
2025 Legislative Workshop

COUNTY OF MONTEREY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

FEBRUARY 7, 2025





San Lucas Clean Drinking Water

San Lucas is a small, disadvantaged farming community in unincorporated Monterey County eight miles south of King City. The community water system (~100 connections) is owned and operated by San Lucas County Water District (District). This project would address persistent water quality problems which have occurred since 2006. In 2011, a “do not drink” order was issued, and despite establishing an alternative well to serve the community, a second “do not drink” order was issued in 2016. The lack of safe, affordable drinking water for the community has also caused a nearly 20-year delay of a severely needed affordable housing project in San Lucas.

The County and the District are working with the State Water Resources Control Board to identify potential solutions to address the water quality issues. The County has been pursuing a project that would construct a new pipeline (~8 miles) to tie into the Cal Water system in King City and deliver water directly to the District water distribution tank.

The County’s Federal FY24 Community Project Funding request for this project received a \$960,000 grant award through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for preliminary design and environmental review. Additional funding is needed for project design, environmental assessment, engineering, and construction work to provide a clean, long-term, reliable source of drinking water to meet the community’s current and future needs.



Nacimiento and San Antonio Dams and Reservoirs Safety Projects

A set of subprojects for Nacimiento and San Antonio Reservoir and Dam facilities to fulfill Federal and State regulatory requirements and provide flood protection and a sustainable water supply.

~ Current cost estimate \$192.5 million

Provides flood control, drought resiliency, groundwater recharge, environmental, and other benefits

- Over 418,000 acres supporting the County's \$11.7B agricultural industry
- Over 250,000 residents utilizing groundwater as the primary drinking water supply
- Reservoir operations provide a buffer against drought conditions to Salinas Valley water users

Fully operational facilities are critical for implementation of Groundwater Sustainability Plans

- MCWRA currently has self-imposed risk reduction measures in place reducing water storage at San Antonio Reservoir
- Without these projects these operational restrictions could become mandatory and more severe



San Antonio Dam Spillway

In September 2023, the Agency let a contract to conduct a feasibility study of the replacement of the San Antonio Dam spillway. The study was completed in the fall of 2024 and sent to the Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD) for review and approval. DSOD approval was received in December 2024 along with an extension to meet the mandate to December 2031.

The Agency is now shifting to design and permitting and estimates these costs to be about \$3 million over a ~3-year timeframe. The Agency currently plans to utilize a portion of the \$17 million in 2023-24 State Budget funding to support this work.

San Antonio Dam Low-Level Outlet Works

The Agency continues to pursue an additional \$8.6 million over the next three (3) fiscal years to modernize the San Antonio Dam Low-Level Outlet Works. This project entails seven (7) sub-tasks laid out in an order of successive steps to ensure safety and efficiency. To achieve this goal, the Agency is seeking \$1.8 million in funding in fiscal year 2025-26, \$5.6 million in fiscal year 2026-27, and \$1.2 million in fiscal year 2027-28. The Agency has applied for a grant through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Dam Safety Program's Rehabilitation of High Hazard Potential Dams (HHPD) program.



Nacimiento Plunge Pool Rehabilitation

In November 2023, the Agency let another contract to begin the design of the Nacimiento Plunge Pool Rehabilitation, and more specifically removal of the Plunge Pool rock outcropping. This geotechnical survey work was completed in the Fall of 2024 and will provide the basis for future design and permitting steps, as well as updated cost estimates, to complete the Rehabilitation.

The Agency currently estimates full design and permitting costs to be \$1.1 million over a 2-to-3-year timeframe and the construction cost to be about \$17 million. The Agency currently plans to utilize portions of the \$6 million in 2022-23 State Budget funding and the \$17 million in 2023-24 State Budget funding to support this work. The Agency applied for an additional \$5 million of funding assistance from the United States Department of Energy for the Safety of Dams Project at Nacimiento for this effort but was rejected. The Agency will continue to pursue state and federal funding sources to augment local resources. The Rehabilitation Project is expected to be complete by 2028.

Monterey County Veterans Home / Community Living Center

Monterey County seeks to sponsor State or Federal legislation that permits the construction of a California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) Veterans Home or a United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Community Living Center (CLC) in Monterey County – preferably on or near the former Fort Ord.

