

SITES  
RESERVOIR  
PROJECT

**CERTIFIED  
ORIGINAL**

**RDEIR/SDEIS  
VIRTUAL  
PUBLIC MEETING**

Thursday, December 16, 2021

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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 Thursday, December 16, 2021 at 9 a.m.  
2 Maxwell, California 95955

3 --oOo--

4  
5 SARA KATZ:

6 Good morning. The public meeting for  
7 the Sites Reservoir Revised Draft Environmental  
8 Impact Report/Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact  
9 Statement will begin in three minutes. Thank you.

10 Good morning. Welcome to the public meeting  
11 for the Sites Reservoir Revised Draft Environmental  
12 Impact Report/Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact  
13 Statement. My name is Sara Katz, and I will serve as  
14 the meeting moderator today.

15 A Revised Draft Enviromental Impact  
16 Report/Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement  
17 is often referred to by its acronym, RDEIR/SDEIS, so you  
18 may hear us using these terms today, or perhaps Revised  
19 Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS throughout today's  
20 meeting.

21 The purpose of this meeting is to provide an  
22 overview of the project and the draft environmental  
23 analysis, as well as to answer questions and accept  
24 official public comments on the Revised Draft  
25 EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS.

1 I will provide an overview of the meeting  
2 agenda briefly now, before I introduce the Sites Project  
3 Authority and Bureau of Reclamation representatives.

4 First up will be the project presentation. At  
5 the end of the presentation, we will review how to  
6 participate in this meeting. We will have a question  
7 and answer session, followed by formal public comment.  
8 The public meeting will then conclude.

9 A few housekeeping items first. For your  
10 awareness, the meeting is being recorded so we can post  
11 the meeting presentation on our Sites project website  
12 for those who are unable to join.

13 Closed captioning is also available during  
14 this meeting. If it doesn't automatically appear, you  
15 can click the CC icon, which is likely at the bottom of  
16 your screen.

17 As we are in an online environment, we may  
18 experience glitches or temporary issues. Please bear  
19 with us as we work through any unforeseen technical  
20 issues as swiftly as possible.

21 And, finally, we ask that you hold all of your  
22 questions until the end of the project presentation.  
23 Once the presentation concludes, we will begin with the  
24 question and answer session.

25 I'd now like to announce our Sites

1 Environmental Planning and Permitting Manager, Ali  
2 Forsythe, who will begin delivering the project  
3 presentation. We also have a representative from the  
4 Bureau of Reclamation, Vanessa King.

5 Thank you.

6 ALI FORSYTHE: Thank you, Sara. As Sara  
7 mentioned, I'm Ali Forsythe. I lead the Environmental  
8 Planning and Permitting efforts for the Sites Authority.  
9 I'll lead us through about a 30-minute presentation  
10 before we get into the question and answer session. We  
11 will start out with an overview of the Sites Reservoir  
12 Project. I'll then provide an overview of the  
13 California Environmental Quality Act and the National  
14 Environmental Policy Act requirements, and I'll finish  
15 out the presentation with an overview of the Revised  
16 Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS, including an overview  
17 of the findings in the document and how to provide  
18 comments.

19 As Sara mentioned, we'll have a question and  
20 answer session at the end of the presentation, so you  
21 can provide your questions in the question and answer  
22 box. We will answer these at the end of the  
23 presentation.

24 I suspect most of you on this call know this,  
25 but I wanted to make sure that we have a high level

1 overview of what Sites Reservoir is. Sites is a  
2 proposed off-stream reservoir west of the community of  
3 Maxwell, California, in the Sacramento Valley. Being  
4 off-stream, the reservoir would impound two local,  
5 intermittent creeks, but would not dam a major river or  
6 block salmon migration.

7 Sites would be filled with water diverted from  
8 the Sacramento River at the existing Red Bluff Pumping  
9 Plant and Hamilton City Pump Stations during high flow  
10 conditions. You can see the locations of these two  
11 facilities at the top of the map on your screen. This  
12 water would be conveyed to the new Sites Reservoir using  
13 the existing Tehama Colusa Canal and GCID main canal.  
14 Water would be stored in the new reservoir for later use  
15 by farms, cities, and the environment.

16 Sites is being funded by a diverse group, the  
17 State, through Proposition 1, the Federal government,  
18 along with public water agencies located throughout the  
19 State. These funding organizations and the people of  
20 the State of California would receive the water supply  
21 benefits that result from the project, which includes  
22 environmental, recreation, and flood control benefits  
23 also.

24 From the back to back record breaking dry  
25 years of 2014 and '15 to the nearly record-breaking wet

1 year of 2017, we can all see the huge variability in our  
2 climate in California. And as the science indicates  
3 that this variability is going to continue into the  
4 future. Sites is one tool in what should be a vast  
5 toolbox of measures and actions to help restore  
6 flexibility, reliability, and the resiliency to our  
7 State, in the face of climate change.

8 Sites Reservoir would be built, owned, and  
9 operated by the Sites Project Authority. And Sites  
10 Reservoir isn't new. It's been discussed for many  
11 years, originally as a State or Federally-owned  
12 reservoir, and now lead by the Sites Project Authority.  
13 Back in 2017, the Authority and Reclamation released a  
14 Draft EIR/EIS for the project. The project envisioned  
15 in the 2017 document was larger, had a greater diversion  
16 capacity, including another intake on the Sacramento  
17 River at Delevan, along with a large hydroelectric  
18 pump-back generation facility. This was essentially the  
19 project formulated by the State and Federal government  
20 in the previous decade.

21 Starting in 2019 and continuing into 2020, the  
22 Authority made a number of refinements to the project.  
23 These were completed to reduce the cost of the project,  
24 but also to reduce the environmental effects. And we  
25 heard you. A number of these refinements were also made

1 in response to the comments received from the 2017  
2 document, along with discussions with tribal  
3 governments, non-governmental organizations, and State  
4 and Federal regulatory agencies.

5 In this timeframe, the Authority considered 16  
6 new and modified configurations to the project. These  
7 modifications included changes in facility footprints,  
8 such as making the reservoir smaller, changes in  
9 operational criteria, which we'll discuss on a later  
10 slide, changes in conveyance and removal of the Delevan  
11 pipeline, which reduced the overall project's ability to  
12 divert water off the Sacramento River from about 6,000  
13 cubic feet per second to 3900 cubic feet per second, or  
14 really by about a third. Along with the reliance on  
15 existing local infrastructure and the addition of the  
16 Dunnigan pipeline and use of the Colusa Basin Drain for  
17 releases from the reservoir. The pump generation  
18 facility was also removed from the project.

19 The changes to the project in the 2019/2020  
20 timeframe resulted in a new or different project  
21 footprint and new or different project operations.  
22 Really, new alternatives to the project. As these  
23 alternatives were not previously analyzed in the 2017  
24 document, the Authority and Reclamation decided to  
25 revise, supplement, and recirculate the previously



1 released EIR/EIS.

2 Preparation of this Revised Draft  
3 EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS allows the Authority and  
4 Reclamation the ability to address the changes made in  
5 the project, along with updating things in the 2017  
6 document that have also changed, such as the modeling  
7 baseline, the existing condition, and some of our  
8 cumulative projects. In making these updates, the  
9 Authority and Reclamation also took into consideration  
10 the comments received on the 2017 document.

11 There are three action alternatives considered  
12 in the Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS. This  
13 table provides a summary of them, and we'll walk through  
14 the footprint components for each in the next few  
15 slides.

16 The alternatives vary based on a few key  
17 factors. From the local community perspective, there  
18 are no -- there are different reservoir sizes, with  
19 Alternative 1 and 3 having a 1.5 million acre foot  
20 reservoir. This would result in about 13,000 acre or 20  
21 square mile reservoir footprint. And Alternative 2  
22 would be slightly smaller at 1.3 million acre feet, with  
23 about a 12,000 acre or 19 square mile footprint. In  
24 addition, and from the local community perspective, the  
25 alternatives vary based on the route to the west side of

1 the reservoir, with Alternative 1 and 3 having a bridge  
2 across the reservoir, and Alternative 2 with a road  
3 around the southern end.

4 Alternatives also vary based on where water is  
5 released from the reservoir back into the Sacramento  
6 River. Alternatives 1 and 3 release water through the  
7 Dunnigan pipeline to the Colusa Basin Drain, which flows  
8 back into the Sacramento River at Knights Landing. And  
9 Alternative 2 extends that Dunnigan Pipeline all the way  
10 out to the Sacramento River and releases water back  
11 directly into the river.

12 All alternatives include possible operational  
13 exchanges with Reclamation, really to benefit the cold  
14 water pool in Shasta and salmonids in the upper  
15 Sacramento River system. But the alternatives vary  
16 based on how much Reclamation would invest in the  
17 project. Alternative 1 includes a range of no  
18 investment, up to seven percent. Alternative 2 includes  
19 no investment by Reclamation. And Alternative 3  
20 includes up to 25 percent investment by Reclamation in  
21 the project.

22 The document also includes a no action  
23 alternative, or what would happen if the project were  
24 not built.

25 This slide is a map from both the Executive

1 Summary and Project description chapters, and shows the  
2 project facilities in the area of the footprint for  
3 Alternative 1 and 3.

4 Water would be diverted for the project at the  
5 existing Red Bluff Pumping Plant and Hamilton City Pump  
6 Station during high flow conditions. This water would  
7 be conveyed to the new Sites Reservoir using the  
8 existing Tehama Colusa Canal and GCID main canal. Most  
9 of the -- these facilities are off your map, but you can  
10 see the two existing canals in yellow, running north to  
11 south on this map. Water would be pumped up into the  
12 new reservoir, which would be 1.5 million acre feet,  
13 from either the existing Funks Reservoir or the new  
14 Terminal Regulating Reservoir East. This would require  
15 two new pump generating plants, associated pipelines,  
16 and power facilities.

