

Congressman John Garamendi (CA-08)

Chair Fern and members of the California Water Commission, thank you for the opportunity to speak today in support of the Sites Reservoir Project.

I had the honor of representing Glenn and Colusa Counties in Congress from 2013 to 2022 and served as the first-ever Deputy Secretary of the Interior under President Clinton, where I oversaw the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. During my time in Congress, I have worked to secure more than \$2.7 billion in federal funding for the off-stream Sites Reservoir, in addition to the \$816 million provided by the 2014 State Water Bond approved by California voters.

The last major reservoir built in California was Diamond Valley in 1999. Since then, our state has outgrown its water storage infrastructure, which is under increasing strain due to the climate crisis. We must make forward-looking investments to capture and store water during wet years for use in times of droughts. The Sites Reservoir Project is exactly the type of critical infrastructure project we need to meet California's future water demands and ensure a reliable water supply for our environment, communities, and farms.

The Sites Reservoir Project is essential to integrated water management in the Sacramento Valley and will maximize the capture of excess Sacramento River flows during winter storms for use later in the year. By increasing storage capacity north of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, the project will improve resiliency in our statewide water system and help advance California's renewable energy goals through its planned Phase II pumped-storage component.

I urge the Commission to consider increasing the Water Storage Investment Program funding allocated to the Sites Reservoir Project. The project is actively securing state and federal permits and has significant funding commitments from federal and local partners. Additional Water Storage Investment Program funding will ensure the Project can move efficiently to construction and begin delivering public benefits as soon as possible.

Construction of the Sites Reservoir Project will help California achieve a truly drought-resilient water system and will benefit our farmers, ecosystems, and communities. I look forward to working with Governor Newsom, the California Water Commission, the Sites Project Authority, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and Cabinet Secretaries Crowfoot, Garcia, and Ross to advance this project and strengthen California's water storage infrastructure. Thank you.