

Public Comment to Santa Clara Valley Water District Board of Directors – June 25, 2019

Re: Shasta Reservoir Enlargement Project

I'm here today to talk about the Shasta Reservoir Enlargement Project.

As you may know, Attorney General Javier Becerra has filed a lawsuit against the Westlands Water District for violation of the California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act by assisting and cooperating with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in the planning of the Shasta Dam Enlargement. The Sierra Club is also party to a separate suit challenging Westlands unlawful assistance and cooperation with Reclamation's plan to raise Shasta Dam.

Santa Clara Valley Water District is a special district, which, along with Westlands, is subject to this same prohibition.

In March 2018 Valley Water Directors serving on the San Luis & Delta Mendota Water Authority Board voted to authorize sending a letter to the United States Department of the Interior expressing interest in sharing the cost for enlarging Shasta Dam and Reservoir.

The Sierra Club has scant information about how the Authority has followed up on this. Therefore, we would like to ask you, what is the Authority doing pursuant to this authorization to participate in the Shasta Dam Enlargement?

We do know that on May 30, 2019 the Authority held a Board of Directors Special Meeting for a Shasta/McCloud Tour. So we would also like to know, did Valley Water Directors go on this tour?

We believe it is unwise for the Authority to pursue this path and Santa Clara Valley Water District should put some distance between your views on this and those of the rest of the Authority Board members. It is doubtful that District voters would support violating the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as that would be inconsistent with the general support for California's landmark environmental laws.

Ideally the San Luis Delta Mendota Board should withdraw its March 2018 authorization to staff to court Reclamation. At least, given your obligations under state law, Valley Water should bring this concern to that Board and urge the Authority to reverse the decision in support of exploring this partnership, to notify the Bureau Reclamation, and to advise the Bureau that California law prohibits cooperation and assistance on the Shasta Dam Enlargement.

Furthermore, you should make an effort to discuss these issues in your own public meetings, including consideration of a resolution to formally withdraw support for the project and in formal opposition to the San Luis Delta Mendota Board's authorization.

In addition, we know that Westlands is courting Valley Water to purchase water that Westlands intends to derive from its illegal partnership with Reclamation. In light of the ongoing litigation, Valley Water should decline and urge other CVP contractors to decline Westlands offer as well.

In summary, we suggest that Valley Water untangle itself from any potential financial commitments and legal vulnerabilities that the San Luis & Delta Mendota Water Authority makes or could make on behalf of the District.