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

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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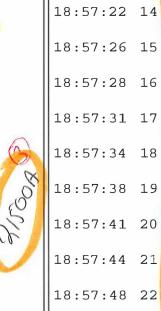
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So the central valley flood planning update in 2017 adopted a conservation strategy. And that's a whole 'nother piece to this puzzle: Storing water on flood plains, storing water in valleys, how we create supply benefit for California in an already overly applicated system. So fixing this supply issue in California is much more dynamic when dealing with climate change and just this one project.

so I think when it comes to Sites, one of the frustrating pieces is not/knowing the details. we've already spent over 20 million dollars on this project since 1957.

And so when we've already created an administrative draft EIR from the Department of Water Resources, we've worked on this project, looked at this project for a very long time, it is frustrating for those groups, the Sacramento River Preservation Trust, that works for you and all of us to make sure that the best project is built that benefits all of us, that helps us have healthy streams, have productive agriculture and leave a better place for the next generation of California.

The Sites project had different alternatives. I've been hearing about this project since I was born. I was born and raised in Northern California.



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going to have power, maybe not have power. We finally now know what this project is.

So we've heard about the project for a very long time. This is our first time to really get our teeth into a document and look at different versions of a defined project and try to figure out what its true impacts will be.

And that's the hard part right now, is there's dollars on the table. There's other competing projects throughout the state that may have less benefit to the state of California. And we're going to have to work really hard as a community and as partners to meet.

Having a Joint Powers Authority allows for streamlining of a lot of different elements within this process, although I do feel that we have not been approached as much as has been talked about in the past with regard to trying to bring it to us ahead of time on this document.

And now we're going to have to really dive in and put a lot of time into this to try to make sure that the soil scientists, the rare plants concerns, the potential damage to our fish food run, right, our fall run of salmon. The Sacramento River is one of only five rivers in the world that has four runs of Shinook

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	18:59:14	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

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

So I really want to just -- with regard to Sites right now, it's exciting. I personally -- and with our board, we've looked at the other -- you know, all 12 projects.

This has significant potential impacts. It also has significant potential benefit to cold water pool, to other things. We're discussed that in partnership and in meetings over years.

And so right now, we really just want to get down to the brass tacks, be able to see how things are really going to work and get those details. Because it's hard to want to buy a truck if you can't see how it runs. They can show you the engine. But if it's not in the truck, and you can't start it, that's a truck with an engine out here.

So trying to put everything into this project, understand how it's going to work, what potential water quality concerns are, and how it's going to benefit the state for those public dollars that will go into this project.

We look forward to submitting written comments and continuing to work with the JPA and the 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,