00:36 4 Sites right now, it's exciting. I personally -- and  
19:00:39 5 with our board, we've looked at the other -- you know,  
19:00:42 6 all 12 projects.]

19:00:44 7 [This has significant potential impacts. It  
19:00:48 8 also has significant potential benefit to cold water  
19:00:51 9 pool, to other things. We're discussed that in  
19:00:54 10 partnership and in meetings over years.

19:00:56 11 And so right now, we really just want to get  
19:00:58 12 down to the brass tacks, be able to see how things are  
19:01:02 13 really going to work and get those details. Because  
19:01:04 14 it's hard to want to buy a truck if you can't see how  
19:01:09 15 it runs. They can show you the engine. But if it's  
19:01:12 16 not in the truck, and you can't start it, that's a  
19:01:15 17 truck with an engine out here.

19:01:17 18 So trying to put everything into this  
19:01:19 19 project, understand how it's going to work, what  
19:01:23 20 potential water quality concerns are, and how it's  
19:01:25 21 going to benefit the state for those public dollars  
19:01:26 22 that will go into this project.]

19:01:28 23 [We look forward to submitting written  
19:01:32 24 comments and continuing to work with the JPA and the  
19:01:34 25 bureau and all the other partners.]

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I think that flood plains are really the future. And so this is one part. But you will see that in California, we're in this newer era where flood plain storage as well as surface storage, because it's in the short term. But flood plain storage is what we'd like to see.

And if this is going to impact opportunities for other pieces of the puzzle, for economic benefit, environmental benefit, and the long-term goals of the state of California with how we're going to work with our water resources, then we'll have to deal with that in the details.]

So thank you so much for comment period and the time. The extension was wonderful. It is a big document, so we really appreciated that. And thank you all for being here, because it's very important. ]

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[ STATEMENT BY JIM BROBECK

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MR. BROBECK: My name is Jim Brobeck. I'm the water policy analyst for Aqua Alliance. We're located in Chico.

[ The DWR 2013 preliminary administrative draft percents discusses in some detail the saline, selenium,

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