

“Water, water, everywhere, And all the boards did shrink; Water, water, everywhere, Nor any drop to drink.”

— Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

The

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WAS CALIFORNIA PROPOSITION 1 WATER BOND BAIT & SWITCH?

The \$7.5 billion California Proposition 1 Water Bond, the “Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014”) on the November 2014 ballot promised to provide more above ground water storage for the first time in 40 years, in order to gain broad support from Democrat and Republican voters. But it seems that the initiative will not complete a single major water storage or delivery system.

Proposition 1 limited to \$2.7 billion the portion of the bond that was supposedly earmarked for “public benefit” from water storage projects, including dams, reservoirs, and groundwater storage. The term “public benefit” is defined as ecosystem improvements, water quality, flood control, or recreation.

The balance of the money in the proposition was to be spent on specific proposals unrelated to water storage, such as \$520 million to improve water quality; \$1.495 billion for ecosystem and watershed protection and restoration projects; \$810 million for integrated regional water management plan projects; \$725 million for water recycling and advanced water treatment technology projects; \$900 million to clean up the contamination of groundwater that serves as a source of drinking water, and \$395 million for statewide flood management projects and activities.

What about the water storage money? The language of the proposition limited the “public benefit” cost share of a water storage project to “not exceed 50 percent of the total costs” of the project.” And the language further stated that ecosystem improvements
(continued on page 2)



PROP 1: CALIFORNIA WATER COMMISSION NIXES ALL 12 PROPOSED NEW RESERVOIRS

The California Water Commission appears to have killed all 12 of the above-ground storage reservoirs proposed under the voter-approved, \$7.5 billion Proposition 1 water bond of 2014 by estimating they will all cost more than their benefits.

Prop 1’s details and implementation were controversial, because environmentalists and special interests carved off over \$4.8 billion of the funding. But drought-weary voters were supportive of the agreement to spend \$2.7 billion, or 36 percent, on the state’s first above-ground water storage in 45 years.

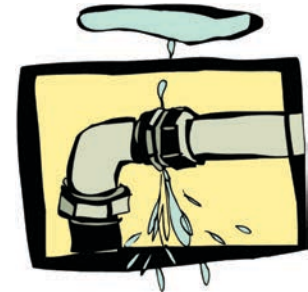
The California Bond Accountability website for Prop 1 still states that it will use “sale of \$7.545 billion in California general obligation bonds to fund ecosystems and watershed protection and restoration, water supply infrastructure projects, including surface and groundwater storage, and drinking water protection.”

But the California Water Commission (CWC) awarded these projects scores under 1, which means that the construction cost is greater than the estimated benefit value for all 12 of the proposed reservoirs that voters assumed they had approved in the \$7.5 billion bond.

For example, the Sites Dam and Reservoir, off the Sacramento River, was projected by water districts and other proponents as scoring a 2.11. They estimated a cost of \$1.66 billion to build the reservoir, creating benefits worth \$3.5 billion and providing enough water storage for 3.6 million people.

But the CWC scored the project a failing

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THEY’RE COMING FOR YOUR WATER

Californians have been told repeatedly that the drought we’ve suffered in the past few years has been due to manmade climate change. However researchers say that studies of tree rings, sediment and other natural evidence show that droughts are common in the state and more recent ones have been minor compared to ancient mega droughts that lasted much longer. In one case, a drought lasted from 850 to 1090 A.D. Another went from 1140 to 1320 A.D.

Both droughts also predate the use of oil, which is blamed for changes in the weather.

Nonetheless the state legislature is now considering a water management planning bill, AB 1668, which would put all Californian residents on a water diet.

AB 1668 would establish 55 gallons per capita daily for indoor residential water use until 2025. Beginning Jan. 1, 2025, however, that would drop to 52.5 gallons per capita daily for indoor residential water use and beginning Jan. 1, 2030 it would drop further to 50 gallons per capita daily for indoor residential water use.

If the law goes into effect it would mean quite a change in lifestyle as on average each person in the United States uses about 80 to 100 gallons of water per day according to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

People can figure out how much water they would have to conserve by checking their water bill and converting it from cubic feet to gallons as there are roughly 7.48 gallons of water per cubic foot.

