

Agenda Item: {{section.number}}B

October 22, 2024

TO: THE COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Director Laura Roughton

Director Fauzia Rizvi

FROM: Sarah Macdonald, Assistant General Manager

RECEIVE AND FILE THE OCTOBER 2024 GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff requests that the Community and Government Affairs Committee recommend that the Board of Directors:

1. Receive and file October 2024 Government Affairs and Legislative Update.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At each meeting of the Community and Government Affairs Committee, Western Municipal Water District (Western Water) staff provides a verbal report. The report is sometimes accompanied by materials prepared by The Fergusen Group or KP Public Affairs and includes a high-level overview of relevant topics from both federal and state government to be discussed in more depth during the meeting.

BUDGET IMPACT:

A receive and file action taken on this item by the Board of Directors at a future Board Meeting has no budget impact.

DETAIL:

Federal Updates:

Legislative Calendar

- Both legislative houses in recess: October 1 to November 8
- Both legislative houses in session: November 12 to November 22

Fiscal Year 2025 Budget

- Congress must pass the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget or a continuing resolution by October 1, 2024. A continuing resolution is likely to pass to fund the government through December 20, 2024.

Department of Interior Announces Continued Cuts to Arizona and Nevada Colorado River Allocations

- Arizona will lose 18% of its water allocation, while Nevada will lose 7% in their Colorado River water allocations in the coming year. The cuts will not increase due to successful conservation efforts.
- Current guidelines used to manage the river are set to expire in 2026.

Time Running Out on Bi-Partisan Permitting Reform Package

- [S. 4753](#), the “Energy Permitting Reform Act of 2024”, which is led by Senators Joe Manchin (I-WV) and John Barrasso (R-WY).
- Lawmakers from both parties are pushing to include their priorities in the Senate’s bipartisan permitting reform package, complicating its path to President Biden’s desk.
 - Requests include offshore wind, opposing transmission reforms, and hydroelectric permitting.
 - These additional requests have both support and opposition for members of Congress and outside interest groups.

The Ferguson Group to Present to the Western Water Board of Directors

- Mark Limbaugh and Chris Kearney are scheduled to present their annual year-in-review and look-ahead on Wednesday, December 18.

State Updates:
Legislative Calendar

- Governor sign/veto bill deadline: September 30
- 2024 General Election: November 5
- Convening of the 2025-26 Regular Session: December 2

Final Status of Bills of Interest

- [SB 366](#) (Caballero): The California Water Plan: long-term supply targets.
- [AB 2257](#) (Wilson): Local government: property-related water and sewer fees and assessments: remedies.
- [SB 1072](#) (Padilla): Local government: Proposition 218: remedies.
- [AB 2515](#) (Papan): PFAS in Feminine Products
- [AB 805](#) (Arambula): Sewer service: disadvantaged communities.
- [AB 460](#) (Bauer-Kahan): State Water Resources Control Board: water rights and usage: civil penalties.
- [SB 937](#) (Wiener): Development projects: fees and charges.

Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Comes to a Halt

- \$1.5 billion to raise the height of the earthen dam at Los Vaqueros by 55 feet to 281 feet and increase storage from 160,000 acre-feet capacity to 275,000 acre-feet.
- Contra Costa Water Agency cites significant increases to the costs to construct project, increased regulations on Delta water use, and inability for interested parties to make an agreement on paying for the project.

Sites Reservoir Environmental Impact Report Upheld by Appellate Court

- On Friday, September 20, a California appellate court upheld an earlier trial court ruling and found the controversial Sites Reservoir Project environmental impact report to be legally adequate.

KP Public Affairs to Present to the Western Water Board of Directors

- Ed Manning and Brenda Bass are scheduled to present their annual year-in-review and look-ahead on Wednesday, November 20.

Reason for Action:

To ensure members of the Board of Directors are informed of the latest updates on both state and federal legislative and regulatory issues.

Solution:

Receive and file the October 2024 Government Affairs and Legislative Update.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

This item aligns with Western Water's Strategic Priority of Superior Service.

PROPOSED DATE OF ACTION:

If approved by the Committee, this item is scheduled for consideration by the full Board of Directors at their meeting on November 6, 2024.

LEGAL COUNSEL REVIEW:

Not applicable.

Respectfully submitted by:

Sarah Macdonald, Assistant General Manager

Attachment:

1. Priority Bill Status from KP Public Affairs - October 2024