



2025 Legislative
Workshop

COUNTY OF MONTEREY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
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Fact Sheets

San Lucas Clean Drinking Water



Clean drinking water pipeline for the severely disadvantaged community of San Lucas

San Lucas is a small, disadvantaged farming community located in unincorporated Monterey County approximately eight miles from King City. The community water system (approximately 100 connections) is owned and operated by the San Lucas County Water District. The San Lucas Clean Drinking Water Project would address ongoing water quality problems at the existing District water sources 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.



Nick Rahaim/courtesy Monterey County Weekly

The County and the District are working with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to identify potential solutions to address the water quality issues. SWRCB is providing the District with Technical Assistance to identify a project that will provide safe drinking water to the community. The County is supportive of the project that SWRCB has identified as an alternative, that would construct a new pipeline to tie into the Cal Water system on the east side of King City and deliver water directly to the District water distribution tank. The pipeline is anticipated to be approximately 7.8 miles long and run along the eastern side of Highway 101 and the railroad line. The pipeline project will have the lowest impact on the community’s water rates long-term, compared to the other project alternatives identified.

While there has been a responsible party identified for the nitrate water quality issues, other water quality issues also need to be addressed. The responsible party will be partially financially liable for the treatment of nitrates, however, should the pipeline move forward. 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.

Request

Support legislation and budget proposals that create new or expands existing sources of funding for a long-term project that provides a reliable source of clean drinking water to the small, disadvantaged community of San Lucas.

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Nacimiento & San Antonio Dams & 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.

Nacimiento and San Antonio reservoirs supply water to Monterey County's fertile Salinas Valley for all the valley's beneficial uses. The reservoirs, built in 1957 and 1967 respectively, were put in place by the people of the Salinas Valley to provide flood control; store and release water for aquifer recharge; and combat seawater intrusion in the valley. The facilities provide water to the Salinas Valley agricultural economy, as well as valley residents; a large number who work in the agricultural industry or in the tourism-related businesses on the Monterey Peninsula. Without these reservoirs, life, culture, and the economies of Monterey County would suffer greatly.

The water released from these reservoirs utilizes the natural Salinas River channel for approximately 100 miles of conveyance through the Salinas Valley. The releases percolate into the ground for groundwater aquifer recharge and are seasonally diverted about 90 miles downstream to augment recycled water supplies used for irrigating crops in northern Monterey County.

Aging infrastructure is a national phenomenon. The problems in California and other states indicate there is a significant need to protect, maintain, enhance, and renew existing infrastructure, which is far more cost effective if done early and consistently. At Nacimiento, the condition of the spillway and plunge pool limits the volume of releases from the high-level outlets. This limitation can adversely affect the dam's storage and flood control potential. San Antonio is currently operated under self-imposed, risk reduction measures that limit the amount of water that can be stored pending the California Department of Safety of Dams mandated replacement of the spillway following the 2017 Oroville Dam spillway failure.

This is a multi-benefit Project. It provides flood control, drought resiliency, and groundwater recharge to drinking water supply aquifers for over 250,000 residents, including disadvantaged communities that support our hospitality and \$11.7 billion agricultural industry. In addition, having both facilities fully operational is crucial to implementation of several Groundwater Sustainability Plans. Monterey County does not receive any imported water from State or Federal water projects. Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Agency) is the lead agency for the Project. In 2023, the Agency received just over \$6 million in the 2022-23 State



Nacimiento Dam and Reservoir



San Antonio Reservoir



San Antonio Dam and Spillway

Budget and executed a funding agreement in 2024 for an additional \$17 million in the 2023-24 State Budget to advance these projects. While appreciative of these investments, a large financial obligation remains to achieve project completion.

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 forwarded to the California Department of Water Resources Division of Safety of Dams for review. In December, the DSOD approved the Agency’s proposed alternative for spillway replacement and extended the deadline for executing the mandated project to December 31, 2031.

The Agency currently estimates design and permitting costs for the spillway replacement to be about \$3 million over a 2-to-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. The Agency will continue to pursue state and federal funding opportunities, as well as develop a funding strategy for the local cost share, during the design and permitting phase with the aim of commencing construction in 2028.

Nacimiento Plunge Pool Rehabilitation: Also, 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 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 a portion 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 project 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.

San Antonio Dam Low-Level Outlet Works: The Agency must secure 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 FY 2025-26, \$5.6 million in FY 2026-27, and \$1.2 million in FY 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.

Request

Secure funding for a set of projects for Nacimiento and San Antonio Dam and Reservoir facilities to fulfill Federal and State regulatory requirements and provide flood protection and a sustainable water supply. Support legislation and budget proposals that protect existing and create new sources of funding for these projects. Tremendous momentum has been achieved to advance these critical dam safety projects over the past few years. The Agency seeks continued assistance and support in securing funding to complete the full suite of dam safety projects, and specifically \$8.6 million over the next three (3) fiscal years to complete the San Antonio Dam Low-Level Outlet Works project.