To get some idea how restrictive that would be in terms of daily water use, according to the USGS taking a bath in a full tub requires 36 gallons of water. A shower
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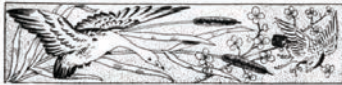
BAIT AND SWITCH *(continued)*

must comprise at least 50 percent of the total public benefits of a project.

The text of the Water Bond also stated that a water storage project “shall not be funded . . . unless it provides measurable improvements to the Delta ecosystem or to the tributaries to the Delta.” Therefore, the proposition assigned key decisions on funding to Governor Jerry Brown’s politically appointed California Water Commission.

A nearby article discusses the recent actions of the California Water Commission.

Credit: Chriss Street, Breitbart News



COMMISSION *(continued)*

“0.4”, by accepting the proponents’ \$1.66 billion project cost, but estimating the benefits of the reservoir at only \$662 million.

Perhaps even more shocking is the CWC’s treatment of the proposed Temperance Flat Reservoir on the San Joaquin River, which would provide enough water storage for 2.6 million Californians. Water districts and other proponents estimated the dam and reservoir cost at \$1 billion, and the benefits at \$2.83 billion.

But the CWC gave the project a zero cost-benefit score, according to the Fresno Bee. The CWC estimated the project at a \$2 billion cost, but found there were to be no benefits from the Temperance Flat reservoir, because the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, under the Obama administration, determined in 2016: “The San Joaquin River is a fully appropriated river, meaning the State Water Resources Control Board presumes that no more water rights are available here.”

Temperance Flat proponents were flabbergasted. With 173 percent above-average snowpack and above-average rainfall in early 2017, the California Department of Water Resources had released an extra 2 million acre feet of water in the first 6 months of 2017, from Friant Dam near the Port of Stockton on the San Joaquin River.

Despite the CWC’s difficulties in finding cost-benefit justifications for any above-ground water storage project in California, CWC appears to have had no trouble agreeing on the cost-benefit justifications for most of the other \$4.8 billion in Prop 1 bond spending. According to the California Bond Accountability website, CWC approved about \$3.97 billion in bond spending for ecosystems, watershed restoration, groundwater storage, and drinking water protection. ~

THEY’RE COMING *(continued)*

uses two to five gallons a minute so a 10 minute shower would use 20 to 50 gallons. Brushing your teeth uses one to two gallons per minute if the water faucet is running as does washing your hands/face or shaving. Running the dishwasher consumes six to 16 gallons. Washing dishes by hand takes eight to 27 gallons depending on how it’s done. Washing clothes takes 25 to 40 gallons depending on the type of machine. Flushing the toilet takes anywhere from 1.6 to 4 gallons. There is also the daily need for drinking water for yourself, your pets and any indoor plants.

Under the 50 gallon limit per day per person, a person might have to choose between taking a shower or washing clothes. Showers also might be colder as waiting for the warm water to kick in could consume too many gallons unless the water is captured and reused. Baths would be a luxury unless multiple people used the same water, probably based on some kind of seniority system.

Shipping the water south

Someone who has been particularly critical of these plans is Dr. Dale Coco who serves on the El Dorado Irrigation District board of directors.

“Fifty gallons per person per day is the minimum needed for health and safety according to the law and you can’t go below that,” said Coco. ”

Limiting people to that is particularly ridiculous in Northern California where there’s plenty of water right now. Even during the drought, we had plenty of water. We only had to restrict people’s water use during the drought because the State Water Board (SWB) forced us to do so. If we had not met the targets they set for us we would have been heavily fined.

“When we first started hearing about this we thought they would make us do the same thing we did during the drought going forward. But this is the main point. If everyone in Northern California restricted water use 25 percent, we only use 9 percent of the water, so water use would only drop by 2 percent. So you have to ask the question, if there’s adequate water, why are restricting people to the bare minimum for health and safety?”

Coco said he believes it’s really just a ruse to change the water rights system in the state and to ship the water south.

“This has nothing to do with water management. It has nothing to do with anything other than more water for billionaire farmers in the southern San Joaquin Valley and Los
(continued on page 3)



WATER TAX PROPOSED IN CALIFORNIA

For the first time, Californians could pay a tax on drinking water — 95 cents per month — under legislation aimed at fixing hundreds of public water systems with unsafe tap water.