17 In these two alternatives, you can see the  
18 bridge across the reservoir to continue to connect the  
19 communities of Maxwell and Lodoga to the west, shown  
20 here in pink. There are two main dams on Funks and  
21 Stone Corral Creeks and a number of saddle dams and  
22 dikes in the northern end of the reservoir.

23 There would also be a number of road  
24 improvements and realignments, both for construction  
25 access and also to ensure local landowners in the area

1 can continue to access their properties.

2 All of the alternatives include three new  
3 recreation areas, two shown in green on this map  
4 adjacent to the reservoir footprint, and a boat ramp, a  
5 day use facility on the west end of the reservoir.

6 This map shows the release facilities for  
7 Alternatives 1 and 3. Water would come down the Tehama  
8 Colusa Canal, seen there in yellow on the left-hand side  
9 of the map, and would be released into the Dunnigan  
10 pipeline, shown in pink. The Dunnigan pipeline would  
11 cross Interstate 5 and the Richie Brothers Auction Yard  
12 and then terminate over at the Colusa Basin Drain.

13 Alternative 2 includes many of the same  
14 facilities as Alternatives 1 and 3. However, the  
15 location of the Terminal Regulating Reservoir is a  
16 little different in Alternative 2. It's located to the  
17 west of the GCID main canal. Also notable is the  
18 extension of Huffmaster Road in the south -- into the  
19 south road, to provide access from Maxwell over to  
20 Lodoga. There would be no bridge in Alternative 2.

21 The main dams would be a little smaller in  
22 this alternative, as the reservoir is a little smaller,  
23 and there would be fewer saddle dams and dikes in the  
24 northern end of the reservoir.

25 This map shows the release facilities for

1 Alternative 2. Similar -- similar to the other  
2 alternatives, water would come down the Tehama Colusa --  
3 oh, excuse me -- Tehama Colusa Canal, seen there in  
4 yellow, and be released into the Dunnigan Pipeline, also  
5 shown in yellow on this map. But in this alternative,  
6 the Dunnigan Pipeline would extend all the way over to  
7 the Sacramento River. There would be the ability to  
8 release some water into the Colusa Basin Drain for  
9 environmental purposes, but most of the releases would  
10 be direct to the Sacramento River.

11 As I mentioned on the maps, all of the  
12 alternatives include three new recreation areas. These  
13 would include camp -- camp sites, picnic sites, hiking  
14 trails, and boat launch facilities. The Authority  
15 intends to phase the approach to building these  
16 recreation areas to match the interest.

17 And all of the alternatives would provide  
18 flood control benefits to Maxwell and the adjacent  
19 agricultural areas, including reducing flooding of  
20 Interstate 5 in a 100-year flood event. This, of  
21 course, is important to the local community and the  
22 local economy, but also important regionally and  
23 state-wide to reduce flooding of Interstate 5, a major  
24 thoroughfare for our state.

25 There is a tremendous effort underway to

1 evaluate and develop the project. We are currently  
2 targeting the end of next year to complete the  
3 environment review process. Our permitting and water  
4 right efforts are underway and we expect to complete our  
5 key permits in mid-2023.

6           There is also quite an engineering design  
7 effort for a project of this magnitude, with involvement  
8 and approval by the Division of Safety of Dams. We  
9 expect to complete all engineering design efforts in  
10 late 2025.

11           Construction would start in mid-2024 and would  
12 be sequenced over time. We'd likely build roads and the  
13 bridge, if that is selected first, both to get  
14 construction equipment to the site, but also because we  
15 need to keep a route from Maxwell over to Lodoga open  
16 during construction. Things like main dams, saddle  
17 dams, and dikes would likely follow once the roads were  
18 in place to access construction locations. And things  
19 like the Terminal Regulating Reservoir and pipelines,  
20 including the Dunnigan Pipeline, would follow later in  
21 the construction period.

22           So some folks may be wondering why we're  
23 preparing this Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS.  
24 We are doing this to comply with the California  
25 Environmental Quality Act, generally abbreviated as

1 CEQA, and the National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA.  
2 CEQA is a state law and applies to all discretionary  
3 approvals by state agencies. Thus, the Authority has to  
4 comply with CEQA prior to moving forward with the  
5 project.

6 And NEPA is a federal law, and applies to all  
7 major federal undertakings. Thus, Reclamation has to  
8 comply with NEPA, prior to deciding to invest in the  
9 project or to issue approvals for the project.

10 Both CEQA and NEPA require that the agencies  
11 analyze the environmental effects of actions that they  
12 are planning to undertake to inform decision makers and  
13 the public of the effects of these actions. They both  
14 foster informed, transparent decision-making, and  
15 encourage public participation in the decision-making  
16 process.

17 An EIR is required under CEQA and an EIS is  
18 required under NEPA when there will be one or more  
19 significant or adverse impacts on the environment. The  
20 EIR/EIS discloses the environmental effects of a  
21 project, identifies possible ways to minimize those  
22 effects, and describes reasonable alternatives to the  
23 project.

24 The Authority is the lead agency for the EIR  
25 under CEQA, as the Authority would decide whether to

1 build and operate the project. And Reclamation is the  
2 lead agency for the EIS under NEPA, as Reclamation would  
3 decide whether to provide funding for the project and  
4 will decide whether to issue project agreements, such as  
5 a land lease and a water wheeling agreement, called a  
6 Warren Act Contract under Reclamation law.

7           The EIR/EIS process began back in 2001 when  
8 Reclamation and the California Department of Water  
9 Resources issued a Notice of Intent and Notice of  
10 Preparation, respectively, for the project. The  
11 Authority issued a second Notice of Preparation in 2017  
12 when we took over the lead agency role from DWR.

13           We are now at that green line you see on this  
14 slide. The public agency -- public and agency review of  
15 the Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS. Your  
16 comments are very important to us and very important to  
17 the process. They help us continue to refine the  
18 project to reduce environmental effects.

19           After the public review timeframe ends, the  
20 Authority and Reclamation will prepare the final  
21 EIR/EIS, which will include revisions to the project,  
22 based on comments received.

23           The final document will also include responses  
24 to the comments received. After the -- excuse me.  
25 After the final EIR/EIS is released, the Authority and



1 Reclamation, separately, will decide whether to carry  
2 out their respective portions of the project and  
3 complete the associated agency decision documents and  
4 noticing.

5           The Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS  
6 is quite an extensive document. Chapters 1 through 4  
7 include the introductory materials, the project  
8 description, and an overview of the analysis. They are  
9 really the foundational chapters that set up the rest of  
10 the document.

11           The document includes an analysis of  
12 environmental resources in 26 chapters and 73  
13 corresponding appendices. And the last few chapters  
14 include analyses like cumulative growth inducement and  
15 other required sections.

16           When preparing an EIR or EIS, the lead agency  
17 must consider both the direct and indirect effects of a  
18 project. Impacts are determined by comparing to  
19 baseline physical conditions. What we call the baseline  
20 are existing conditions in the case of CEQA, and the No  
21 Action Alternative in the case of NEPA.

22           CEQA and NEPA use slightly different  
23 terminology when assessing impacts, and this terminology  
24 is shown on this slide in front of you.

25           There were nine resource areas -- really

1 chapters in the document, that had either no effect, no  
2 adverse effect, or less than significant impacts for the  
3 entire area -- for the entire chapter -- really for all  
4 of the components analyzed within that chapter. These  
5 include fluvial geomorphology, ground water, minerals,  
6 recreation, energy, noise, population and housing,  
7 public services, and public health.

8           There were three resource areas that had  
9 impacts that required mitigation, but the resulting  
10 impacts -- the impact after the mitigation was applied  
11 were less than significant or not adverse. These  
12 include aquatic biological resources, which is really  
13 our fisheries chapter, greenhouse gas emissions, and  
14 Indian trust assets.

15           And, finally, there were a number of resource  
16 areas with at least one impact in the chapter would be  
17 significant and unavoidable or adverse and substantial.  
18 Keep in mind that it's not that every impact in these  
19 chapters were substantial, but at least one was. These  
20 are listed on your screen and include surface water  
21 quality, vegetation and wetland resources, wildlife  
22 resources, geology and soils, land use, agriculture,  
23 traffic, air quality, cultural resources, tribal  
24 cultural resources, visual, environmental justice and  
25 socioeconomics. Many of the individual impacts that

1 were substantial in these chapters are related to  
2 construction of the project.

3 I'd now like to highlight a few areas and  
4 chapters that we know are of substantial interest. The  
5 first is water quality. And there's quite a bit on this  
6 slide, so let's walk through this.

7 For water quality, we analyzed the quality of  
8 inflow or source water, including Sacramento River water  
9 and water from the local creeks, Funks and Stone Corral  
10 Creeks. We also took a look at in-reservoir processes,  
11 and then analyzed release water quality to different  
12 locations downstream of the reservoir. We completed  
13 this analyses for metals, pesticides, and temperature,  
14 and also looked at things like the potential for harmful  
15 algal blooms and invasive aquatic vegetation.

16 Based on this analysis, we found that there  
17 would be no substantial increase in salinity and  
18 temperature in or downstream of the reservoir. This  
19 includes releases to the Sacramento River and no  
20 violation of water quality objectives. We also found  
21 that the level of nutrients, organic carbon, and  
22 dissolved oxygen in releases would not violate water  
23 quality standards. Harmful algal blooms have been in  
24 the news quite a bit this past year, and we do expect to  
25 have these at sites. The mechanism for what drives

1 these is really not well understood at this time.

2 We would address these through monitoring and  
3 public notification, similar to how they're addressed at  
4 numerous reservoirs throughout our State.

5 The project may also result in the potential  
6 for elevated concentrations of some metals and  
7 pesticides in the Yolo Bypass. Really, as a result of  
8 moving water from the Colusa Basin Drain down into the  
9 Yolo Bypass. We've included a monitoring program, and  
10 would stop delivering water into the Yolo Bypass if  
11 elevated concentrations and metals and pesticides are  
12 projected to occur.

