

Frequently Asked Questions: SB 149 and Sites Reservoir

1. What is SB 149?

Senate Bill 149 makes a broad swath of energy, transportation, water, and semiconductor projects eligible for expedited judicial review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Projects must meet certain criteria to be eligible for certification, as defined in the legislation, and be certified by the Governor. The streamlining provisions for certified projects include a 270-day judicial review period for a lawsuit challenging the CEQA compliance for the project, including all appeals, as feasible.

2. Why is SB 149 important for water supply projects?

Senate Bill 149 is important for accelerating timelines on critical projects necessary to achieve the State's climate and clean energy goals. A resilient water supply is an essential part of meeting these goals. SB 149 will assist project proponents like the Sites Project Authority in navigating key aspects of California's regulatory process while still protecting our environment and communities. It is important to note that SB 149 does not allow for project proponents to short-cut or side-step the environmental review process. It actually holds proponents to higher standards by ensuring that projects certified are fully disclosing and addressing environmental concerns. SB 149 simply shortens the timeframe for litigation on projects that are certified by the Governor. This is an important time and cost-saving benefit for critical water storage projects that enable California to become more resilient to climate change and its impacts.

3. Is Sites Reservoir eligible for streamlining provisions under SB 149?

On November 6, 2023, the Governor certified the Sites Reservoir Project under SB 149. Earlier this year, the Authority applied for certification and provided detailed information on the Sites Reservoir Project and how the Authority is complying with each requirement in SB 149. The Authority is committed to fulfill its obligations under the applicable provisions of the law. The Authority's application can be found online here: <https://opr.ca.gov/ceqa/judicial-streamlining/infrastructure-streamlining.html>

4. How does certification help advance Sites Reservoir?

The certification of Sites Reservoir under SB 149 strikes the right balance—saving time and reducing costs for delivery of critically important water projects like Sites Reservoir, while still ensuring key safeguards for our communities and our environment.