Senate Bill 623, backed by a strange-bedfellows coalition of the agricultural lobby and environmental groups but opposed by water districts, would generate \$2 billion over the next 15 years to clean up contaminated groundwater and improve faulty water systems and wells. The problem is most pervasive in rural areas with agricultural runoff.

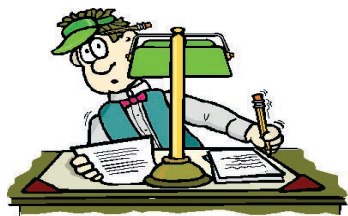
“My message is short and direct: We are not Flint, Michigan,” co-author Sen. Robert Hertzberg, D-Van Nuys, said at a Wednesday rally outside the Capitol, where demonstrators held signs reading “Clean water is not a luxury” and “Water is a human right.”

Ironically, many Californians are more aware of the crisis in Flint — where state and local officials in 2015 told residents about lead contamination in the drinking water, after claiming it was safe to drink — than about the water problems in their home state, said the measure’s main author, Sen. Bill Monning, D-Monterey. He called this “a pivotal time in our state’s history to do the right thing.”

SB 623 has been moving through the Legislature for months, but was amended recently to include the tax on water for both homes and businesses. It also imposes fees on farms and dairies, roughly \$30 million annually, to address some of the contamination caused by fertilizers and other chemicals. Because it includes new taxes, the proposal will need a two-thirds vote in each house to pass, which supporters concede will be a battle.

Still, Monning has been able to forge the

(continued on page 3)



The EDITOR'S CORNER

"Whiskey is for drinking; water is for fighting over."

Hello All,

The above quote is attributed to Mark Twain. Whoever did say it said a mouthful. Witness the current battle over water in California.

About 75 percent of the water demand in California originates south of Sacramento, while about 75 percent of the state's water supply in the state comes from north of the capital city. Huge water projects transport water from north to south. The State Water Project and the Central Valley Project are the leaders in furnishing thirsty Southern California with water from Northern California. That's the big picture.

Now let's look at El Dorado County, served by the El Dorado Irrigation District, known as EID. The mining ditch system that early gold-rush pioneers built in the 1850s to bring water to otherwise dry mining claims was the basis for today's EID.

The mining ditch companies dammed creeks and rivers to divert the water into ditches that ran from the north fork of the Cosumnes River all the way to our own Bass Lake (then called the American Reservoir).

After many ownership changes, EID was formed in the 1930s, bought the water system, and began to improve it to the water system we have today. In effect, in El Dorado County we have our own independent water supply.

In the rest of California, the haves and have-nots are fighting over whether to use the water that could be available if dams were built, or simply ration the insufficient water we have now. But we may be forced to ration and pay a water tax. To me, that's unfair.

Best regards to everyone,

John E. Thomson

Editor

THEY'RE COMING *(continued)*

Angeles," charged Coco.

"Even if we cut our water use, where does the water go," he asked, "and who gets it? There is nowhere to store the water they want to store. If they were really doing this for conservation, where are they going to put it? They have no way to recharge the groundwater. They don't have the infrastructure to either move the water or put it underground. So it's all really smoke and mirrors you're seeing out here."

Coco believes that if the law goes into effect the state will enforce it through the water districts by fining them if they produce too much treated water. Or will require districts to fine customers for using more water than allowed. He also believes that if a district can't show a beneficial use for its water, the state may rescind its water rights.

"Long before the SWB was founded, you had local control of water supplies. You have water rights and you control them and you use them. The SWB is trying to change nearly 200 years of how we have managed and handled water in the state. And the reason is because 26 million people live in an arid, semi-arid or actual desert area where there is just 3 to 7 inches of rainfall a year. Tell me why they are still building golf courses in southern California if they have such a problem with water?"

"How can we sustain our lifestyle and economy in the face of the onslaught of incompetent bureaucrats who mainly are protecting their phony baloney jobs any way they can," he said. "We have agencies that continue to exist for no other reason than to continue paying the bureaucrats that run them."

"The reality is that all this fighting over water rates doesn't mean anything. Without water there is no life. If we don't manage our water properly. If we do not have a well thought out, well-managed, cohesive workable water policy in this state, nothing else will matter. Water is the basis of all life. Even in drought years, this state has plenty of water but it's being mismanaged, misappropriated and misused. A lot of it is being used to grow seed crops on billionaires farms in the Southern San Joaquin Valley, most of which is exported for a profit. The water flows into the ground and the money flows into the Resnick's pockets."

