



County of Monterey

Item No.9

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

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Nacimiento and San Antonio Dams Flood Reduction Benefits Study

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Monterey County Water Resources Agency Board of Directors:

Approve an Agreement for Services with FlowWest in an amount not to exceed \$60,000 to perform a study of flood reduction benefits related to the presence of Nacimiento and San Antonio Dams; and authorize the General Manager to execute the amendment.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

Nacimiento and San Antonio Reservoirs began operation in 1957 and 1967, respectively, serving as multi-benefit facilities providing flood reduction, water storage, and recreational benefits. The dams were built in part to address conditions of seawater intrusion and groundwater overdraft that were already prevalent in the 1940s and documented in the California Department of Public Works, Division of Water Resources, *Bulletin No. 52-B* which was published in 1946. The dams and their reservoirs have served the residents of Monterey County well since their construction, providing winter flood reduction, summer groundwater recharge, and recreational opportunities for locals and tourists alike. Since the construction of the Salinas Valley Water Project and the start up of the Salinas River Diversion Facility in 2010, growers in the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP) distribution area have benefitted from re-diversion of reservoir water to supplement recycled water and ground water sources.

Many years after the construction of the dams, the Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Agency) commissioned a consulting team led by Montgomery Watson to further study the benefits of the dams. The resulting *Salinas Valley Historical Benefits Analysis* (HBA) was completed in 1998. The HBA has become one of the foundational documents that helped determine how the Agency funds the ongoing operations and maintenance of the dams.

One of the primary benefits described in the HBA is flood control. The HBA addresses two categories of flood control benefits; prevention of agricultural damages, including reduction in damages from erosion, and prevention of damages to buildings and structures. The HBA does not address many of the other flood reduction benefits that are created by the long-term presence and reliability of the dams. Agriculture (primarily in the Salinas Valley) and tourism (primarily on the coast) are multi-billion dollar industries that drive the economy of Monterey County and benefit from the flood reduction provided by the dams. Those benefits include but are not limited to the reduction of 100-year flood flows, protection for major transportation corridors and public infrastructure, and flood

risk reduction that allows formerly flood prone areas to now accommodate agriculture, industry, and housing.

The Agency is proposing to work with consultant, FlowWest, to perform an analysis comparing with and without dam flood conditions. The analysis will help us better understand the extent of the broader county wide flood reduction benefits provided by the dams. FlowWest will research existing studies and modeling work to inform the development of pre-dam hydrology, model with and without dam flow scenarios, and perform statistical analysis on the results. To the extent possible, FlowWest will use existing modeling and analysis tools such as a recently updated HEC-RAS model of the Salinas River and a flood inundation map viewer that is currently under development with the Agency. Use of existing tools will reduce the cost and effort required to perform this analysis. The resulting data will be used to support a benefits assessment analysis that will consider the economic value of the flood reduction benefits. The combined analysis will support the Agency's ongoing evaluation of existing funding sources and goal of identifying future funding sources to support stable long-term operations and maintenance of the dams.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

During their April 1, 2026 meeting, the Planning Committee recommended that the full Board consider approval of the agreement.

FINANCING:

This analysis will be funded from Agency Fund 111 with partial funding identified in the approved FY26 budget. The remaining funding is identified in the upcoming FY27 budget.

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