



**For Immediate Release:**

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**Statement from Sites Project Authority in Response to Yolo County Superior Court Decision on CEQA Lawsuit by Environmental Organizations**

Maxwell, CA – On Friday, May 31, 2024, the Superior Court of Yolo County [released an Order](#) denying all claims in the Friends of the River v. Sites Project Authority case. In late 2023, six environmental organizations, Friends of the River, Center for Biological Diversity, California Sportfishing Protection Alliance, California Water Impact Network, Save California Salmon, and Sierra Club, petitioned the Court to review certain aspects of the Authority’s California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process and the Authority’s certification of the Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) for the Sites Reservoir Project.

The Yolo County Superior Court found in the Authority’s favor in every claim asserted by the environmental organizations. The Sites Final EIR fully complies with CEQA.

“We embrace environmental values and have taken extra steps at every turn to ensure this project is an environmental asset. California upholds the most rigorous environmental standards in the nation, and we are committed to building a reservoir that meets or exceeds those standards. We are grateful the court’s decision will allow us to advance Sites Reservoir and ultimately supply more water for people, farms, and the environment. The need for this water is significant, and we have no time to waste,” said Fritz Durst, chair of the Sites Project Authority.

“The court has recognized that the Authority conducted an exhaustive environmental review process and a complete analysis of potential project impacts. The Authority’s efforts included extensive public outreach over more than six years,” said Jerry Brown, executive director of the Sites Project Authority.

While this is an affirmation of the careful work that has gone into project development, there are several milestones to achieve in the permitting and approval process that are progressing and will lead to construction start in 2026.

The Authority extends its appreciation to the Governor and State Legislature for having the foresight to enact SB149 and certify the Sites Reservoir Project as critical water infrastructure for the State. Without these actions the expediency with which the Court’s decision occurred would have been delayed by up to several years.

Sites Reservoir is purposely designed to work in concert with California’s changing climate conditions by capturing and storing water during extreme storm events for use during severe dry periods when it is needed the most. Sites will be a unique reservoir in California, one that captures and stores water for multiple benefits including as a dedicated asset specifically for the environment to support fish and their habitat during drought periods.

Sites is an off-stream facility that does not dam a major river system and does not threaten fish migration or spawning. Sites Reservoir diversions would be conducted under highly protective operating and permit conditions that establish when water can be diverted after all other water rights and regulatory requirements are met.

*Sites is an off-stream reservoir proposed north of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, where it would provide unique water supply and environmental benefits during dry periods, especially during extended drought. Additional information can be found at [www.sitesproject.org](http://www.sitesproject.org) or on Facebook and Twitter at @SitesProject.*