(The Resnick family has created an agricultural empire in the Central Valley and own a majority stake in the Kern Water Bank, one of California's largest underground water storage facilities.)

"The missing piece of water policy in

the state, the environmentalists, are being used in order to realign and reassign the water rights from northern California to southern California and that has been the theme from the central valley project to the California water project to the California water fix to conservation as a way of life. All of those projects have one theme: moving water south because that's where the people are and the north is where the water is. But when you are going to require people in the north who have abundant water, even in a drought, to be restricted to the minimum amount necessary for health and safety, that is going too far." ~

Credit: Dawn Hodson, Mtn. Democrat

WATER TAX *(continued)*

unusual alliance of farmers and environmental groups, which rarely agree on public policy. He also has the support of at least one Republican lawmaker: Sen. Andy Vidak, a cherry farmer who said his Central Valley district — which includes Hanford and parts of Fresno and Bakersfield — is the epicenter of the drinking-water problem.

"This is very, very important to my constituents," he said after the rally, as some of them began chanting on the Capitol steps. "This is one of the most important things in my district."

But water agencies say taxing drinking water sets a dangerous precedent and that the bill would turn them into state tax collectors. "Water is essential to life. Should we tax drinking water? We don't think so," said Cindy Tuck, a spokeswoman for the Association of California Water Agencies.

Sue Stephenson, a spokeswoman for the Dublin San Ramon Services District, said she supported the intent of the proposal — potable drinking water for all — but argued that lawmakers should use the money in existing coffers.

"The whole purpose of the general fund is to help take care of disadvantaged communities," she said. "There's no reason that they could not also fund communities that need access to drinking water."

Marie Barajas, of San Jose, had a similar reaction. "That's not fair. We're not responsible for that," she said. "That's why we pay taxes."

Monning, however, argues that the general fund isn't a reliable funding source and that the proposed tax on households, amounting to roughly \$11.40 per year, is negligible. "You're not going to notice it on your water bill," he said.

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BIG CHANGES TO 916 AREA CODE

In response to the dwindling supply of telephone numbers in the 916 area code, the Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has decided add the 279 new area code to the existing 916 area code region. Adding the new area code will ensure a continuing supply of phone numbers to the region. In effect, what used to be the old 916 area code region will now have two area codes. The technical name for such an arrangement is an area code overlay.

The alternative would have been to carve a new area code region out of the old 916 region and require that all existing 916 numbers in the new area code region change to the 279 area code. The logistics would have been difficult, to say the least.

With an overlay, existing customers with a 916 number won't have to change their existing area code or phone number. However, because more than one area code will now serve the same geographic area, they will be required to dial 1 plus the area code plus the phone number for all calls, including calls within the same area code. Customers with

a 279 area code will have to do the same.

Customers with a 530 area code are not affected, except to be aware that your calls to the new 279 area code are going to what was once only the 916 area code region.

The service for current subscribers with a 916 area code and phone number won't change. The only change is entering the area code for all calls. The price of a call, your plan and coverage area, and other rates and services won't change because of the overlay. All local calls will remain local, regardless of the number of digits entered.

However, there are things that current 916 area code subscribers must do in addition to entering the area code and phone number for all calls.

You should update any pre-programmed 7-digit phone numbers in your mobile device to include the area code, as well as any text or email alert services, and any call forwarding services.

You should also re-program all services and devices that are currently programmed to use a 7-digit phone number to include the area code, including automatic dialing equipment. Some examples include: Life safety systems and medical monitoring devices; fire or burglar alarm and security systems; security gates; speed dialers; call forwarding settings; fax machines; Internet dial-up numbers; voicemail services; and similar functions.

Also review your websites, personal and business stationery, advertising materials, personal and business checks, contact information, personal or pet ID tags, and other such items to ensure the area code is

included.

If you have any questions about the 916/279 area code overlay, you may contact the CPUC at (800) 922-0204, or visit the [California Public Utilities Commission](http://CaliforniaPublicUtilitiesCommission.com) site to learn more. ~



WATER AGENCIES STRONGLY OPPOSE WATER TAX

Water agencies from throughout California have joined with the Association of California Water Agencies to publicly voice their opposition to a pending bill that would establish the state's first-ever tax on drinking water and to pledge their commitment to ensuring safe drinking water for communities across the state.