13 The project may also result in the potential  
14 for elevated concentrations of some metals in Stone  
15 Corral Creek, downstream of the reservoir, really, due  
16 to the releases -- the depth of the releases in -- into  
17 this creek. We believe we can address this in the final  
18 design process.

19 We also found the potential for substantial  
20 increase in methylmercury concentration downstream of  
21 the reservoir, primarily during the initial filling of  
22 the reservoir, and for up to 10 years afterwards. We  
23 have a number of measures in the document to reduce the  
24 potential for methylization of mercury in the reservoir,  
25 but conservatively call this impact substantial and

1 adverse.

2           The second area I'd like to highlight is  
3 fisheries, and I have focused this slide on diversion  
4 criteria and effects to salmon and steelhead. The  
5 fisheries chapter covers a number of species, but I'm  
6 only focused here on salmonids, meaning the fish in the  
7 salmon family.

8           In consideration of the comments on the 2017  
9 document, and discussion with our fisheries resource  
10 agencies, the Authority made a number of changes to the  
11 project diversion criteria since the 2017 document. The  
12 revised diversion criteria are reflected in the project  
13 description chapter, which is chapter 2, and include  
14 criteria for a Wilkins Slough flow bypass, pulse flow  
15 protection, and protection of the Fremont Weir Notch  
16 Project. The project would also only divert water when  
17 the Sacramento River is not fully appropriated, which is  
18 September 1st to June 15, and when the Delta is in  
19 "excess conditions," as determined by Reclamation and  
20 DWR.

21           And I want to share that we're not saying that  
22 there is excess water or water is being wasted to the  
23 ocean when we say "excess conditions." The water -- we  
24 understand that the water in our river systems serve  
25 important ecological and water supply value for our

1 State. Excess conditions is a term of art, so to speak,  
2 that identifies when there is water in the system in  
3 excess of the needs of the State water project and the  
4 Central Valley project.

5 And, finally, the project would only divert  
6 water when there are flows available above those needed  
7 to meet applicable laws, regulations, biological  
8 opinions, incident take permits, and court orders in  
9 place at the time of diversion. These diversion  
10 criteria are quite a bit more protective and restrictive  
11 than the criteria used in the 2017 Draft EIR/EIS,  
12 really, to avoid and reduce the effects to the  
13 fisheries.

14 In the Aquatic Resource Chapter, chapter 11,  
15 which is our fisheries chapter, we have identified the  
16 potential for significant operational effects to  
17 salmonids, including steelhead. Although the diversion  
18 criteria are quite a bit more protective, we've included  
19 a mitigation measure to further those protections. That  
20 measure would require that the project diversions from  
21 the Sacramento River in March through May of all water  
22 year types would not occur if flows in the river are or  
23 would be below 10,700 cubic feet per second, as measured  
24 at Wilkins Slough. This mitigation measure effectively  
25 modifies the project description in chapter 2 and makes

1 the project diversion criteria even more protective of  
2 fish.

3 There have been a number of concerns related  
4 to the project's potential effects to the Trinity River.  
5 The project would not affect the Trinity River system.

6 It would not affect or change the operations  
7 of the Central Valley Project, Trinity River Division  
8 facilities, including those facilities in Clear -- Clear  
9 Creek. Reclamation would continue to operate consistent  
10 with all applicable statutory, legal, and contractual  
11 obligations, including but not limited to the Trinity  
12 River Record of Decision, the 2017 Record of Decision  
13 for the Long-Term Plan for the Lower Klamath River, and  
14 the provisions of the Trinity River Division, Central  
15 Valley Project Act of 1955. The project would not  
16 result in changes to any of the statutory, legal, and  
17 contractual obligations that govern operations of the  
18 Trinity River, and, thus, would not affect the Trinity  
19 River system.

20 And the last area I want to highlight for you  
21 is our efforts to reach out to tribes. The Authority,  
22 as the State Agency, is responsible for compliance with  
23 Assembly Bill 52 requirements, commonly called AB52. As  
24 part of this effort, the Authority reached out to seven  
25 tribes in 2020. These seven tribes are also those that

1 are traditionally or culturally affiliated with lands in  
2 the project footprint. We sent hard copy letters to  
3 these tribes, emailed them, and followed up with phone  
4 calls. Two tribes responded, and we are in on-going  
5 consultation with these two tribes.

6           Although the project's changes in flows in the  
7 Sacramento and Feather Rivers are minor, we reached out  
8 to seven additional tribes this year. These seven  
9 tribes are those that are traditionally or culturally  
10 affiliated with locations where the project operations  
11 have the potential to change flows in rivers. We sent  
12 hard copy letters to these tribes, emailed them, and  
13 then also followed up with phone calls. To date, none  
14 of these tribes have responded.

15           These outreach efforts are detailed in chapter  
16 23 of the Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS. The  
17 Authority continues in AB52 consultation with the true  
18 -- two tribes -- excuse me -- that have responded.

19 Based on previous surveys, we know that there are Native  
20 American human remains and other tribal resources in the  
21 footprint of the reservoir. The Authority is working  
22 closely with the tribes that have historically inhabited  
23 the reservoir footprint to address impacts to these  
24 resources and ensure that Native American human remains  
25 are addressed consistent with the tribes requests.



1 Reclamation as the Federal Agency is  
2 responsible for compliance with the National Historic  
3 Preservation Act, typically called Section 106  
4 compliance. This year, Reclamation reached out to nine  
5 tribes. Very recently, one tribe has responded. But  
6 Reclamation has not received responses from the other  
7 eight tribes. Reclamation plans to reach out to those  
8 same tribes again in the coming year. As described in  
9 chapter 29 of the Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft  
10 EIS, the project does not result in -- and it does not  
11 occur in an area that would affect Indian hunting or  
12 water rights, nor is the project on Indian trust lands.

13 We want to hear from you. Your comments are  
14 important to us and important to the process. Your  
15 comments really help us continue to refine the project  
16 and make adjustments to continue to reduce environmental  
17 effects. Comments are best when they are focused on a  
18 substantive content of the document and comments should  
19 be limited to the environmental analysis in the Revised  
20 Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS. All comments on the  
21 document must be postmarked or received by 5 p.m.,  
22 Pacific Standard Time on January 11th, 2022. The  
23 Authority and Reclamation will respond to all  
24 substantive comments received in the comment period in  
25 the final EIR/EIS.

1           And as a reminder on how to submit those  
2    comments, we'll be taking verbal comments after our  
3    question and answer session later this morning. You can  
4    also submit written comments via email to  
5    EIR-EIS-comments@sitesproject.org or via mail, to either  
6    the Authority at P.O. Box 517, Maxwell, California  
7    95955, or to Reclamation at 2800 Cottage Way, Suite  
8    W-2830, Sacramento, California 95825. And a reminder  
9    that all comments must be mailed or postmarked by  
10   January 11th, 2022.

11           This concludes our presentation portion of the  
12   meeting, and I'd like to hand this back to Sara to lead  
13   us through the question and answer session.

14           SARA KATZ: Thank you, Ali.

15           We will now begin the question and answer  
16   session. This is your opportunity to get your questions  
17   about the project and the Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental  
18   Draft EIS answered. Thirty minutes have been allotted  
19   for answering questions. The last hour of the meeting  
20   is exclusively for accepting verbal public comments on  
21   the Draft Environmental document. Please hold on  
22   providing comments on the Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental  
23   Draft EIS until the question and answer session has  
24   concluded. We will then begin accepting verbal comments  
25   on the environmental document at 10:00 a.m. A court

1 reporter is preparing a transcript to assist us in  
2 ensuring we have captured all comments during the formal  
3 public comment portion of the meeting.

4 If you would like to ask a question, please  
5 raise your hand to ask it verbally, or type your  
6 question in the Q&A box. My colleague, Sarah Rossetto,  
7 will be monitoring the Q&A box and reading questions out  
8 loud.

9 From your computer, or on your Zoom App,  
10 please click "raise hand." From your phone, dial star 9  
11 to raise your hand. Once your name or the last few  
12 digits of your phone number has been called as the next  
13 speaker, we will allow you to unmute yourself and ask  
14 your question. At that time, you will receive a notice  
15 asking you to please unmute.

16 For those online, just click on the "unmute"  
17 button and you will be able to speak. For those on your  
18 phone, unmute your phone and dial star 6 to speak.

19 Questions will be answered in the order  
20 received. Repeat questions will be consolidated.

21 Currently, I don't see any hands raised or  
22 asking any questions, but I do know that we had some  
23 questions come in in advance, so we can certainly start  
24 off with those.

25 Sarah Rossetto, could you please ask the first

1 question?

2 SARAH ROSSETTO: Yes. The first question we  
3 received in advance was, I submitted comments on the  
4 2017 Draft EIR/EIS. How will those comments be  
5 addressed?

6 ALI FORSYTHE: That's a great question. And  
7 it's important that folks realize that those comments  
8 submitted on the 2017 Draft EIR/EIS will not be  
9 specifically addressed in the final documents.  
10 Technically, under CEQA, we are not required to do that,  
11 so we encourage folks that have submitted comments on  
12 the 2017 document to go back through those comments,  
13 really look at what is applicable for today and for  
14 today's project, and then resubmit those comments that  
15 are applicable for today's analysis.

16 Under NEPA, we will be responding to those  
17 2017 comments in an appendix to the document. But we do  
18 encourage you to really comb through those comments,  
19 look through at -- at what's applicable to today's  
20 project, and resubmit those.

21 SARA KATZ: Terrific. Sarah, the next  
22 question that's been submitted?

23 SARAH ROSSETTO: Yes. The second question is,  
24 is the project related or connected to the Delta Tunnel  
25 Project?

