



**For Immediate Release:**

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**Statement from Sites Project Authority in Response to Third District Court of Appeal Decision on CEQA Lawsuit by Environmental Organizations**

Maxwell, CA - On September 20, 2024, the Third District Court of Appeal [released an opinion](#) upholding the decision by the Superior Court of Yolo County in the Friends.of.the.River.v.Sites.Project.Authority case. The Yolo County Superior Court and now the Court of Appeal have found in the Sites Project Authority's favor in every claim asserted by the environmental organizations challenging the sufficiency of the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR), concluding that the Authority fully complied with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in its review of the Sites Project.

As background, in 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 for review of certain aspects of the Authority's CEQA process and the Authority's certification of the EIR for the Sites Reservoir Project. The Yolo County Superior Court ruled in favor of the Authority on all of the issues, and the groups appealed the Court's decision earlier this year. The Third District Court of Appeal has affirmed the lower court's decision in favor of the Authority.

"We've taken every step necessary to meet or exceed the standards laid out in the state's comprehensive environmental law, and the Court of Appeal has confirmed that," said Fritz Durst, Chair of the Sites Project Authority. "This is good news for Californians because we are now one critical step closer to breaking ground on this essential water supply project."

Sites Reservoir is the state's first project to be certified under SB 149 as critical water infrastructure, which requires legal challenges to be made and considered by the courts without unnecessary delays. The Authority extends its appreciation to the Governor and State Legislature for having the foresight to enact SB 149 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. The Authority also appreciates the Court's thorough review and diligence in meeting the expedited timelines in SB 149.

"As chair of the Sites Project Authority Board, I'd like to extend thanks to our participants for their support and patience through this process, and to our staff who led such a comprehensive environmental review for Sites," added Durst.

Sites 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 the supply of water to support fish and their habitat during drought periods.

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;