

SUMMARY FOR JANUARY 2023 Office of Government Relations Activities



Washington Monument on the Reflecting Pool in Washington, DC.

FEDERAL ADVOCACY EFFORTS

Congress Passes Legislation with Key Provisions for Shoreline Project

In the final days of December 2022, Congress passed two bills that include Valley Water-supported language that will help advance the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Phase I Project. The Water Resources Development Act of 2022 includes a provision to restore the original federal/non-federal project cost share, dispensing with the Contributed Funds Agreement that Valley Water had signed in 2021 as a way to keep the project alive. Congress also signed the Fiscal Year 2023 Omnibus Appropriations Bill, which provides additional funding for projects like the Shoreline Project that were funded under the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (BBA 2018). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) maintains that only BBA 2018 funds can be used for those projects, so the additional funds available under the FY23 Omnibus are critical. Valley Water will now advocate strongly for the Corps to receive as much of this new money for the Shoreline Project as possible.

STATE ADVOCACY EFFORTS

Governor Released Proposed State Budget for FY2023-24

On Tuesday, January 10, Governor Gavin Newsom released his \$297 billion proposed state budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24. As expected, revenues are down

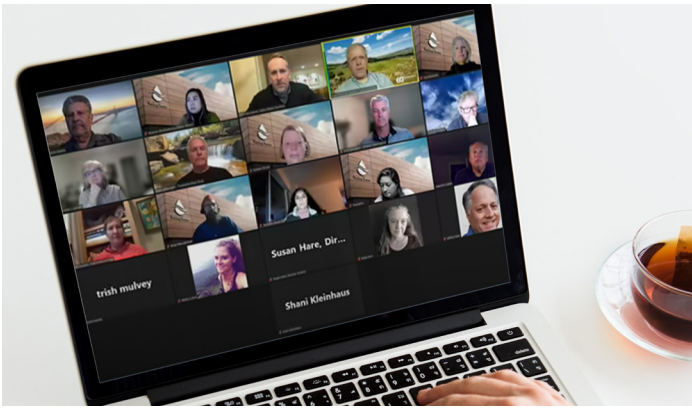
\$22.5 billion from last year, creating a shortfall requiring significant cuts and deferrals of previously approved and future state spending. The proposed budget reflects the current priorities of the Governor, funding education, homelessness assistance, housing, climate change, drought, and wildfire response planning and preparation. Notably, the proposed budget maintains most of the current and proposed investments in drought response and water resilience, albeit at reduced levels of funding. The State Coastal Conservancy funding previously approved in the 2022-23 fiscal years to address the impacts of climate change through coastal resilience did see a significant reduction, going from \$1.3 billion to \$734 million, approximately a 57 percent cut.

The budget includes several appropriations that may provide opportunities for Valley Water, such as \$125 million for drought, \$310 million in recycled water, \$75 million for dam safety, and \$125 million for habitat restoration. In addition, the budget proposes \$400 million in encampment resolution grant funds, increasing the total appropriation for such purposes to \$700 million since the 2021-2022 budget. While Valley Water currently does not directly qualify to access the encampment resolution grant program we may be able to access these funds through partnerships with the cities or county.

Staff will be advocating through the state budget process for Valley Water's funding priorities, including dam safety, recycled water, and State Flood Control Subventions funding.



California State Capitol in Sacramento.



November 16: Last meeting of 2022 for the tri-annual environmentally focused stakeholder meetings.

LOCAL ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS

Environmentally Focused Stakeholders Meeting

On November 16, the Office of Government Relations and the Watersheds Stewardship and Planning Division convened the last meeting of 2022 for the tri-annual environmentally focused stakeholder meetings. Chair Pro Tem Varela provided opening remarks and former Director LeZotte was also in attendance and spoke briefly to the group. More than 20 participants, including environmental and community partners, attended the virtual meeting and had an open discussion on the following topics presented by Valley Water staff: public guidelines for best practices for land-use near streams and an update on the Purified Water Project. Participants engaged Valley Water directors and staff with questions and thanked former Director LeZotte for her years of service to the community.

Vice Mayor Chappie Jones Homelessness Roundtable

On November 21, Valley Water staff participated in a virtual Homelessness Roundtable event hosted by San Jose Vice Mayor Chappie Jones. The event is a part of a series of meetings by the Vice Mayor's office to help prepare, educate, and engage the community on homelessness solutions and to provide updates on policies and efforts to address homelessness within the local community. Staff from the Watersheds Operations and Maintenance Division provided an overview of Valley Water's encampment cleanup program and process, and shared information on routine work performed in District 1. Also in attendance was Supervisor Susan Ellenberg and staff from the County's Office of Supportive Housing, as well as the City's housing, parks and recreation (BeautifySJ), and police departments. More than 50 people were in attendance and speakers engaged in a Q&A with attendees following the presentations.

Valley Water Participates in Annual Santa Visits Alviso Community Event

On December 10, Valley Water's Organization for Latino Affairs (OLA) partnered with Government Relations to staff a resource table at Santa Visits Alviso. Many people who visited the resource table did not know about emergency kits prior to the event. Staff used the water wheel along with the flood preparedness trivia to educate the community and



December 22: Chair Pro Tem Varela with Members of South County Realtors Alliance on Tour of Anderson Dam.

provided them with various flood preparedness resources.

Anderson Dam Tour with South County Realtors Alliance

Valley Water hosted members of the South County Realtors Alliance on a tour of the Anderson Dam Seismic Retrofit Project. Chair Pro Tem Varela kicked off the tour with welcome remarks and turned it over to Assistant Officer for Dam Safety and Capital Delivery Ryan McCarter, who went over the progress of the project and answered questions from the tour participants.

Farm Bureau Awards Director Santos for Service

On December 14, the Santa Clara County Farm Bureau presented the "Linda L. Lester Friend of Agriculture" award to Director Santos for his long and dedicated service, which has benefitted Santa Clara County agriculture.



December 14: Director Santos and Santa Clara County Farm Bureau Director Paul Mirassou.