1           ALI FORSYTHE: That's a very great question.  
2     It is not connected to the Delta Tunnels Project. We --  
3     as shown in the environmental documents, the Revised  
4     Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS, we include the Delta  
5     Tunnels Project as a cumulative project, just  
6     recognizing that it's out there. It's another project  
7     in the system, and it fits within the CEQA and NEPA  
8     criteria for cumulative. So it's analyzed from a  
9     cumulative perspective, really trying to look at what  
10    happens if both projects were built to, say, air  
11    quality, to the need for construction equipment and  
12    those types of things.

13           But the project, itself, Sites Reservoir  
14    Project, can operate completely independently from the  
15    Delta Tunnels Project, and I think the modeling that  
16    we've done for our -- for this Revised Draft  
17    EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS demonstrates that.

18           SARA KATZ: Thank you, Ali.

19           And, again, I would encourage anyone who is  
20    participating virtually today to consider any questions  
21    you'd like to ask. We have a robust lineup of subject  
22    matter experts that are here and are looking forward to  
23    having those discussions.

24           I do see a hand raised here, and the -- it's  
25    from a phone, and the last four digits are 8650. If you

1 could please unmute yourself, state your name and if you  
2 represent an organization, and ask your question.

3 JOHN MCMANUS: Yeah. Good morning. This is  
4 John McManus with the Golden State Salmon Association.  
5 Curious as to how you arrived at the 10,700 cubic feet  
6 per second bypass flow at Wilkins Slough. Appreciate  
7 that new standard, but since our understanding is the  
8 best available science shows that you need that similar  
9 bypass flow at any diversion point, why did you -- how  
10 did you narrow it down just to Wilkins Slough instead of  
11 also up near the intake of the Glenn Colusa Irrigation  
12 Canal?

13 I'll stop there. Thank you.

14 ALI FORSYTHE: That's a great question.  
15 Thanks, John, for that.

16 So the 10,700 CFS bypass flow at Wilkins  
17 Slough comes from a recent study done by Chelleh  
18 Mitchell, who is a -- a -- a researcher with the Science  
19 Center for the National Marine Fisheries Service. That  
20 study was published earlier this year, and really looks  
21 at the survival of juvenile salmonid coming down the  
22 Sacramento River, based on a variety of -- of water year  
23 types. And 10,700 CFS was really the -- I'll say  
24 breakpoint to where survival of juvenile salmonids  
25 increased substantially as they migrated down the

1 Sacramento River. And that study was based, really, on  
2 that 10,700 CFS at Wilkins Slough. It was published  
3 earlier this year.

4 We have Mike Hendrick on the phone with us  
5 today too, who's a fisheries biologist. Mike, anything  
6 to add on that study or the findings out of it?

7 MIKE HENDRICK: No. You did a good -- good  
8 job of summarizing that. But one point I'd -- I'd like  
9 to make is it -- more flow doesn't necessarily equate to  
10 better survival of all locations. So this study, if you  
11 take a look at it, also looked at in -- higher flow  
12 levels. I -- I don't know the exact CFS, but once you  
13 got to critical threshold, much above 10,700 -- 700  
14 survivability actually went down. So like Ali  
15 mentioned, the 10,700 Wilkins Slough seemed to be sort  
16 of the sweet spot for survival.

17 ALI FORSYTHE: Thank you, Mike.

18 JOHN MCMANUS: Can you guys still hear me?

19 MIKE HENDRICK: Yes.

20 ALI FORSYTHE: Yes.

21 JOHN MCMANUS: It was Chelleh's study that I was  
22 alluding to in my comment. And my understanding of that  
23 is that Chelleh found you needed that 10,700 at any intake  
24 point for this project. That -- that's why I asked the  
25 question. Why did you just narrow it down to Wilkins

1 Slough, instead of at the other points, upstream, where  
2 the intakes will be?

3 ALI FORSYTHE: Yeah. Chelleh Mitchell study  
4 was not exclusive to the Sites Project or analyzing  
5 effects of the Sites Project. It looked at that 10,700  
6 at Wilkins Slough specifically. And so it's -- it's --  
7 I think if we -- we -- we'll take a second look at that  
8 study, but our understanding of it, and it -- actually  
9 talking with NMFS and Chelleh Mitchell was  
10 that it -- it really focused on those flows at Wilkins  
11 Slough, specifically.

12 SARA KATZ: Thank you. If we don't have any  
13 other hands raised at this moment, Sarah, could you take  
14 a call from the Q&A box?

15 SARAH ROSSETTO: Sure. We have four open  
16 questions in the Q&A box, and then I see one hand  
17 raised, so we'll go to the hand after we answer a couple  
18 of related questions in the Q&A box. We have one -- two  
19 related to, I guess, regional impacts.

20 One, what impact on regional groundwater is  
21 anticipated? And then another question, what impacts do  
22 you expect on the public water supply systems for  
23 Maxwell, Arbuckle, and the City of Williams?

24 ALI FORSYTHE: Those are great questions.  
25 I'll take the regional groundwater one first, and then



1 we'll go into the impact on the water supply systems.  
2 So, from a regional groundwater perspective, we are  
3 going to need -- and will likely end up using some  
4 groundwater for construction of the project to help us  
5 with dust suppression and a number of other things as we  
6 build the project. But in the long run, we won't be  
7 using groundwater extensively. We may use it for our  
8 own ability, but that's gonna be a pretty small use in  
9 terms of -- of drawing from the groundwater system. So  
10 we will have a short-term construction effect that we  
11 think is less than significant, not a substantial use in  
12 the long run. We'll have very little effect on the  
13 regional groundwater system. We may actually benefit  
14 the groundwater system in the long run as seepage comes  
15 out of the reservoir and -- and helps to recharge that  
16 really deep groundwater, strata quite a bit down, but  
17 that's really, I think, yet to be seen. We would need  
18 to build the reservoir and see how that comes together.

19           The second question is, what impacts to the  
20 public water agencies, and the -- in the local area, and  
21 we don't see any impacts to the public water agencies or  
22 public water systems. Again, the reservoir is -- is  
23 quite a bit ways away from any of those public water  
24 systems. We're not looking to tap into those for our  
25 own needs, in terms of, like, our own end building, and

1 those types of things are in the recreation areas. So  
2 we don't see any -- any substantial effects or any big  
3 changes for those public -- local public water service  
4 systems.

5 SARA KATZ: Thank you, Ali. Let's go ahead  
6 and take the next caller, Ron Stork with Friends of the  
7 River.

8 Ron, if you could unmute yourself.

9 RON STORK: Good morning. Yesterday we saw  
10 the Commission's treatment of -- of feasibility, and for  
11 that matter, a peak at Reclamation's treatment of  
12 feasibility as well. And -- and I would say that those  
13 standards are relatively low. What I'm curious about  
14 is -- is whether or not the EIR, or in what document  
15 will there be a -- a discussion about the nature of  
16 project financing? That is, how income is to be  
17 generated. You know, what are the -- kind of the  
18 minimum amounts of -- of income necessary to meet  
19 project costs, including repayment of capital and  
20 interest? And -- and I suspect you're gonna tell me  
21 that the EIR doesn't deal with that issue, but the  
22 question will be, you know, what -- will there be a  
23 feasibility document that deals with that issue, either  
24 from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation or from the  
25 Authority?

1                   ALI FORSYTHE: Ron, you know me way too well.  
2 My initial thought was, oh, goodness, this is outside of  
3 the environmental infirmity role. I don't know. But  
4 it's a -- it's a fabulous question, because it's  
5 important for the project. We've got to be permitable,  
6 which is sort of my -- my focus area, but we've also got  
7 to be constructible. And we've got to be affordable.  
8 We've got to be able to pull -- pull the money together  
9 and pull the finances together for the project.

10                   So, it -- it is outside of the EIR/EIS  
11 process, but it is something that is absolutely critical  
12 to kind of that three-legged stool of the project to  
13 make it -- make it all work. And the -- the project is  
14 developing a finance plan, and I don't have a ton of  
15 specifics on that for you right now, just because it's  
16 kind of been out of my -- my very specific focused area,  
17 but I'd be happy to circle back with you, Ron, on the  
18 finance plan. I'm not sure -- we've got Henry on the  
19 phone, who has been leading our, kind of, construction  
20 side of things, and there was a little bit of finance  
21 work, I think, done for the Water Commission. But I do  
22 believe that the finance plan kind of falls in that  
23 third leg of this stool, and we don't have anybody on  
24 the phone with us today to -- to talk about that.

25                   But I can -- I can get more details and we can

1 circle back with you on that one, Ron. I believe there  
2 is some information on our website on that too -- in  
3 some of our board packets.

4 SARA KATZ: The next person with their hand  
5 raised is Morning Star Gali. And so if you could please  
6 unmute yourself, and ask your question.

7 MORNING STAR GALI: Good morning. My name is  
8 Morning Star Gali with Save California Salmon. I serve  
9 as the Tribal Water Organizer for SCS. I'm very  
10 concerned of the lack of proper consultation with tribes  
11 that will be affected within the area. Sites will flood  
12 the tribal cemeteries and ceremonial sites and three  
13 creeks and will further degrade salmon runs, harming an  
14 important food source. And I would like to know what is  
15 being done in -- in terms of consultation efforts. What  
16 I am hearing directly from tribal representatives is  
17 that, you know, there is just a -- a checking of -- of  
18 the box, and -- and that this project is failing to  
19 properly consult with tribes that are -- are local.