Establishing a Veterans Home or CLC in Monterey County will address the needs of our nation's heroes living in California by significantly reducing wait times, providing close proximity to Veteran health care and several other Veteran services, and reducing the risk of Veterans' homelessness. The scope of the project, location and cost are to be determined in coordination with CalVet and VA.

The Proposal seeks to authorize legislation like SB 1234 (Johannessen) in 2002, that would authorize the State Public Works Board to issue lease-revenue bonds to finance acquisition, design, and construction of an additional Veterans Home in Monterey County. A similar option is to pursue Federal legislative efforts to establish a VA Community Living Center which would generally provide the same skilled nursing and long-term healthcare benefits as a CalVet Veterans Home.



CalVet Veterans Homes

CalVet has eight (8) Veterans Homes that offer affordable long-term care to Veterans who are age 55+, eligible spouses and domestic partners are eligible to apply for admission.

The age requirement is waived for disabled or homeless veterans needing long-term care.

Services range from independent living programs with minimal support to 24/7 skilled nursing and dementia care for veterans with significant clinical needs.

Four (4) of the Veterans Homes offer skilled nursing and dementia care, all of which have 2 to 5+ year waiting lists.

All the Veterans Homes are at a considerable distance from Monterey County with the closest in Fresno and Yountville (both 2.5 hours away) and Ventura (4 hours away).

