

March 11, 2025 Valley Water Board Meeting

Item 8.1. Receive an Informational Update on the Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project

Comments from Katja Irvin

Please consider the following comments regarding the staff report for the subject agenda item.

1. **Future Topics** (Slide 3). The “Discussion of connection between Project and the 2025 Water Supply Master Plan’s Portfolio Recommendation” should **include “comparison of Project cost to those of other water storage projects”** because that was the topic approved by the Board on November 14, 2023. These storage projects include Pacheco Reservoir, San Luis Reservoir (B.F. Sisk), and Sites Reservoir.
2. **Regarding Total Project Cost and Benefit-Cost Updates**
 - The first page of **Attachment 2: Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project FAQ includes cost breakdowns** for design and permitting activities, and for construction activities. The Board may want to **consider if these are reasonable estimates** given the magnitude of this project and the remote location.
 - The current total project cost estimate of \$2.73 billion for Pacheco Reservoir appears low given that the less complicated and less remote Anderson Dam projects are now estimated to cost about \$2.26 billion.
 - Upcoming Milestones (Slide 13) shows that project cost updates will occur in September 2026, late 2027, and late 2028. The last project cost update was presented to the Board in January 2023, so **there will be an almost 4-year gap in project cost updates**. The Board may want to **request an interim update in 2025** to better understand the project status and inform partnership discussions.
 - The Board may want to **request an updated benefit-cost analysis along with the next updated cost estimate** to help with the re-assessment of project viability.
3. It has been stated that the Board will re-assess project viability when the 60% design documents are complete. **Staff should document this commitment to re-assess project viability** when Valley Water reaches that milestone. Even so, two more years and another \$40 million will be spent by then with no opportunity to assess changes to the viability of the Pacheco Reservoir Project. This seems insufficient for such a large important project.
4. **Environmental Justice and Equity Impact. The Pacheco Reservoir Project will have significant and unavoidable impacts on tribal cultural resources.** This should always be included in this section of staff reports regarding Pacheco, especially if *potential* reduction of flood damages to disadvantaged communities is included. Intended or not, this omission suggests that Valley Water is down-playing the destruction of tribal cultural resources.

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