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Public comment for 5/12/26 Item 3.9. Operating and Capital Rolling Biennial Budget



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From: Katja Irvin <katja.irvin@sbcglobal.net>

Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2026 1:50 PM

To: Clerk of the Board <clerkoftheboard@valleywater.org>; Board of Directors <board@valleywater.org>; james.eggars@sierraclub.org

Subject: Public comment for 5/12/26 Item 3.9. Operating and Capital Rolling Biennial Budget

For the record, here is my public comment delivered on the subject agenda item.

It is good to see the operations project details pages now mention the Sites Reservoir Project and the B.F. Sisk Dam Raise Project under the projects they are assigned to. I want to thank Darin Taylor and his team for adding that information, and for providing me with specifics about the FY 27 budgets for these projects.

The FY 27 budget for Sites is \$250,000. The latest quarterly report to California Water Commission shows “contracts for non-public cost share” completed by September 2026, and the WSIP award hearing in December 2026, so contracts will need to be signed by then and participant funding provided to the Sites Project Authority. The report says participant funding to move the project to construction is about \$101M but an updated total project cost estimate is underway, so the needed funding is likely to be more. Valley Water’s current participation level is .66% which comes out to about \$668,000 even at the current cost estimate, much more than the \$250,000 allocated in the budget. That will be a big mid-year budget adjustment.

I also want to thank staff Linh Hoang for providing me with information about how staff is measuring and tracking the effectiveness of outreach and engagement. I suggested to Linh that the California Water Commission provides a good example of tracking outreach. The Commission schedules regular agenda items to report on engagement trends, which explicitly provides an opportunity for discussion. I provided Linh with information about their last report which was in April.

This comes from a goal in the Commission’s 2025 Strategic Plan which directs the Commission to support smart water management through outreach, engagement, and a commitment to equity. Goal Two also directs the Commission to use its forum to provide interested parties with the opportunity to inform Commission activities and decision-making, and to develop, implement, and evaluate a targeted outreach approach to increase engagement.

I encourage the Board to develop a similar strategic goal related to increasing and tracking engagement, at least for the CIP/rate-setting/budget process which is arguably the most important Board action since everything Valley Water does flows from that process.

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