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Monterey County Veterans Home/ Community Living Center



Establish a Veterans Home/Community Living Center in Monterey County to serve the areas' aged and disabled veteran community and honor their service to our Nation.

Monterey County seeks to sponsor state or federal legislation that permits the construction of a California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) Veterans Home or U.S. 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 legislation 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 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's Veteran Population

California has the second largest veteran population in the United States – with nearly 1.5 million veterans. Monterey County and its surrounding area is home to thousands of these veterans plus thousands more active and reserve military members. The veteran population in the local area is 86,300:

- 17,500 in Monterey County
- 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

Economic Impact

California's veterans are accessing their earned benefits, VA Compensation and Pension (C&P) Benefits, at greater levels than ever before. In 2011, 15.8% of veterans accessed these benefits, which increased to 27.8% by 2019. During FY23-24 alone, nearly \$579 million in new or increased benefits were paid to veterans, dependents and survivors. Overall, the FY23-24 VA benefits paid to California veterans or survivors totaled \$10.9 billion, representing a tremendous positive economic impact on California's economy. Unfortunately, California is losing veterans at an alarming rate – much faster than its peer veteran population states (Texas and Florida). We owe all we have to the veterans of this nation, and it is our joint obligation to do all we can to care for those who have selflessly served for the freedoms we have today.

Benefits to Locating a Veterans Home in Monterey County

Locating a Veterans Home or CLC in Monterey County will provide an attractive geographical location with a rich military history and current military presence. Residents of the Veterans Home/CLC would have easy access to the Major General William H. Gourley VA-DoD Outpatient Clinic, commissary, military recreational facilities, and other military/veteran accessible resources. There are a large variety of beaches, walking/bike trails and county/state/national parks that will promote outdoor activity. A CalVet Veterans Home or VA CLC would provide an anchor towards keeping veterans, their families, and their economic resources to remain in Monterey County rather than seeing the continued outflow of veterans and their benefits.

Request

Support efforts to establish a CalVet Veterans Home or VA Community Living Center in Monterey County to serve the long-term health and housing needs of our veteran population and honor their contributions to our lifestyle, values and economy.

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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 including fundamental civil rights, reproductive freedom, protection of immigrants regardless of documentation status, and more.

The County 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.
- **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.
- **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.

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FEMA Reimbursements



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

The County continues to work with the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to recover costs related to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, 2020 Wildfires, and 2021, 2023 and 2024 Winter Storms. Monterey County has experienced several major disaster events in recent years and is concerned that FEMA may reduce disaster related reimbursement funding and/or change the way disaster events qualify for reimbursement. The County has submitted millions of dollars in FEMA Public Assistance grant requests to recover costs related to these disaster events. FEMA takes considerable time to review these applications - in some cases, the County has waited two-four years to recover eligible and expended costs for disaster response and recovery efforts. The process creates a significant administrative burden and creates a need for dedicated staff and training to keep up with FEMA's ever-changing requirements. There is also a need for clear and consistent guidance and policy interpretation from FEMA, as constant changes lead to major difficulties in documenting and seeking reimbursement.



More recently, the County has been working with Cal OES and FEMA towards reimbursement for costs related to non-congregate shelters (NCS) under FEMA Public Assistance following the 2023 Winter Storms and the COVID-19 Pandemic. NCS is an activity eligible for reimbursement under FEMA Public Assistance, and the County has spent several months working to clarify the guidance surrounding eligibility criteria. FEMA has continued to issue retroactive guidance for both disasters which contradict previously issued guidance and Public Assistance Policy.

Request

Support efforts to improve the FEMA Public Assistance Program including written guidance to clarify expenses that are eligible for reimbursement and expedite the grant award process to ensure the County is reimbursed for eligible costs as quickly as possible. Support efforts to streamline FEMA Public Assistance workflow and reduce overly burdensome bureaucracy.

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Lithium-Ion Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Facilities



The Moss Landing Lithium-Ion Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), one of the world’s largest BESS, is located in Monterey County at the retired Moss Landing oil and gas-fired power plant, which was built by PG&E. The facility began operating in December 2020 and houses large quantities of LG brand and Tesla brand lithium-ion battery packs managed by Vistra Energy and PG&E, respectively.

There have been several incidents at the site resulting in emergency response from the local fire protection district, regional HAZMAT team, the Environmental Health Bureau, law enforcement, the U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and others. One of these incidents resulted a shelter-in-place order issued to the surrounding residential community due to potentially hazardous air quality. A second incident, in January 2025, resulted in the mandatory evacuation of 1,500 people. Both of these 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.

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 and 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.
- The County supports new environmental health, public health, and fire/safety regulations for BESS facilities as they develop.

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