20 ALI FORSYTHE: Sure.

21 SARA KATZ: So, Morning Star Gali, is there a  
22 specific question in there?

23 MORNING STAR GALI: Yes. What are the  
24 consultation efforts that are happening directly with  
25 tribes?

1                   SARA KATZ: Thank you.

2                   ALI FORSYTHE: Sure. Thank you. I can answer  
3 this.

4                   So we did talk about this in the presentation.  
5 The Authority, both in 2020 and in 2021, has reached out  
6 to 14 tribes under AB52, Assembly -- Assembly Bill 52  
7 requirements. In that -- in that outreach, we received  
8 responses from two tribes, indicating that they wanted  
9 to enter into discussions and consultation under AB52.  
10 So, we are in discussions and consultations with those  
11 two tribes. And that's, I think, been really good  
12 discussions. With one tribe in particular, we have  
13 pretty regularly scheduled meetings, talking about the  
14 resources in the footprint, you know, really thinking  
15 ahead on how to address Native American human remains  
16 in -- in a proactive manner. We want to be very  
17 respectful of the tribes, of the fact that these are  
18 their ancestors in the Valley. And that's -- that's  
19 important -- and that would be important to me if they  
20 were my ancestors. So, we take this very seriously, and  
21 we're working with the tribe to find creative ways, just  
22 knowing that we're gonna be inundating the Valley, but  
23 creative ways and ways that respect their culture, their  
24 heritage, and their ancestors and their traditions as we  
25 look to build Sites Reservoir.

1           So lots of -- there's been a lot of  
2     discussions with the two tribes in the -- that have  
3     traditionally had lands in the Valley on how to address  
4     the resources that may exist there. And we do know that  
5     in those other 14 tribes, if -- that haven't responded  
6     to us, we're happy to enter into consultation if they'd  
7     like to respond, even though the timeframe has passed.  
8     That's -- you know, we want to be respectful of these  
9     resources.

10           Reclamation is also consulting under Section  
11     106 from the Federal perspective and the Federal  
12     requirements that they follow. And they've reached out  
13     to nine tribes this year. They had one just very  
14     recently respond to them that they'd like to enter into  
15     consultation, so I believe Reclamation is moving forward  
16     with that. And Reclamation is doing a second outreach  
17     to those same tribes in 2022.

18           So even though the other eight didn't respond,  
19     Reclamation recognizes just that there's a variety of  
20     factors and things going on now and is doing a second --  
21     a second outreach to those tribes in the upcoming year.

22           SARA KATZ: Thank you, Ali.

23           ALI FORSYTHE: These are issues that we take  
24     very seriously with the tribal resources in the Valley.

25           SARA KATZ: Thank you, Ali. We've got about

1 ten more minutes for the Q&A session, and I see the Q&A  
2 box is filling up.

3 So, Sarah, if you could please ask a few more,  
4 I'd appreciate that.

5 SARAH ROSSETTO: Sure. We've received two  
6 questions about seepage. The first, how much seepage do  
7 you expect from the reservoir, and what are the  
8 significant points of seepage? And then the next  
9 question, how will seepage from the project impact  
10 ground -- the groundwater aquifer degradation from  
11 upwelling of salt water in the Colusa Subbasin?

12 ALI FORSYTHE: Oh, these are good questions  
13 on -- on seepage. So from a -- do we expect seepage  
14 from the reservoir? I'd say, right now, we are, of  
15 course, designing the dam facilities to meet the SOD  
16 requirements, which means that, generally, we would  
17 expect very little seepage out of the dams. And Henry  
18 can probably -- would probably kick me and say -- our  
19 en -- lead engineer would probably kick me and say none.  
20 But very little seepage out of the dams, themselves. So  
21 it's really that mountain range that forms the rest of  
22 the reservoir, and the impalements of the reservoir as  
23 to whether or not we expect seepage out of there.

24 We are doing quite a bit of geotechnical  
25 investigations to take a look at that -- at the

1 stratigraphy and what's underneath the ground and a  
2 number of those locations along that ridgeline to get a  
3 better understanding of the potential for seepage out of  
4 the reservoir. And we do, I believe, discuss this in --  
5 in depth in our groundwater section, and also our  
6 geology and soils section of the documents.

7 And, Sarah, can you remind me on the second  
8 question there? I apologize.

9 SARAH ROSSETTO: Yes. I am -- how will the  
10 seepage from the project impact groundwater aquifer  
11 degradation from upwelling of salt water in the Colusa  
12 Subbasin?

13 ALI FORSYTHE: Yeah. We don't expect the  
14 seepage to -- well, we're -- we do need to do some more  
15 geotechnical work on the seepage, but we don't expect it  
16 to degrade the water quality in the subbasin. There is  
17 a smaller location in the reservoir footprint, commonly  
18 called the salt pond, which has a very high salt  
19 concentration. We'd expect that to basically kind of  
20 stay and stabilize as the pressure of the reservoir and  
21 the water on top of the reservoir kind of holds it in  
22 place. But it is a small -- it is a small location, a  
23 small area. We don't expect that to, you know, expand  
24 or to contribute to degradation of -- of the overall of  
25 the Colusa Subbasin.



1                   SARA KATZ: Sarah, if you could ask the next  
2 question?

3                   SARAH ROSSETTO: Yes. Why wasn't a bypass  
4 flow pattern considered that is consistent with the  
5 State Water Board's 2018 framework for the Phase 2 Bay  
6 Delta water quality controlled plan update? How will  
7 the Water Board be able to use the EIR to evaluate the  
8 water rate application without this information?

9                   ALI FORSYTHE: Yeah. So the Phase 2, from the  
10 State Board, for folks that aren't aware of it, is  
11 really looking at an unimpaired flow for both the San  
12 Joaquin and the Sacramento River systems. They've  
13 finalized that and -- and are -- are actually working to  
14 implement it on the San Joaquin system. In the  
15 Sacramento system, they haven't yet finalized it. And  
16 so there's -- it's been difficult to figure out how to  
17 formulate bypass criteria around that, because, one,  
18 it's not done, so we're kind of speculating as to what  
19 the number would be, as the State Board gave a range.  
20 And then the other component to that is, how the entire  
21 system would reoperate.

22                   So having Sites be the only one held to an  
23 unimpaired flow means that everybody else could increase  
24 their diversions and impact the Sites project. You  
25 know, they could -- they don't -- they're not held to

1 unimpaired flow, but we are to this much higher  
2 standard. And their changes could effect us. So we  
3 looked at that carefully, and we thought about doing  
4 that. But it's just -- there's too much uncertainty and  
5 speculation out there right now as to what exactly that  
6 would be for the Sacramento River system. And then  
7 speculation as to how it would actually operate and how  
8 the whole system would reoperate with that.

9 In our discussions with the State Board staff,  
10 kind of outside of the EIR/EIS process, and as part of  
11 the water right process, they have asked us to do a  
12 little bit more work on this. And that is something  
13 that I think we'll -- we'll do for the water right  
14 process, based on parameters that they -- that they give  
15 and provide to us for the water right process. But even  
16 that will, I think, have a -- a healthy level of  
17 uncertainty and speculation to it, as the State Board  
18 has not -- not solidified or defined these criteria and  
19 maybe start a concrete form.

20 SARA KATZ: Sarah, the next question in the  
21 Q&A box?

22 SARAH ROSSETTO: We have a question if we can  
23 put up the schedule again. So maybe we can just do that  
24 in the background for a quick second. Then we can get a  
25 better look at it. It was included in the presentation

1 and then move on to the next one, then we can come back  
2 to this slide so everyone knows how to unmute  
3 themselves.

4 Another question, when was the Delevan  
5 intertie alternative stopped in consideration? Have you  
6 considered the lost environmental and economic  
7 mitigation benefits from the Delevan intertie in this  
8 version of your draft?

9 ALI FORSYTHE: Yeah. So we sought -- we  
10 dropped Delevan from the project in that value planning  
11 effort that occurred in 2019/2020 timeframe. There were  
12 a lot of concerns with the Delevan pipeline and the pump  
13 station. First off, it allowed us to divert a lot more  
14 water from the Sacramento River, another 2000 cubic feet  
15 per second with that pump station and pipeline. It also  
16 went through a national fish and wildlife refuge. And  
17 so it was a very -- it was a very sensitive  
18 consideration trying to build a pipeline through a  
19 refuge and sensitive habitat. And -- and, lastly, the  
20 tribes were concerned about Delevan.

21 There were potentially some pretty substantial  
22 resources for the tribes, where the intake and discharge  
23 facility would be. And so that was of concern and --  
24 for the tribes, and we appreciated that. So we did drop  
25 the Delevan pipeline in the 2019/2020 timeframe from the

1 project, and moved forward with really focusing on using  
2 existing facilities, the Tehama Colusa Canal, the GCID  
3 main canal as our -- our diversion location. Those  
4 are -- already exist. They're out there. They're --  
5 have approved fish streams. And then using the Tehama  
6 Colusa Canal in the Colusa Basin Drain as a release  
7 facility.

8 We still need to build the Dunnigan pipeline,  
9 but that's much shorter than Delevan, and doesn't have  
10 the same -- you know, doesn't go through refuge. It  
11 doesn't -- it doesn't potentially go through a -- a -- a  
12 historic Native American site that was sensitive. So  
13 it's a shorter facility overall, and we expect the  
14 impacts of the Dunnigan pipeline to be much -- much less  
15 than Delevan.

16 SARA KATZ: Thank you, Ali. Let's go to the  
17 question on the schedule, and then, Ron, you'll be next  
18 up for the last question during the Q&A session.

19 SARAH ROSSETTO: Okay. I think -- the -- the  
20 question was just to put the schedule up one more time,  
21 so hopefully everyone got a good look at that.

22 We can go back to the Q&A methods and unmute  
23 Ron.

24 SARA KATZ: Okay. Ron, please unmute yourself  
25 and ask your question.

1                   RON STORK: Unmuted. Just a follow-up from my  
2 initial question, which I guess Ali will have to get  
3 back to me on. Does Reclamation intend to do a revised  
4 feasibility determination? And let me just make the  
5 observation, I think their economic evaluations tend to  
6 be not particularly useful, but their engineering  
7 evaluations sometimes are, setting aside, you know, the  
8 past issues they've had with Teton Dam, Auburn Dam, and  
9 nearly losing the Canyon Dam. But -- but hopefully  
10 they've -- they're doing better on those engineering  
11 evaluations.

