



Government Affairs Update – May 2023

Please contact Assistant General Manager Brad Sherwood with any questions at brad.sherwood@scwa.ca.gov

State Update:

Water Contractor Tours

On April 10th Sonoma Water gave a joint tour to Cotati, and Rohnert Park City Councilmembers. Thank you so much for coming out! We highly encourage anyone who has not had a chance to view our facilities please coordinate a tour date with Brad Sherwood at brad.sherwood@scwa.ca.gov.

Legislative Updates

Sonoma Water's Co-sponsored Bill AB 30 is moving along in the legislative process and will be heard in the Assembly Appropriations Committee on April 26th. Also, Sonoma Water's ask for more funding from the state for Groundwater Sustainability Agencies will be heard in Assembly Subcommittee 3 on April 26th.

Letters of Support

Sonoma Water has submitted four letters of Support for Bills that we feel strongly about. Those bills include:

AB 557: Open meetings: local agencies: teleconferences

AB 1572: Potable water: nonfunctional turf

SB 23: Water supply and flood risk reduction projects: expedited permitting.

SB 867: Drought and Water Resilience, Wildfire and Forest Resilience, Coastal Resilience, Extreme Heat Mitigation, Biodiversity and Nature-Based Climate Solutions, Climate Smart Agriculture, and Park Creation and Outdoor Access Bond Act of 2023.

Federal Update:

The Sonoma Water Federal Affairs Program continues to make progress during the first quarter of 2023 focusing on Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration, Community Fund Requests, Sub-seasonal to Seasonal Precipitation Forecasting, Advanced Quantitative Precipitation Information (AQPI), Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO), Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, and Operation of Dams / Implementation of Russian River Biological Opinion.

Issue: Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration

Status: Sonoma Water staff are working on an application in response to a Notice of Funding Opportunity released on March 14, 2023 by the Bureau of Reclamation to restore and protect aquatic ecosystems. Funding will support the study, design and construction of collaboratively developed ecosystem restoration projects that provide widespread regional benefits and improve the health of fisheries, wildlife and aquatic habitat through restoration and improved fish passage. The Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Program was established due to language championed by Representative Huffman that was included in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021.

Issue: Community Fund Requests

Status: Sonoma Water requested funds for five projects within the community fund opportunities provided by local congressional delegations and U.S. Senate offices. Senator Feinstein's appropriation requests included the following Sonoma Water requests:

- Russian River County Sanitation District: Funds would be used at the Russian River County Sanitation District's treatment plant to increase its sustainable treatment capacity during flood events. Guerneville CA \$1.5M
- Sonoma County Water Agency: Funds would be used to conduct design, CEQA, and right-of-way acquisition for the 12kV Wohler-Mirabel overhead electrical distribution system as part of their water supply system local hazard mitigation strategy. Santa Rosa CA \$1M
- Congressman Huffman's office requested our programmatic language of \$4 million for watercraft inspection stations in Russian River watershed, and our report language related to wildfire resiliency at Army Corps facilities.

Issue: Sub-seasonal to Seasonal Precipitation Forecasting

Status: Sonoma Water coordinated efforts to advocate for a \$15 million Fiscal Year 2024 (FY2024) federal appropriation to begin a Western pilot project for improving sub-seasonal to seasonal (S2S) precipitation forecasting. Building on the success of a \$1,000,000 appropriation that was included in report language for H.R.2617, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, the firm worked to enlist Congressional champions, including Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA) and Representative Grace Napolitano (D-CA), who are serving as lead promoters for the FY2024 federal funding request. In March, the firm facilitated a trip to Washington, DC to meet with Congressional staff and Administration officials to advocate for funding for the pilot and to encourage additional bipartisan support for the initiative. Additionally, we spearheaded letters of support to House and Senate appropriators that have been endorsed by nearly three dozen stakeholders representing national, regional, and local entities.

Issue: Advanced Quantitative Precipitation Information

Status: Sonoma Water continued to coordinate with Sonoma Water staff and the DC consultant team to pursue federal funding for the Advanced Quantitative Precipitation Information (AQPI) program. Building on the success of a \$900,000 appropriation that was included in report language for H.R.2617, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, we are working to secure additional funding in FY2024. Our champions, Congressman Jared Huffman (D-CA), Senator Padilla, and Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), have led efforts to request an additional \$4.8 million for FY2024. Through the Local Partner Agency Committee, we were able to secure ten signatures from Bay Area water agencies in support of the

funding request. We have shared the letter with Bay Area Congressional offices and have received positive responses in return.

Issue: Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations

Status: In addition to the efforts related to S2S and AQPI noted above, Sonoma Water worked to promote federal support for improved forecasting and associated water allocation and flood control decisions at Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino. We have remained committed to educating policymakers and staff on Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) and seeking funding to update water manuals for the region's reservoirs. On March 9, 2023, the President's FY2024 budget request was released, which includes \$14 million for the Water Operations Technical Support (WOTS) program. We continue to coordinate with Scripps Institution of Oceanography to ensure continued funding for the program.

Issue: Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund

Status: As is noted above, on March 9, 2023, the President's FY2024 budget request was released, which includes \$65 million for the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recover Fund (PCSRF). This appropriation is consistent with the amount enacted in FY2023 and in annual appropriations in recent years. We will continue to monitor FY2024 funding as House and Senate appropriations bills are released in the coming months. Since the program's inception in FY2000, due in part to Sonoma Water's leadership and ongoing advocacy efforts, PCSRF has received \$1.75 billion in federal funding.

Issue: Operation of Dams / Implementation of Russian River Biological Opinion

Status: Sonoma Water continued to support efforts to secure funding for operation and maintenance of infrastructure critical to successful implementation of the Russian River Biological Opinion that has been in place since 2008. As is noted above, on March 9, 2023, the President's FY2024 budget request was released, which includes \$4.338 million for Operations and Maintenance (O&M) at Coyote Valley Dam and \$6.885 million for O&M at Dry Creek (Warm Springs) to support, among other things, dam safety and hatchery operations.

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