Proponents of SB 623 – called the “Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fee” – say the bill is aimed at creating a fund to clean up contaminated drinking water in disadvantaged communities. It would establish the state's first tax on drinking water.

ACWA is vigorously opposed to this new tax and the precedent it would set.

In all, representatives of more than 20 ACWA agencies have voiced their opposition to SB 623's water tax, and more than 100 have signed a coalition statement against the bill.

Locally, El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) spokesman Jesse Saich told the Bulletin, “EID, along with the Association of California Water Agencies and scores of water purveyors across the state, is working to fight against this legislation. We fundamentally believe that taxing drinking water—an essential life-sustaining resource—is not sound policy. We feel confident that the legislators in our service areas (Senator Gaines and Assemblymen Bigelow and Kiley) are against this water tax.”

Credit: Pamela Martineau, Water News; El Dorado Irrigation District



Oak Knoll Clubhouse

3331 Alyssum Circle



Program Outreach

Tuesday, February 27


9:30-11:00am and 5:30-7:00pm

The El Dorado Hills Community Services District will be seeking resident input for programming of Oak Knoll Clubhouse.

Please join us to brainstorm ideas and discuss suggestions.

QUESTIONS? Contact Mike Cottrell
916-614-3215 or mcottrell@edhcsd.org



WATER TAX *(continued)*

The bill is now relegated with hundreds of others in the “suspense file” of the Assembly Appropriations Committee. The panel must decide by September 1 to move it to the Assembly floor for a vote.

Selerina Chavez took a day off from work to drive from the Kern County city of Arvin for the rally. She said she hoped lawmakers would try to fix the problem posing health risks to her family and her neighbors, many of whom are farm workers or living on fixed incomes.

When she moved from Ventura County more than 20 years ago, she said, it never occurred to her that the water would be unsafe for her family to drink. They drank it for years, she said, before she learned a few years ago that it contained unsafe levels of arsenic.



PRESIDENTS' DAY

Presidents' Day is an American holiday celebrated on the third Monday in February. Originally established in 1885 in recognition of President George Washington, it is still officially called “Washington's Birthday” by the federal government.

Traditionally celebrated on February 22—Washington's actual day of birth—the holiday became popularly known as Presidents' Day after it was moved as part of 1971's Uniform Monday Holiday Act, an attempt to create more three-day weekends for the nation's workers.

While several states still have individual holidays honoring the birthdays of Washington, Abraham Lincoln and other figures, Presidents' Day is now popularly viewed as a day to celebrate all U.S. presidents past and present.

In addition to her regular water bill, she spends \$40 per week buying drinking water. She also buys water for cooking.

Now, she said, “I have three water bills.”



SB623 Questions and Answers

What is it? SB 623, by Sen. Bill Monning, D-Monterey, would generate \$2 billion over 15 years for a Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund, which would provide emergency water and longer-term system fixes for hundreds of communities whose tap water doesn't meet safe drinking-water standards.

Where would the money come from? The proposal would generate roughly \$110 million per year through a 95-cent monthly fee on home water bills as well as taxes on businesses of up to \$10 per month. Another \$30 million would come from higher fees on agricultural and dairy businesses, industries whose chemicals contribute to the problem of contaminated groundwater.

Who's for it? Who's against it? The bill is backed by the agriculture and dairy lobbies, as well as by a long list of environmental, social justice and civic groups — an unusual combo. Water districts are against the bill, saying that taxing water users creates a bad precedent and that collecting the money would be burdensome.

Will it pass? If the Assembly Appropriations Committee moves the bill to the floor, it needs a two-thirds vote of each house, which is always a challenge. What's more, Assembly Republican Leader Chad Mayes has faced intense blow-back for his bipar-

tisan collaboration to extend California's landmark climate program, called “cap and trade.” But SB 623 does have one Republican co-author: Sen. Andy Vidak, of Hanford. ~

Credit: Katy Murphy, Bay Area News Group



BLAC BOARD SETS MAY MEETING

The February Board Meeting of the Bass Lake Action Committee will be held on May 7, 2018, at a location to be announced in an upcoming edition of the Bass Lake Bulletin.

The meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. BLAC Members and members of the public are cordially invited to attend.

For further information about BLAC meetings and membership, please contact Vice-President John Davey at 530-676-2657. ~

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