12                   ALI FORSYTHE: Thanks, Ron. It's a great  
13 question. So, Reclamation, for those folks on the  
14 phone -- Reclamation did do a feasibility study for the  
15 project. That was finalized in late 2019 and determined  
16 the project to be feasible. We have Vanessa King from  
17 Reclamation on the phone with us today.

18                   And, Vanessa, do you want to talk a little bit  
19 about where you guys see going with the feasibility  
20 study from here?

21                   VANESSA KING: Sure. So, the feasibility  
22 report that we previously prepared, it was actually late  
23 2020 that we submitted that.

24                   ALI FORSYTHE: Oh.

25                   VANESSA KING: No problem. That was basically

1 looking at the old alternative from the 2017 draft. So  
2 we are preparing an addendum to the feasibility report  
3 that will look at, probably just one, of the  
4 alternatives. We will in that addendum identify a  
5 select alternative and do analysis of -- of that  
6 alternative to confirm that is economically and  
7 financial, environmentally and completely feasible.

8 SARA KATZ: Thank you so much.

9 Well, this concludes the question and answer  
10 session, and we will now begin accepting verbal comments  
11 on the Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS.

12 The Sites Project Authority and the Bureau of  
13 Reclamation are seeking substantive comments on both the  
14 adequacy and accuracy of the analysis presented in the  
15 document.

16 All verbal comments will be part of the public  
17 record for the project and will be responded to in the  
18 Final EIR/EIS. There will not be a verbal response.  
19 Any questions will be treated as a comment and will be  
20 part of the public record.

21 We will be calling on individuals in the order  
22 of hands are raised. Please raise your hand now if you  
23 would like to provide a verbal comment.

24 As a reminder, from your commenter or the Zoom  
25 App, click "raise hand." And from your phone, dial star

1 9 to raise your hand.

2           Once your name or the last few digits of your  
3 phone number have been called as the next speaker, we  
4 will allow you to unmute yourself. At that time, you  
5 will receive a notice asking you to unmute. For those  
6 online, just click the "unmute" button and you will be  
7 able to speak. For those on the phone, unmute your  
8 phone and dial star 6 to speak.

9           Once you are unmuted, please state and spell  
10 your name for the record. And in addition, if you are  
11 representing an organization or an agency, please state  
12 the name of that agency or organization.

13           Each speaker will have two minutes to provide  
14 their comment. Please be respectful so that everyone  
15 has a chance to comment. Once you are unmuted and  
16 identify yourself, we will start the two-minute timer  
17 and you may provide your comments.

18           So we will wait for hands to be raised, and I  
19 will call on the speakers in a first-come, first-serve  
20 basis.

21           Currently, we do not have any hands raised,  
22 but we will be accepting comments until the end of the  
23 meeting scheduled for 11:00 a.m. If you would like to  
24 provide a comment, please raise your hand.

25           We have our first request, and this is from --

1 perhaps it's Malissa. Again, if you could state your  
2 name and spell it for the record and any agency or  
3 organization you may represent.

4 MALISSA TAYABA: Hello. Malissa Tayaba,  
5 M-a-l-i-s-s-a, last name, T-a-y-a-b-a.

6 Good morning, Commissioners. Thank you for  
7 the opportunity to speak. I'm Malissa Tayaba, Vice  
8 Chair of Shingle Springs, Band of Miwok Indians. The  
9 Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians derives from both  
10 Miwok and Utian lineage, with major village sites in  
11 Sacramento, the Delta, and beyond. The tribes  
12 ancestral homelands span seven counties, including  
13 Sutter, Yuba, Yolo, Sacramento, El Dorado, Placer and  
14 Amador. The inter-connectivity of the land, the  
15 waterways, the people, the plants, animals, and  
16 resources is deep, reciprocal and time-wise. The  
17 ancestral waterways are the lifeblood of the tribe and  
18 include the Sacramento River, American River, Feather  
19 River, Bear River, Consumnes River, and the watersheds  
20 therein.

21 The Shingle Springs Bank of Miwok Indians were  
22 originally displaced by colonization, the mission  
23 system, disease brought by fur trade, the arrival of  
24 John Sutter, the genocide violence of the Gold Rush, the  
25 political violence of California's state head, and



1 anti-Indian laws and policies.

2 Delta ancestral homelands were lost to  
3 Reclamation and colonization in the 19th Century, and we  
4 have been kept out by private land ownership and state  
5 and federal water resource development in the Delta  
6 Region. The Delta is a diminishing resource, that once  
7 stretched at least as far north as the confluence of the  
8 Sacramento and Feather Rivers in Sutter County, near the  
9 Nisenan Village of Vola.

10 It is being further diminished, along with its  
11 cultural and traditional resources that tribes have  
12 utilized from the Delta for food, medicine,  
13 transportation, shelter, clothing, ceremony, and  
14 traditional lifeways from the beginning of time.  
15 Additional diversions from the Sacramento River  
16 Watershed will exacerbate an already damaged and  
17 diminishing Delta ecosystem and ossuary and our tribes  
18 ties to our homelands.

19 I'm here today because your decisions  
20 regarding the Sites Reservoir have a direct impact on  
21 the health, life expectancy, and future of our tribe.  
22 Our waterways must be managed holistically.

23 In addition, true and meaningful tribal  
24 consultation has not occurred. In fact, my tribe was  
25 not consulted. And President Biden's November 12th

1 memo, heads of federal agencies and departments, he  
2 emphasizes the importance and intentions of advancing  
3 equity for Indigenous people, with commitments to ensure  
4 that federal agencies conduct regular, meaningful, and  
5 robust consultation with tribes. To date, consultation  
6 efforts have been neither regular, meaningful, nor  
7 robust. We urge the Commission to not move forward with  
8 this project.

9 Thank you.

10 SARA KATZ: Our next speaker will be Nicole N.  
11 Diti (phonetic). And if you could please state your  
12 name, spell it, any organization, and unmute yourself.

13 NICOLE PANDITI: Hi. I'm Nicole Panditi. I  
14 am just a citizen who is concerned by this project. I  
15 urge the Commission not to move forward with this  
16 project. As the very eloquent speaker before me stated,  
17 it's completely unacceptable to overrule native burial  
18 grounds, native ceremonial sites, and create, basically,  
19 what would be a water project that's not needed or  
20 helpful and would threaten the drinking sources, the  
21 drinking water quality of so many other Californians.  
22 This project is -- it's not needed and -- and it should  
23 not move forward.

24 That's all I have to say. Thank you.

25 SARA KATZ: Thank you, Nicole.

1                   Currently, we do not have any other hands  
2 raised. We will be accepting comments until the end of  
3 the meeting. If you'd like to provide a comment, please  
4 raise your hand.

5                   The next speaker is Ben King. Ben, if you  
6 could state your name and any organization you may  
7 represent, and you are now authorized to unmute  
8 yourself.

9                   BEN KING: Thank you. Yes, my name's Ben  
10 King, and I'm representing T & M King Farms, which is a  
11 family farm that's been owned since 1860. My great  
12 grandfather actually got title to the property because  
13 he farmed an area which was wetlands back during the  
14 period before the Knights Ridge Cut -- Knights Ridge  
15 Landing Cut. The property actually is near the  
16 confluence of Sycamore Slough, the old Sycamore Slough  
17 and Colusa Basin Drain, which was a variable waterway,  
18 presettlement, with groundwater dependent ecosystems or  
19 riparian habitat, some of which still exists, especially  
20 near my property. There's islands in the middle of the  
21 Colusa Basin Drain.

22                   So my primary -- two -- two main comments, and  
23 I'll -- I'll respond in more detail in written form, but  
24 the first is regarding the public engagement process at  
25 this point. It's unfortunate we are in an area of

1 Covid, so a lot of -- it was truncated, some Zoom, and a  
2 lot of constituents weren't able to participate. And  
3 then -- so I think that it'd be good, especially as this  
4 goes forward, to -- to acknowledge that.

5           The -- the other general comment, really  
6 regards the -- the benefit -- the potential benefits of  
7 the Delevan intertie in that it actually would  
8 provide -- have possibility of actually providing offset  
9 for the lost drainage coming from Funks Creek and Stone  
10 Corral Creek at that point. As you mention, the Delevan  
11 Refuge is there, but you also have the Colusa Refuge and  
12 you have all the riparian habitat and ground --  
13 ecosystems below that area. So there is gonna be impact  
14 if you actually don't allow the water to come from Stone  
15 Corral and Funks.

16           In the area of the Colusa Basin Drain, from --  
17 they're -- they're natural intakes into the Colusa Basin  
18 Drain to Dunnigan. You know, my concern is that not  
19 only water right holders, but just the environmental  
20 impact of not having those seasonal flows, and how that  
21 relates to the recharge and actually water quality in  
22 generally in -- in the subbasin, because there is a  
23 known upwelling, and the upwelling is predominantly salt  
24 water, which has a hydro chemical reaction to redox, if  
25 you have lowering of water levels, the oxidation effect

1 of previously cloning salt -- salt water actually can  
2 lead to desorption of trace metals, like, around the  
3 Sutter Buttes, we have an arsenic problem.

4 So I'm gonna take the rest of this period to  
5 actually give you some sites that I want to put in the  
6 public record for your consideration, but I -- I do -- I  
7 am very concerned about groundwater quality degradation,  
8 especially from the public supply system of Williams.  
9 We have both the sustainability, but also a quality  
10 issues.

11 PDS level is a possibility as it creates metal  
12 impacts, and so -- you know, instead of taking up more  
13 of your time, but those are my general comments, and I  
14 will follow-up in more detail, and I appreciate the  
15 opportunity to comment. Thank you.

