



Meeting: **Joint Sites Reservoir Committee & Authority Board Special Board Meeting**

June 5, 2023

- Authority Board Chair: Fritz Durst (Reclamation District 108)
- Authority Board Vice Chair: Jeff Sutton (Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority)
- Reservoir Committee Chair: Valerie Pryor (Zone 7 Water Agency)
- Reservoir Committee Vice-Chair: Mike Azevedo (Colusa County)
- Treasurer: Jamie Traynham (Davis Water District)

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Authority Board Chairman Durst called the Joint Authority Board (AB) and Reservoir Committee (RC) Meeting to order at the hour of 8:00 a.m., followed by Roll Call and the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL/ATTENDANCE:

Roll of the Authority Board equaled 6 members in attendance, which resulted in a quorum.

Roll call of the Reservoir Committee equaled 18 representatives, 86.69% in attendance, which resulted in a quorum.

INTRODUCTIONS:

The Sites Staff, Consultants, and members of the public introduced themselves.

AGENDA APPROVAL RC:

Chairman Durst made time to approve the June 5, 2023, Joint RC and AB Special Board Meeting Agenda.

Executive Director Brown requested to make an addition to report prior to adjournment. Chairman Durst so directed.

Action RC: It was moved by Tincher, seconded by Bettner to approve the June 5, 2023, Joint RC, and AB Special Board Meeting Agenda. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Action AB: It was moved by Director Sutton, seconded by Director Allen to approve the June 5, 2023, Joint RC, and AB Special Board Meeting Agenda. **Motion carried: All Directors present voted yes.**

PERIOD FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:

Authority Board Chairman Durst called for a period of public comment. Hearing none, he closed the period for public comment.

1. CONSENT AGENDA:

None.

2. ACTION ITEMS:

2.1 Reservoir Committee and Authority Board consider approval of:

1. Communicate general support for the Governor’s Executive Order and Legislative Permit Reform Package.
2. Direct staff to actively advocate on behalf of the three legislative proposals of direct benefit to the Project: California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Administrative Record Reforms, CEQA Judicial Streamlining, and Reclassification of Fully Protected Species.

Executive Director Brown gave a brief explanation of Staff recommendations and the background and analysis that contributed to the recommended action and requested that Participants look at the proposals from the perspective of what makes sense for the Sites Project.

Mr. Spesert presented on the Governors Permit Reform Package and spoke to the following:

- Permit Reform Package Proposal introduced by the Governor and Executive Order Signed on May 19th, establishing broad strategies and goals across all state agencies to advance infrastructure projects, Ten Legislative proposals to be included as trailer bills to the Budget to establish statutory permitting reforms. The Governor mentioned the Sites Project in his introduction noting that Sites would be an eligible project included in the Permit Reform proposal.
- Governor’s Executive Order (NN-8-23) establishes an Infrastructure Strike Team to work across all state agencies to maximize federal and state funding opportunities for infrastructure projects, Identify projects for streamlining with a focus on projects that include significant job creation, names all P1 Storage Projects, including Sites, Support coordination between all levels of government on project review, permitting, and approvals, support infrastructure in specific sectors by investing in adjacent sectors, share challenges, and best practice, and identify areas for improvement.
- The following 3 legislative proposals have a direct benefit to the Sites Project:
 - **CEQA Administrative Record** would clarify and streamline requirements to allow CEQA Administrative Records to be developed more expediently, with fewer litigation delays. Specifically, the bill creates timeframes the petitioner must follow if they elect to prepare the administrative record,

provides that internal emails within the lead agency that are not presented to the final decision-making body are not required to be included in the record and allows electronic filing of the record.

- **CEQA Judicial Streamlining** to the extent feasible, requires that any judicial challenges and appeals be completed within 270 days for qualifying projects, including energy infrastructure projects, federal CHIPS Act-eligible manufacturing projects, transportation-related projects, and water-related projects. Eligible projects must be certified by designated state officials.
- **Reclassification of Fully Protected Species** would reclassify species to facilitate responsible and appropriate development but would also allow the Department of Fish and Wildlife to require mitigation and other actions to contribute to the conservation of these species.

Keith Dunn spoke to the timing for possible action on the trailer bills including bill review occurring in upcoming informational hearings. He noted that he and other stakeholders have participated in recent discussions about the process. The Governor plans to do everything he can to get the proposals passed. There is opposition from environmental groups to the approach of using trailer bills.

Executive Director Brown noted that the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) State Legislative Committee is in favor of the 3 proposals that are a direct benefit to the Sites Project.

Durst explained that it's important to note that the reform isn't about changing the process, but the purpose is to expedite the process. Sites will not overlook any environmental concerns.

Director Sutton expressed appreciation to everyone attending the Special Board Meeting, the Legislative & Outreach Committee, Keith Dunn, and the Governor.

Executive Director Brown made time for attendees that logged in after Roll Call to identify themselves. The Board Clerk updated the attendance.

ACTION RC:

It was moved by Cheng, seconded by Vanderwaal to approve the following:

1. Communicate general support for the Governor's Executive Order and Legislative Permit Reform Package.
2. Direct staff to actively advocate on behalf of the three legislative proposals of direct benefit to the Project: CEQA Administrative Record Reforms, CEQA Judicial Streamlining, and Reclassification of Fully Protected Species. **Motion carried unanimously except for Neudeck, Metropolitan Water District, who abstained.**

ACTION AB:

It was moved by Director Sutton, seconded by Alternate Ruiz to approve the following:

- 1. Communicate general support for the Governor’s Executive Order and Legislative Permit Reform Package.
- 2. Direct staff to actively advocate on behalf of the three legislative proposals of direct benefit to the Project: CEQA Administrative Record Reforms, CEQA Judicial Streamlining, and Reclassification of Fully Protected Species. **Motion carried: All Directors present voted yes.**

3. DISCUSSION AND INFORMATION ITEMS:

Executive Director Brown announced that the Sites Project Water Right Application was noticed by the State Board on Friday, June 2, 2023. This starts the 60-day protest period. Following the 60-day period there will be a period for the Project to resolve any protest. He noted this is not the Water Right itself but another milestone in the process to receive it. Mr. Brown expressed appreciation for Ms. Forsythe’s leadership in getting the Project to this point in the Water Right Application. Tincher agreed with Mr. Brown and expressed appreciation for the Staff and all the work on the Water Right Application.

Authority Board Chair Durst adjourned the Joint Reservoir Committee and Authority Board Meeting at the hour of 8:37a.m.

Fritz Durst, Authority Board Chair

Valerie Pryor, Reservoir Committee Chair

Sandra Yarbrough, Board Clerk