



For immediate release: September 23, 2024

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CONSERVATION GROUPS STATEMENT ON SITES COURT RULING

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

Don Mooney, attorney for the coalition of conservation groups, including Friends of the River (FOR), California Sportfishing Protection Alliance (CSPA), Center for Biological Diversity, California Water Impact Network, Save California Salmon, and the Sierra Club (plaintiffs) had this to say:

“We are disappointed in the court’s decision and remain concerned that the public still lacks sufficient information from the Sites Authority to fully understand and appreciate the project’s downstream impacts. We also remain concerned that given the inaccurate information regarding environmental baseline, the project impacts will not be fully mitigated.”

We disagree with the court's ruling that the Sites Authority presented a reasonable range of feasible alternatives. If it doesn't leave enough water in the Sacramento River to protect severely depressed salmon populations, Sites Reservoir should not be permitted. We will continue to fight this ill-conceived, environmentally damaging project."

"Our governor has decided to sideline our most important public processes in order to build a 1.5 million acre-foot reservoir on lands that are sacred to California Native American Tribes," said Regina Chichizola of Save California Salmon. "All Californians should be concerned about privatization of our public water resources. It is obvious the interests of water brokers, big ag, and Southern California water districts mean more to the governor than justice for Native American Tribes and California's most important public resource, clean water."

Kasil Willie, Staff Attorney for Save California Salmon, added, "Tribes and other project opponents have valid concerns including contamination of drinking water supplies, salmon extinction, and inundation of lands that hold irreplaceable Native American sacred sites and cultural resources. The Project as proposed will cause irreparable harm to Tribal Cultural Resources, including ancestral village sites and burial sites. Governor Newsom should apologize for calling those concerns 'frivolous.'"

Central Valley Tribes and Tribal experts are set to testify against Sites Reservoir in front of the State Water Resources Control Board's Administrative Hearing Office on September 30th.

The public can watch live on YouTube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/@swrcbadministrativehearing728>

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