16 SARA KATZ: Thank you, Ben.

17 If there are others who would like to read  
18 formal public comments into the record, please raise  
19 your hand.

20 The meeting is scheduled to be completed at  
21 11:00 a.m. As such, we will be staying on to accept  
22 formal comments until 11:00 a.m. And remember, please,  
23 raise your hand. And the directions to do so are on the  
24 screen.

25 If you're on the phone, you just dial star 9

1 to raise your hand.

2 We currently do not have any hands raised, but  
3 we will be accepting comments until the end of the  
4 meeting at 11 am. If you would like to provide a  
5 comment, please raise your hand. Thank you.

6 Our next speaker will be Regina Chichizola.  
7 If you could spell your name, please, and the  
8 organization you represent, and you have permission to  
9 talk.

10 Regina, can you unmute yourself?

11 REGINA CHICHIZOLA: Yes. Sorry. It wasn't  
12 letting me for a second. I just wanted to state for the  
13 record that I think there was a lot of confusion, that  
14 people thought that the California Water Commission  
15 meeting was the public comment period for this. Because  
16 this -- the Zoom for this did not come out until later  
17 on Monday, and the California Water Commission noticed  
18 their meeting a week or two ago. I think the public was  
19 extremely confused about -- about this.

20 Anyways, I'm just saying that because quite a  
21 few people have told -- messaged me that they commented  
22 yesterday thinking that it was for this meeting. So,  
23 anyway, I just wanted to let ya'll know, I think there's  
24 a lot of confusion going on about how the public comment  
25 period for this worked in the relation to the California

1 Water Commission. And it might be worth doing some kind  
2 of, like, YouTube update or something to let people know  
3 this is a different public comment period and letters  
4 have to come in separately if you want to be on the  
5 record, because people do not know.

6 And then I also wanted to state that the  
7 amount of people that have sent in emails now is at  
8 48,976, which just, I think, shows interest that if this  
9 was noticed in a way that was more understandable to  
10 people, that more people would be participating. And  
11 I'm not -- I'm not saying that to, like, give you all  
12 flack or anything, it's just -- because it's before the  
13 holidays and the California Water Commission meeting was  
14 on the same day, a lot of people are really confused.

15 Yeah, so some kind of paper explaining the  
16 difference between the different processes, I think,  
17 would be helpful. And that's just a suggestion, and  
18 thank you. I'm gonna leave this meeting now. I just  
19 wanted to hear what the public had to say. But it does  
20 confirm my belief that this whole process is very  
21 confusing, 'cause a lot of people told me they were  
22 gonna do public comment, and I think they all called  
23 into the Water Commission instead, thinking it was  
24 this -- for Sites Res -- that it was the public comment  
25 period.

1                   SARA KATZ: Thank you, Regina.

2                   REGINA CHICHIZOLA: Thanks, bye.

3                   SARA KATZ: We currently do not have any  
4 additional hands raised, but we will be accepting  
5 comments until the end of the meeting. If you would  
6 like to provide a comment for the record, please raise  
7 your hand. And there are also ways to participate in a  
8 written manner, which we will show on the screen at  
9 11:00 a.m. Thank you.

10                   Again, we will be taking comments for the  
11 record until 11:00 a.m. If you are interested in  
12 submitting a comment, please raise your hand. For those  
13 on the phone, remember you can dial -- dial star 9 to  
14 raise your hand to provide your comment, and then star 6  
15 to unmute and speak. Thank you.

16                   We have a -- a new hand that has been raised.  
17 It's Melissa.

18                   Melissa, if you could spell your name and any  
19 organization you might be affiliated with, and you can  
20 unmute yourself now.

21                   MELISSA TOMLINSON: Hi. Yes. Good morning.  
22 My name is Melissa Tomlinson. I think you asked me to  
23 spell it for you, so M-e-l-i-s-s-a, last name,  
24 T-o-m-l-i-n-s-o-n.

25                   I'm calling in from Veshanwoni (phonetic)



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

1 initiative. I'd like to consider that Sacramento -- the  
2 Colusa Subbasin is now a priority basin. And if the  
3 focus is just on nitrates and is not focused on the  
4 actual concurring contaminates, which I think will be --  
5 could be adversely impacted if there was any significant  
6 seepage from Sites.

7 Secondly, the State -- the Department of Water  
8 Resources just adopted the human right to water in its  
9 handbook, and then you can -- any future considerations  
10 have to take into consideration human right to water.  
11 And my consider -- my concern there is, if there's  
12 adverse impact on public supply systems and domestic  
13 wells, down -- downhill from the reservoir, that that  
14 actually will impact human right to water. And since it  
15 is human right -- right and high is a beneficial use, it  
16 really should have a very high standard when it comes to  
17 potentially adverse effects and mitigation.

18 And the third is the Water Board's recent  
19 resolution on racial equity. That is tied to human  
20 right to water, but also just the economic benefits in  
21 the construction and the impacts that may have on people  
22 of color in the Subbasin, since Colusa is majority  
23 non-white residents. Colusa County is -- who are  
24 usually lower social economics, and also may be even  
25 more susceptible to poor water -- water quality, like --

1 like the areas. The public supply system for Grimms  
2 actually has arsenic contamination. So if you would --  
3 and then my last one -- my last comment, actually, is  
4 regarding the access to the public recreation space  
5 around the reservoir.

6 I guess my question is, if you don't go ahead  
7 with the bridge, will the public really be able to enjoy  
8 the recreation? How accessible will that be on the west  
9 side of the reservoir?

10 So, thank you for indulging me with the extra  
11 time, but I just want to complete my -- that part, and  
12 then, otherwise, I'll follow-up with more comment. But,  
13 you know, I -- I believe that -- I'm supportive of the  
14 project, provided that water rights and the environment  
15 and the local economy is -- is mitigated. And we need  
16 more -- we need more supply. And -- and I think  
17 Colusa -- Colusa County should do its part for the State  
18 and for the future water sustainability of the State,  
19 but I am concerned about the issues that are raised as  
20 followed. So, thank you.

21 SARA KATZ: Thank you, Ben.

22 We will be taking public comments for another  
23 15 minutes. If you would like to have a comment  
24 provided for the record, please raise your hand and we  
25 will call on you.

1                   Our next speaker is Greg Reis.

2                   Greg, if you could state your name, any  
3 organization you might be affiliated with. You're --  
4 you're on.

5                   GREG REIS: Hi. My name's Greg, G-r-e-g,  
6 Reis, R-e-i-s. I'm with Advance Team, and we will be  
7 submitting written comments. However, I'll take this  
8 opportunity to point out one thing that will shorten our  
9 written comments by a line, since they'll be here. On  
10 page 2-39, under "emergency release," the word  
11 "velocity" is incorrectly used to describe the flow  
12 rates. It -- that's -- the word "flow" should be used  
13 instead of "velocity."

14                  And then the -- the other thing I'll take this  
15 opportunity to -- to respond to is Ali's answer to my  
16 question earlier, about the water quality control plan,  
17 and she mentioned unimpaired flow. It's actually  
18 percentage of unimpaired flow that the Water Board is  
19 planning to implement. And I believe the -- the  
20 55 percent -- 45 to 65 percent range is what -- what  
21 they were planning. And the uncertainty she mentioned  
22 within that range, it does seem like there could be an  
23 alternative that would -- would get something from that  
24 range. It -- and it will go to our comments on -- that  
25 there is an inadequate range of alternatives in the EIR.



1                   And the other -- the other thing Ali mentioned  
2   is the -- that the others would take the water Sites was  
3   the only one following an approach like that if -- if  
4   the water rights [inaudible] were not to [inaudible].  
5   And that's not -- doesn't seem to be true, since Sites  
6   was last in line with junior water rights. It's really  
7   the -- the inflow of the San Francisco Bay that the --  
8   with the increased if Sites were to decrease its  
9   diversions during the peak flow times of the year. So,  
10  anyway, we'll -- we'll submit the written comments, and  
11  that's all for now.

12                   SARA KATZ: Thank you, Greg.

13                   Our next speaker is Garbin. And if you could  
14  state your name, proper spelling, any organization, and  
15  you can allow -- you can unmute yourself now. Garbin?  
16  Garbin, it seems to indicate you're unmuted, if you  
17  would like to speak.

18                   GARBIN: Can you hear me?

19                   SARA KATZ: We can, yes, thank you.

20                   GARBIN: Oh, okay. Yeah. Just, put in --  
21  taking public water and putting it into a private  
22  aquafer -- a public -- a private dam to grow rice and  
23  other -- other crops that shouldn't be grown in the  
24  middle of the desert seems pretty stupid, and it seems  
25  like we're prioritizing -- prioritizing one industry

1 over another. We're prioritizing the interest of  
2 wealthy farmers and those who are connected against the  
3 interest of the environment, the fish populations.  
4 People enjoy, you know, natural flowing waters, and  
5 those who don't have quite the connections of the  
6 farmers seem to have -- where most -- I guess, from what  
7 I understand, most of this water's going to be going to.  
8 And very much against taking public water and putting it  
9 on private property for private people to make a profit  
10 on, especially when they're growing crops that probably  
11 shouldn't be grown where they're being grown. So,  
12 that's pretty much my thoughts.

13 SARA KATZ: Thank you, Garbin.

14 Our next speaker is Danielle Frank. Danielle,  
15 if you could spell out your name and your organization  
16 you are affiliated with, and you are unmuted.

17 DANIELLE FRANK: Hi. My name is Danielle  
18 Frank. I'm calling from the Hupa Valley Indian  
19 Reservation, where I've been raised since childhood and  
20 I'm a tribal member. I'm calling because this proposed  
21 project cannot go through. There are just too many  
22 issues with it.

23 For starters, not the -- not only does it  
24 endanger the salmon population that is already  
25 depleting, thanks to diversion and other issues, it will

1 also flood three creeks, further harming the salmon runs  
2 and harming an important food source. For Natives --  
3 for Native people, salmon holds a cultural significance  
4 that native -- non-natives can't even begin to grasp.

