

April 8, 2019

The Honorable Ben Allen  
California State Senate  
State Capitol, Room  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 45 (Allen) Wildfire, Drought, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2020  
Request for Additional Categories of Funding for Dam and Spillway Improvements; Increasing  
Capacity of Existing Water Storage and Clarifications on Eligible for Fire Protection Prevention**

Dear Senator Allen:

The County of Monterey faces several natural resource challenges that could benefit from financial support from the State, specifically related to wildfire prevention, aging and inadequate dam and spillway infrastructure, and increasing capacity of existing water storage. Below please find our requests for additional funding categories as they related to the County's priority projects.

**Dam and Spillway Infrastructure:** The Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Agency) manages the San Antonio and Nacimiento Reservoirs, which were built at the same time as Oroville and with similar materials. The Agency received indication from the Department of Safety of Dams (DSOD) that significant repairs may be required at Nacimiento and San Antonio reservoirs. As the Agency waits for a formal response from DSOD, the Agency is analyzing the potential cost to replace the spillway, estimated at \$40 million or more. There is currently no State funding mechanism for costs of this type or magnitude. If repairs are not made, the reservoirs will be required to store less water, which means more water runoff flowing into the ocean. California's network of dams and reservoirs exist to capture and bank storm water during the rainy season. Maintaining existing water storage is a key piece to future sustainability of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin.

**Requested Action:** Include a new category of funding that provides matching funds for dam and spillway improvements to ensure California's water infrastructure is properly maintained and able to withstand storm events.

**Increasing Capacity of Existing Water Storage:** The Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Agency) is working on a project called the Interlake Tunnel that will connect Nacimiento and San Antonio reservoirs to transfer wet year water from Nacimiento Reservoir to San Antonio Reservoir to more fully utilize existing storage capacity in San Antonio Reservoir. The project could store up to 41,500 additional acre-feet of water per year, when available. The diversions through the tunnel provide increased water quantity for aquifer recharge and drought protection; seawater intrusion abatement; and provide additional flood control protecting the downstream farming communities. The Interlake Tunnel will improve the use of existing water storage by providing greater interconnection between water storage reservoirs.

**Requested Action:** Include a new category of funding that provides matching funds for existing water storage projects to increase their capacity to store additional water by raising dams and other cost-effective measures like the Interlake Tunnel.

**Fire Prevention:** The County has several areas considered by CAL FIRE as high and very high wildfire hazard severity zones. The Soberanes Wildfire in 2016 was caused by an illegal campfire in Garrapata State Park. The wildfire was declared as a State of Emergency and took three months to fully contain as it burned 132,127 acres. These wildfires will continue to threaten the Big Sur area and planned fire breaks could lessen the impact on the community.

**Requested Action:** Ensure counties are eligible for any grant funding that is included in the bond for fire prevention activities.

For these reasons, Monterey County requests your consideration of our request for additional funding categories for dam and spillway improvements and for increasing the capacity of existing water storage. Please feel free to contact Monterey County's Public Policy advisor, Jennifer Capitolo of Nossaman LLP at jcapitolo@nossaman.com or 916-930-7706, if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

John M. Phillips  
Chair, Board of Supervisors

cc: Senator Bill Monning  
Senator Anna Caballero  
Assemblymember Mark Stone  
Assemblymember Robert Rivas  
California State Association of Counties