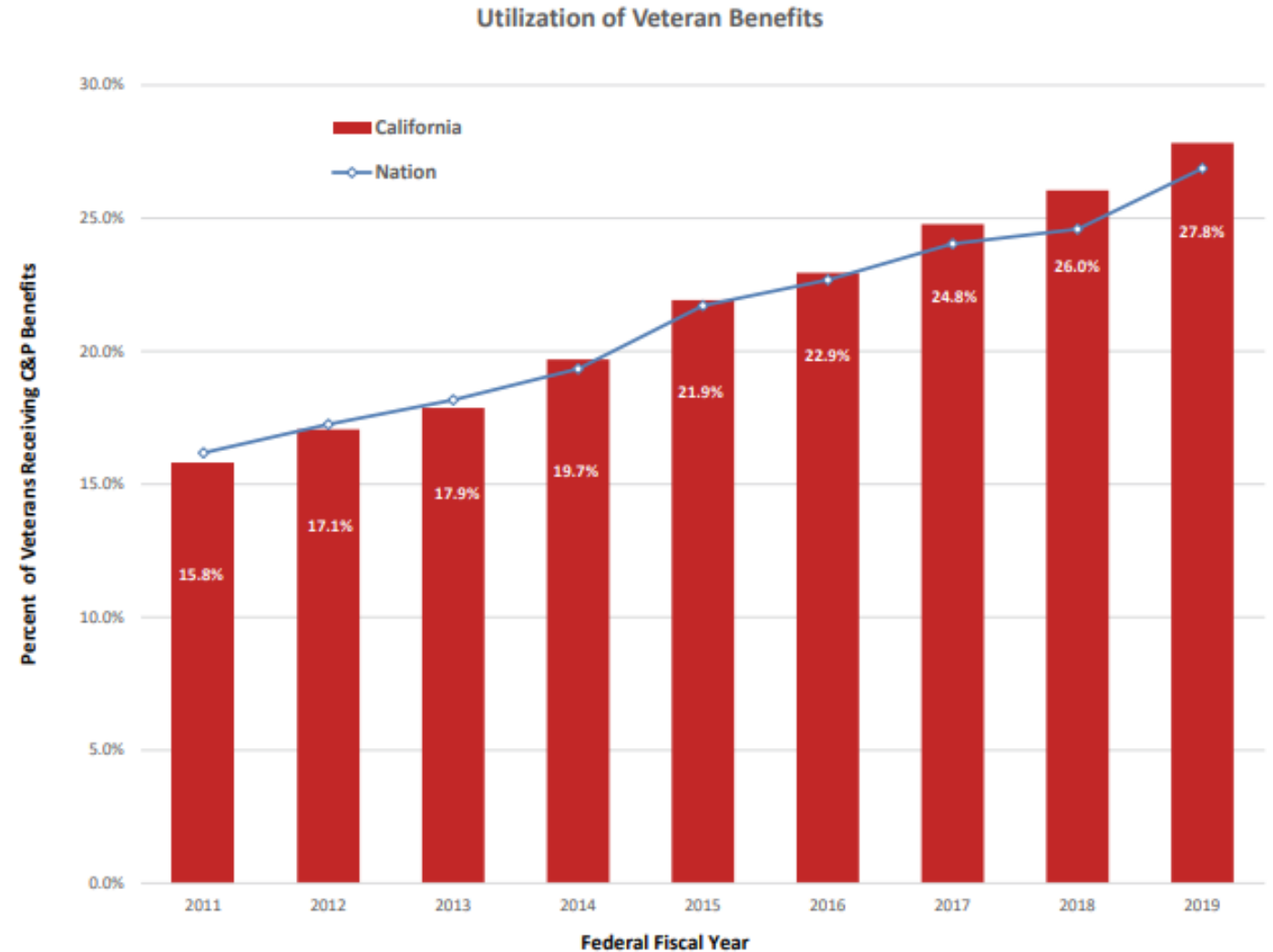
California Veterans

Second largest Veteran population in the U.S. - over 1.5 million

- 17,500 in Monterey County plus thousands of active and reserve military members
- 44,300 in Santa Clara County
- 8,100 in Santa Cruz County
- 14,300 in San Luis Obispo County
- 2,100 in San Benito County
- 86,300 collectively

Accessing VA Compensation and Pension (C&P) Benefits at greater levels than ever before-

- 15.8% in 2011 v. 27.8% in 2019
- California's total is over \$10.9 billion in FY 23/24



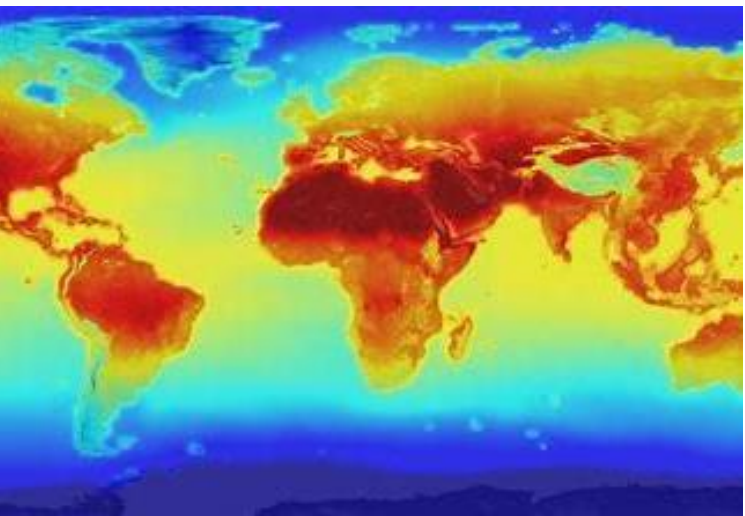
Immigration



Protecting Monterey County Values

The County of Monterey has a long tradition of providing a welcoming, safe, and sustainable community for its residents. People are entitled to live their life as they see fit and access public benefits and resources free of fear, hate or retribution. The County is resolute in its commitment to preserving the values that define this community and will rigorously advocate to protect and preserve:

- ***Immigrants:*** Oppose efforts that unfairly target documented and undocumented immigrants including but not limited to separation of migrant families at border crossings, large-scale deportations, efforts to limit or eliminate Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).
- ***Data Privacy:*** Support effort to protect data privacy for individuals who have provided personal information to any private or governmental institution and ensure that such data is only used for the purpose for which it was originally provided.
- ***Public Health:*** Oppose efforts that diminish public health initiatives such as access to preventative healthcare services and vaccines.



Protecting Monterey County Values – continued...

- **Reproductive Freedom:** Support efforts to defend and protect reproductive freedom, including the right to access safe, legal abortion services. Support legislation to codify the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*.
- **Marriage Equality:** Support and defend marriage equality as a constitutional right.
- **Climate Change:** Support efforts to continue to combat the very real climate change impacts experienced in the County and throughout California (e.g., wildfires, winter storms).
- **Disaster Assistance:** Oppose cuts to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). A well-funded FEMA is critical to partner with local communities to prepare for and recover from natural disasters, and to provide opportunities for federal funding/grants to supplement county services.
- **Freedom of Thought and Expression:** Support efforts to preserve access to freedom of thought and expression, as available through a variety of institutions, such as libraries and museums.

DISINFORMATION



Protecting Monterey County Values – continued...

