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Senate Republicans Offer New \$8.7 Billion Water Bond Proposal To Meet CA's Needs

Senators Vidak & Nielsen Author Responsible Solution to Provide Storage and Clean Water, Protect Water Sources, Sustain the Delta

Friday, August 8, 2014



SACRAMENTO – With time running out to place an alternative water bond on the November ballot that will help provide a safe and reliable water supply for California, Senate Republicans today introduced SB 1013 – The Clean, Safe, and Reliable Drinking Water Supply Act of 2014. It meets Governor Brown’s demand for a “no-frills” water bond that is less costly than the Proposition 43 water bond that will be on the November 2014 ballot. It also provides the necessary funding to help build two new reservoirs that will provide desperately needed water storage to capture water in wet years for use in dry periods.

“The current drought has made it even more clear that Californians are looking for real solutions to provide a reliable statewide water supply and time is running out to find a lower-cost alternative to the current bipartisan water bond (Proposition 43) that can get enough votes to pass out of this Legislature,” said Senate Republican Leader Bob Huff (R-Diamond Bar.) “Our caucus has continued to work with Democrats on an alternative water bond but they have not offered any viable solutions. Our legislation provides a statewide approach to improving water management, and it truly meets the co-equal goals of water supply reliability and Delta ecosystem restoration.”

Authored by Senators Andy Vidak (R-Hanford) and Jim Nielsen (R-Gerber) the Senate Republican bill provides \$3 billion for water storage. It funds clean, safe and reliable drinking water; protecting rivers,

lakes, streams, coastal waters and watersheds as well as climate change preparedness for regional water security and drought preparedness. It will allocate money for groundwater sustainability, water recycling, Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta sustainability and statewide flood management.

“The people of California want the Legislature and the governor to come to a consensus on a water bond, and that is the intention of this proposal,” said Senator Vidak. “We will not settle for a water bond that doesn’t provide a critical and sustainable water supply. Let’s negotiate an agreement that works for all Californians or let the people vote on the bipartisan water bond that’s already on the November ballot. It’s time to lead, not delay.”

“In January Senator Vidak and I introduced SB 927, a \$9.2 billion water bond that increased storage, protected the Delta, and provided more clean drinking water,” said Senator Anthony Cannella (R-Ceres.) “It had bipartisan support and addressed California’s needs but ultimately it did not pass. This Senate Republican bond is a fair compromise that should obtain bipartisan support as it meets California’s water needs.”

SB 1013 is co-authored by Senators Tom Berryhill (R-Twain Harte,) Anthony Cannella (R-Ceres,) Jean Fuller (R-Bakersfield,) Steve Knight (R-Antelope Valley,) Bob Huff (R-Diamond Bar,) Mimi Walters (R-Laguna Beach,) and Mark Wyland (R-San Diego.)

“The 2009 Water Bond which will go before the voters as Proposition 43 was an exhaustively negotiated bipartisan, north, south, east, west visionary compromise among many competing priorities,” said Senator Nielsen. “It represents the most significant water legislation since the State Water Project was authorized in 1951. For purely political reasons its placement on the ballot has been twice postponed. We stand ready to work with the Governor and our colleagues on an alternative bond, but we do not intend to remain idle while the future water needs of our children and grandchildren are compromised. If no agreement is reached on an alternative bond, we are comfortable going forward with Proposition 43 and will actively campaign for it.”

“Proposition 43 would be an acceptable alternative to doing nothing,” added Senator Huff. “Prop 43 has many things Democrats voted for and should still support: safe drinking water, water recycling, conservation and water supply and Delta habitat restoration. It doesn’t spend money on Delta tunnels. It has broad support from labor unions, family farmers and water agencies and is a bipartisan solution. California’s future, our economy, our families and our jobs depend on a stable water supply. It would be a shame for this governor and Democrat leaders to abandon Californians in the middle of a crisis.”

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