

What is the status of the Sites Reservoir Project's water right application?

The Sites Reservoir Project has completed the public notice and hearing phase of the water right application process. The Administrative Hearings Office (AHO) issued a Draft Decision and Draft Permit for the Sites Reservoir Project on March 20, 2026 and the first public comment period closed on May 22, 2026.

The AHO is currently scheduled to issue a Revised Draft Decision and Draft Permit in mid-July prior to the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) taking final action currently scheduled for September 2026.

What are the Draft Decision and Draft Permit?

The Draft Decision and Draft Permit are legal documents prepared by the AHO at the conclusion of the water right hearing. The Draft Decision evaluates the evidence and legal arguments presented during the proceedings and provides the rationale for conditions contained in the Draft Permit. The Draft Decision and Draft Permit have been released for public review and comment and are subject to further changes before they are submitted to the State Board for final consideration.

What revisions did the Authority request to the Draft Decision and Permit?

The Authority's comments, submitted on May 22, 2026, identify several Draft Permit conditions that, as currently written, would significantly constrain Project operations and materially reduce Project yield—without corresponding public or environmental benefit. The Authority's highest priority revisions include:

- Clarifying the manner in which the yet to be adopted Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan Update would be applied to the new Sites Reservoir water right;
- Addressing technical and legal flaws in the AHO's analysis related to diversion criteria layered on top of the stringent regulatory determinations in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Incidental Take Permit requiring bypass flows to protect migrating salmon, which already significantly limit diversions into Sites Reservoir;
- Clarifying the protections necessary to ensure the movement of Sites water through the Delta during the transfer window as non-Central Valley Project/State Water Project water is consistent with the existing regulatory framework and recently issued State Board orders for other similar actions; and
- Ensuring available local runoff from Funks and Stone Corral Creeks into Sites Reservoir is secured as a source of supply for uses solely within the Colusa County and Glenn County areas.

Did others comment on the Draft Order and Permit?

Yes. In all there were more than 50 comment letters, and most are calling for similar changes to those recommended by the Authority, including comments from several state agencies.

Can the AHO revise the Draft Decision and Permit following the first public comment period?

Yes. The AHO will evaluate the input received and consider revising the Draft Decision and Draft Permit. We expect the AHO to issue a Revised Draft Decision and Draft Permit in July, which we expect to be submitted to the State Board for their final action. There will be a 30-day public comment period for the submittal of comments on the Revised Draft Decision and Draft Permit prior to the State Board's consideration of the Sites Reservoir water right for approval in September.

What specific actions can the State Board take on the Revised Draft Decision and Permit?

The State Board may:

- Adopt the decision and permit terms in their entirety.
- Make minor or technical changes and adopt them.
- Reject the terms and remand it to the AHO for further proceedings. (This can only happen once.)
- Reject the terms and decide on their own, with or without additional evidence.
- Take no action within 90 days, in which case the Revised Draft Decision and Permit are deemed approved.

How can the public participate?

The State Board will provide a second comment period prior to final consideration of the Draft Decision and Draft Permit. Opportunities for participation include:

- Submitting written comments to the State Board during the noticed public comment period
- Providing oral comments at the State Board's public meeting when approval of the water right is agendaized for final action

How will I know when public comment opens?

All formal notices are posted on the State Board website: www.waterboards.ca.gov. You can also monitor the State Board's calendar, subscribe to relevant email lists, and check the [Sites Reservoir application page](#) for updates.

What is the anticipated timeline for the remainder of the process?

Subject to the volume and complexity of the comments submitted to the AHO and State Board on May 22, 2026, the following schedule has been noticed by State Board:

JULY 15, 2026	AHO submits the Revised Draft Decision and Draft Permit to the State Board
AUGUST 15, 2026	Deadline for written comments to the State Board on the Revised Draft Decision and Permit
AUGUST 2026	State Board notices a public meeting to consider adoption of the Revised Draft Decision and Draft Permit
SEPTEMBER 1, 2026	State Board considers adoption of the Revised Draft Decision and Draft Permit at its scheduled Board meeting

Where can I find official, up-to-date information?

Please refer to the State Board's [calendar](#) and the [Sites Reservoir application page](#).