- ***Combating Disinformation:*** Foster access to reliable and factual content from trusted news outlets, social media channels, and other information sources. Promote media literacy, equipping individuals to independently fact-check and analyze potentially deceptive or misleading data.
- ***Education:*** Oppose any efforts to limit or abolish the critical functions and protections provided by the U.S. Department of Education.
- ***Military Personnel and Veterans:*** Support the rights of veterans and members of the military, including women who seek to serve in combat roles, LGBTQ and transgender populations.
- ***Defense institutions:*** Support efforts to enhance, grow, and protect national security assets in the Monterey Bay Area and oppose Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) and similar Department of Defense proposals, which would diminish local missions and negatively impact the economy.



FEMA Reimbursements

Improve the FEMA Public Assistance Program, provide guidance to clarify expenses eligible for reimbursement, and expedite the grant award process.

- The County is working with Cal OES and FEMA to recover costs of the COVID-19 Pandemic, 2021, 2023 and 2024 Winter Storms, and is concerned that FEMA may reduce disaster reimbursement funding or change how events qualify.
- The County submitted millions of dollars in FEMA Public Assistance grant requests to recover disaster related costs. FEMA takes considerable time to review the applications.
- Process time is slow and creates administrative burdens.
- Requests for Information (RFIs) are numerous, burdensome, and ineffective.
- Interpretation of Public Assistance Policy is inconsistent and contradictory. Clear and consistent guidance and policy interpretation is needed from FEMA, as changes lead to major difficulties in documenting and seeking reimbursement.
- FEMA has continued to issue retroactive guidance or selectively interpreted Public Assistance Policy which contradict or are inconsistent with previously issued guidance and policy interpretation.
- The County received a \$23 million advance from the State; obligated funds for eligible projects will directly reimburse the state before funds are distributed to the County for the 2023 Winter Storms.

FEMA Reimbursements

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FEMA Public Assistance (2019-2024)



\$97 M

Eligible Response Expenditures



\$46-80 M

Federal Cost Share (Reimbursement)



\$11 M

Obligated

Disaster #	Incident Name	Status	Possible FEMA Eligible Damage Amount	Low End Reimbursement Estimate (Accounting Eligibility Issues/Insurance) *	Maximum Possible Federal Reimbursement	Obligated Federal Share
4434	2019 Winter Storm	Close Out	\$95,762	\$70,429	\$77,250	\$70,429
4482	2020 COVID-19	In Progress	\$18,179,563	\$7,114,934	\$18,149,804	\$7,114,934
4558	2020 Wildfires	Close Out	\$1,820,703	\$1,737,358	\$1,737,358	\$1,737,358
4683	2023 January Winter Storms	In Progress	\$27,999,026	\$18,754,646	\$23,489,059	\$2,036,926
4699	2023 March Winter Storms	In Progress	\$43,751,190	\$17,341,847	\$32,813,393	\$384,717
4769	2024 February Winter Storms	Commencing	\$4,953,995	\$778,336	\$3,715,496	-
Grand Total			\$96,800,239	\$45,797,550	\$79,982,360	\$11,344,364



Lithium-Ion Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Facilities.

The Moss Landing Lithium-Ion Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) began operating in December 2020 and houses large quantities of lithium-ion battery packs managed by Vistra Energy and PG&E.

Several incidents at the site have resulted in emergency response from the local fire protection district, regional HAZMAT team, Environmental Health, law enforcement, U.S. EPA and others. One incident resulted a shelter-in-place order issued to the surrounding community due to potentially hazardous air quality. A second incident, in January 2025, resulted in the mandatory evacuation of 1,500 people. Both incidents resulted in the closure of State Route 1, which lasted several days for the second incident.

Utility scale battery usage at the residential level, as well as commercial level, will continue to increase as the focus on renewable energy source demands intensifies.



Lithium-Ion Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Facilities ... continued

Key Objectives

- The County was instrumental in the development of SB 38 (Laird, 2023) – and supports legislative and regulatory efforts to further strengthen emergency response planning and enhance disaster response mitigation.
- The County is reviewing AB 303 (Addis).
- The County seeks legislative and regulatory changes to support periodic evaluation of existing facilities with current safety and fire codes to align with technology changes. The County supports more robust engagement with local fire departments on existing or planned BESS facilities.
- The County is dedicated to supporting policies and funding for local emergency response and preparedness resulting from BESS hazardous threats to the surrounding community.
- Support new environmental health, public health, and fire/safety regulations for BESS as they develop.