5 This is more than just environmental  
6 injustice. It's also an injustice against a group of  
7 people who have been discriminated against by this  
8 country since the beginning of modern day American  
9 civilization. Not only is this project putting our  
10 sacred salmon in danger, it will also be going through  
11 three different -- it will be going through different  
12 ceremonial sites. It will be digging up Native American  
13 Cer -- Native -- Native American cemeteries, which  
14 the -- is -- I kind of -- I'm not sure how that's okay  
15 with people to be digging up bones of our ancestors that  
16 we've laid to rest.

17 And it -- it -- it goes against everything  
18 that Indian people stand for, and I'm urging you guys to  
19 listen to the Native voices that have come to speak  
20 today, because we -- that's how -- that's the only way  
21 that these salmon population are gonna be saved, and  
22 they do hold more of a significance to us than just food  
23 source. So we -- we're here to speak for them. And I  
24 thank guys for your time and for your consideration in  
25 listening to this.

1                   SARA KATZ: Thank you, Danielle.

2                   Our next speak every will be Benjamin Lord.

3 Benjamin, if you could spell your name, any organization  
4 you may be representing, and you can unmute yourself.

5                   BENJAMIN LORD: Hi. Can you hear me?

6                   SARA KATZ: We can.

7                   BENJAMIN LORD: Great. My name is Benjamin  
8 Lord, B-e-n-j-a-m-i-n, space, L-o-r-d. I'm gonna be  
9 brief. I'm not a water scientist or a -- a Sacramento  
10 bureaucrat or -- or, you know, a farmer. I'm just  
11 someone who loves visiting the Trinity. I go there  
12 every year. It's one of my favorite places on earth. I  
13 think it's an incredibly special place, the Trinity and  
14 the -- the Middle Klamath Watershed. And this project  
15 gives me real pause, because it affects almost certainly  
16 a place that is incredibly dear to me.

17                   I look at the history of the Klamath Dam  
18 removal fight and how it has dragged on and on and on  
19 and these kinds of projects, once they're done -- I  
20 appreciate that a lot of hard work has gone into this.  
21 A lot of staff members have worked very, very hard on  
22 putting this proposal together. As hard as it is to do,  
23 it's even harder to undo, and we should think about that  
24 in the event that we realize years down the line that  
25 there was some kind of mistake in our calculations, that

1 our knowledge of ecology grows, our knowledge of fishery  
2 science grows. How would we undo something like this,  
3 right? What is -- what is the undo strategy? And I  
4 think history shows that it's incredibly hard to undo  
5 these things. And the -- the bar for necessity of  
6 something like this happening, should thus be set just  
7 incredibly high, because it is nearly impossible to  
8 reverse once it happens.

9 I would -- like the previous speaker -- like  
10 to see, for a project like this, hard, explicit, legal,  
11 enforceable guarantees for tribes in the Trinity and the  
12 Klamath. As she said, the history of discrimination is  
13 just terrible in this -- in this region. If you look at  
14 photos from 100 years ago of the Klamath, people  
15 described the river flowing backwards from the amount of  
16 fish in it. And every year since, you know, white  
17 people came, the situation gets worse. The overall  
18 trajectory is catastrophic.

19 My grandfather saw things that my father would  
20 not be able to see. My father saw things that I won't  
21 be able to see. I see things that I'm pretty sure my  
22 son is not gonna be able to see. I understand the  
23 allocation issues are very complex here. I understand  
24 that we need farms. I understand that farms need water.

25 But I would like to see -- and I know this is

1 way beyond the province of the decisions that this group  
2 makes -- but I would like to see a push for  
3 conservation. When I see the amount of money that it  
4 costs to build something like this, why are -- do we not  
5 have state-wide fines for wasting water? Why do we not  
6 have a state-wide increase in the cost of water with tax  
7 credits, so that it's not regressive for poor people?  
8 Why do we not have public-needed campaigns about  
9 conservation awareness?

10 The cheapest water is the water that we  
11 already have. And if we just conserved it a little  
12 more, we could, you know, continue to have the, you  
13 know, water flowing to residential customers and  
14 agricultural customers, and everyone who needs it  
15 without destroying the way of life of the people who've  
16 been on this river for millennium.

17 Thank you.

18 SARA KATZ: Thank you, Benjamin.

19 Our next speaker will be Shannon Wittgen.

20 Shannon, if you could spell your name for the  
21 record, any organization you might represent, and you  
22 can unmute yourself now.

23 Shannon, it looks like you're still muted.  
24 Shannon, if you can hear me, you show to me unmuted --  
25 I'm sorry, you show to me muted.

1                   Okay. We'll go to our next speaker, Dan  
2 Bacher.

3                   Dan, if you want to unmute yourself.

4                   DAN BACHER: Yes. I just spoke, but I wasn't  
5 able to finish one simple sentence, and this is all I  
6 want to leave with you -- or actually two sentences.  
7 Now is not the time for you to keep going forward with  
8 Sites Reservoir. Now is the time to take decisive  
9 action, to stop species extinction. Please remember,  
10 extinction is forever.

11                   Thank you.

12                   SARA KATZ: Thank you, Dan. We have five more  
13 minutes that we will be accepting formal public  
14 comments, and then we will provide instructions how you  
15 might be able to submit them in the written form if  
16 that's your preference.

17                   Please remember that any comments submitted  
18 via the Q&A box will not be entered into the formal  
19 record. We would ask that you either raise your hand  
20 and read them into the record and/or follow the  
21 instructions on our closing slide, which will allow you  
22 to submit them formally via email and/or hard copy.

23                   Thank you.

24                   We have a hand raised with Shannon Wittgen.  
25 If you could please, again, your name for the record,

1 any organization you represent, and you can go ahead and  
2 unmute yourself.

3 SHANNON WITTGEN: Okay. I hope I'm unmuted  
4 here.

5 SARA KATZ: You are.

6 SHANNON WITTGEN: My -- my name is Shannon  
7 Wittgen, S-h-a-n-n-o-n, Wittgen, W-i-t-t-g-e-n, and I  
8 don't represent any organization. I'm just a private  
9 California resident.

10 I live in Mountain House, California. I drive  
11 over the California Canal and the Mendoza Canal every  
12 day, and I just wanted to -- from my perspective, just  
13 reiterate that we should be listening more to Native  
14 voices when it comes to land management and water  
15 management. I just wanted to chime in there and -- and  
16 just kind of let everyone know that this is something  
17 that is final to us all, and I think we should be  
18 looking to them for leadership. Thanks.

19 SARA KATZ: Thank you, Shannon.

20 We have a hand raised, and the speaker is  
21 Garbin. Garbin, I believe you've spoken before, so,  
22 again, if your name for the record and any organization  
23 you represent, and you are ready to unmute.

24 GARBIN: Yeah. I can't really hear you, so  
25 I'm hoping you -- you can hear me.



1           The only thing that I -- I want to add is  
2   that the -- the format for this, while it's good for  
3   those people who were able to find out about -- I found  
4   out about this by -- via email. I'm -- I'm quite  
5   confident that if this was actually widely publicized in  
6   communities that would be directly effected by this  
7   onerous attempts, you'd have a lot more people stepping  
8   up and expressing their opposition to this.

9           This plan's gonna hurt a lot of people, the  
10   environment, salmon runs, Indigenous people, poor  
11   people, you know, who rely on -- you know, are living in  
12   these areas where wells are gonna be going dry and all  
13   the rest of it from the theft of this water. And I  
14   think if you had reached out more to the community who  
15   is gonna be directly affected by this offense, that you  
16   would have a -- a much greater turnout of folks in  
17   direct opposition of this. And, you know, it's just --  
18   it's just -- it's just sad that -- that those people  
19   who, I think, are gonna be really damaged by this don't  
20   really know what's happening. And I don't know if  
21   that's by design, by accident, but -- but it's --  
22   it's -- it's -- it's not right.

23           This is a huge expense. It will affect large  
24   parts of Cal -- of the State. It will affect people's  
25   enjoyment of the outdoors. It will affect species, not

1    only the salmon, many species that rely on water that's  
2    gonna be put into a -- as I understand -- a private  
3    reservoir for almond and -- and rice production, crops  
4    that probably shouldn't be growing in the middle of a  
5    desert. It's just -- it's just wrong the way this is  
6    being handled, and more people need to know about it,  
7    and there should be a greater outreach to those folks  
8    who are gonna be directly affected in a negative manner.  
9    Thank you.

10           SARA KATZ: Thank you, Garvin.

11           If we could advance to the last slide, please.  
12    You can comment after today's meeting by providing --  
13    provide -- providing a written comment.

14           Email your comments to  
15    EIR-EIS-comments@sitesproject.org. Or you can mail your  
16    comments to the Sites Project Authority at P.O. Box 517,  
17    Maxwell, California 95955, or to the Bureau of  
18    Reclamation at 2800 Cottage Way, Suite W-2830,  
19    Sacramento, California 95825.

20           Comments must be postmarked or received by 5  
21    p.m. Pacific Standard Time on January 11th, 2022.

22           Thank you again for your participation in this  
23    public meeting.

24           As a reminder, if anyone joined late or missed  
25    the presentation, the recording of the meeting

1 presentation will be posted for viewing on the Sites  
2 Project website, Sitesproject.org within a week.

3 Thank you again for participating. We will  
4 now conclude this morning's session. Have a great day.

5 (End of meeting.)

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, JENNIFER GERATY, a Certified Shorthand Reporter for the State of California, do hereby certify:

That the said meeting was taken down by me in stenotype at the time stated, via Zoom, and thereafter reduced to typewriting under my direction and that the transcript is a true and correct record of the proceedings held.

I further certify I have no financial interest in, nor am related to any parties of this cause. Dated this 29th day of December, 2021.

*Jennifer Geraty*

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JENNIFER GERATY, CSR No. 13350