

# CAPITOL-TO-CAPITOL

SACRAMENTO, CA WASHINGTON, D.C.

## WATER RESOURCES

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## WATER SUPPLY RELIABILITY WITH ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

In adapting to climate change, our region's water resources can be sustainably managed through the conjunctive use of ground and surface water to create a resilient water future for the region that has substantial benefits for our communities and wildlife habitat. The Water Resources Team requests funding and policy support of the following projects.

### Sacramento Regional Water Bank Requested Action

- Additional planning assistance funding of \$500,000 from the Bureau of Reclamation and continued federal acknowledgement of a project in process that benefits multiple agencies and communities.

This project allows the region to store water in the aquifer in wet years and sustainably pump and use groundwater during drought periods, thereby reducing surface water diversion. This is a benefit to the ecosystem and helps to flexibly manage surface storage reservoirs.

- The Capital Region aquifer has a tremendous amount of untapped storage capacity.
- The water bank project uses existing infrastructure and plans for an expanded network of groundwater wells and interties.

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- It can be operational in 2025-2026.
- The water bank enhances groundwater recharge and storage and “banks” water during wet years to allow groundwater pumping in dry years.
- It is voluntary for water agencies to participate.
- The water bank can alleviate demands on Folsom Reservoir in dry years, giving flexibility to the Bureau of Reclamations operation of the CVP.
- This concept is a SGMA precursor and is a proven model for stabilized groundwater use. It is compatible with state and local groundwater management plans.
- The Groundwater Bank project is halfway through its three-year planning process. Local and state agencies are contributing more than half of costs to date. The Water Bank has previously received \$870,000 in WIIN act funding.

## The RiverArc Project Requested Actions:

- Bureau of Reclamation: Support the project and become the NEPA lead agency; Support CVP water rights transference from American River to Sacramento River for participating water agencies.
- Legislative offices: Submit letters of support directed to Bureau of Reclamation.

The RiverArc project shifts water reliance of north region communities from the American River to the much larger Sacramento River. Currently, 80 percent of the Capital Region relies on American River water, a federally designated Wild & Scenic River. RiverArc balances water use between two major rivers to ensure long-term water supply sustainability. The RiverArc uses an existing point of diversion on the Sacramento River and incorporates a new water treatment facility and interties. The project supports the Water Bank and groundwater recharge. Based on the Water Forum Agreement, RiverArc provides numerous environmental benefits to the American River watershed, including stronger flows and temperature control in the lower American River for enhanced aquatic and terrestrial habitat. RiverArc will also give the Bureau of Reclamation more flexibility when operating Folsom Reservoir.

## Timeline for the RiverArc

- 2024-2026: Permitting, environmental and construction design. Prepare ground and surface water modeling.
- 2026-2030: Secure funding, procure of land and easements, design, and begin construction.
- 2040- beyond: Expand water treatment facilities and necessary infrastructure upgrades.

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## **Voluntary Agreements Requested Actions:**

- Legislative offices: The Agreements require ensuring that existing funding, like that provided under the Central Valley Project Improvement Act through the Restoration Fund, continue. The Agreements also rely on \$740 million in *new* federal funding to support habitat restoration throughout Central Valley tributaries, multi-benefit projects, and Sacramento Valley habitat projects.
- Bureau of Reclamation: For the American River Region, the Agreements require active engagement by Reclamation. While Reclamation is currently not intending to be a signatory, it has a vital role in operating Folsom Reservoir to support implementation of local water agencies' flow contributions to the program.

The region is home to multiple watersheds, which include the American, Consumes, Yuba, Bear, Feather, and Sacramento rivers, from which our water resources are captured. These watersheds are an essential component of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta estuary, the hub of California's water system.

The Voluntary Agreements (VAs) represent a collaborative and holistic approach to providing healthy water flows to the California Bay-Delta ecosystem while ensuring water supply reliability for upstream habitat and communities. Habitat restoration projects, along with enhanced and better managed flows, will achieve these co-equal goals.

Through the VAs, a group of public water agencies are proposing a comprehensive suite of actions that will improve habitat and flows in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and its tributaries to help native fish and wildlife species. A Delta watershed-wide solution could provide a substantial "budget" of water for the environment. Combined with significant new habitat, an integrated science program, and adaptive management, this suite would provide a more comprehensive framework to recover fish populations. The VAs are a more comprehensive and efficient strategy than an unimpaired flows approach.

## **Forecast informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) Requested Actions:**

- Support for FIRO policies and projects from Reclamation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE),
- Support HR 6093. Appropriation for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to support pilot projects in the western U.S. that improve sub-seasonal to seasonal (S2S) forecasting to improve water management.

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The economy of the region relies on a reliable, sustainable water supply and regional flood protection for businesses and the community to thrive. A Watershed-FIRO program that integrates Folsom Reservoir operations with upstream reservoir improvements and management will allow further climate adaptation and enhance the operation of Folsom Reservoir by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. FIRO is well recognized as the future of flood operation in a changing climate. Ongoing and recently completed FIRO studies for Lake Mendocino and the Yuba-Feather system by the Bureau of Reclamation and USACE, in collaboration with other non-federal partners, show unequivocal success in improving flood management while accruing additional benefits for water supply and environmental protection.

## **Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) Requested Actions:**

- The federal government and company polluters should provide funding for remediation of these chemicals to protect public health.
- The federal government should issue a liability exemption for water agencies under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (Superfund Act) for contamination events involving PFAS.

A sustainable water supply can only be achieved if the quality of the water produced is beneficial for people and wildlife. Groundwater contamination can have a negative effect on all the water projects we are proposing. PFAS chemicals have been detected in areas of the American River subbasin. This contamination will require federal government participation to address.

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large group of manufactured organic chemicals that are used in several products for their nonstick properties (e.g., Teflon, Scotchgard), as well as in industrial applications such as firefighting. Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF) usage at military bases and airports are sources of PFAS in drinking water systems. In the Capital Region, some groundwater contamination has been linked to the use of AFFF at Mather Airfield.

Passive receivers of this pollution cannot be held responsible for the cost of remediation efforts. The burden of cleanup must lie with the polluters, and not local water agencies and rate payers.

## **Business Nexus**

The economy of the California's Capital Region is dependent upon a reliable, sustainable, and high-quality water supply. Businesses, communities, agriculture, and natural habitat cannot function and thrive without abundant clean water. These projects will provide substantial management tools to assure our water future.