



GOVERNOR'S REMARKS

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Governor Holds Press Conference on Water Supply Reliability and a Sustainable Delta

GOVERNOR: Good morning, good morning. We just had a great tour of this Joint Operations Center here, and I have to tell you that I like coming to places like this, because there is real action happening. This is where they actually manage California's water, and in normal times, or if it is in drought, or if it is during difficult times when we have a flood, this is where the action is happening. And together with the federal government, our experts manage the reservoirs, our reservoirs, and they work day and night to keep California safe, and also to make sure that we have a reliable supply of fresh water. Our environment, our economy, and every region in California depends heavily and relies on quality water.

Last year the Legislature and I put a 4.1 billion dollar levee and flood control bond package on the ballot in order to protect the people and our water supply, and the people overwhelmingly voted for it because they understand how important of an issue this really is. It was a great start, I have to say, but it was only the beginning, and there is much more that needs to be done.

And this is why last January in my State of the State Address I proposed our second phase of our strategic growth plan, which is that we proposed 5.9 billion dollars in water bonds, which includes 4.5 billion dollars for increased water storage, 1 billion dollars for Delta sustainability, and 450 million dollars for conservation and restoration.

Let's take these items one at a time. We desperately need above the ground water storage to accommodate future growth and for flood control. California's population is going to increase by approximately 30 percent over the next 20 years. That is an equivalent of adding three cities the size of Los Angeles.

We also need additional storage because scientists say that global warming will eliminate 25 percent of our snowpack by the half of this century, which will mean less snow stored in the mountains, which will mean more flooding in the winter and less drinking water in the summer. And that is why it is important that we don't let that much water run off into the ocean before capturing it. We must plan ahead and build more above the ground water storage to make sure that that does not happen.

Now, the Joint Operation here at this center also manages the flow of water through the Delta. As the nation's largest single source of drinking water, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta supplies 25 million people in California, which is two-thirds of the population, with water. Los Angeles, San Diego, Silicon Valley, Contra Costa, the Central Valley, they all depend on Delta water. And the Delta is the lifeblood of our 32 billion dollar agriculture industry, irrigating millions of acres of highly productive farmland.

At the same time, we know that the Delta is vulnerable, vulnerable to salt water contamination from rising sea levels and natural disasters. Our bond money, leveraged with federal and local funds, will help to finally put in place a long-term sustainable resource management plan for the Delta, and the 450 million dollars for conservation and restoration will help us achieve a comprehensive water solution.

This is a big and important issue. I'm excited about the progress that we have already made, and I'm looking forward to working with the Legislature to make sure that we have adequate flood protection and also an ample supply of clean water for future generations to come. It is my responsibility as the governor to not only think 1 year ahead, or 2 years ahead, but to think 10, 20, 30, 40 years ahead. I want to make sure that by 2050 we have enough

water, and we protect our people from huge floods.

Thank you very much. And now I would like to introduce someone that is an expert and very passionate about this issue, which is Senator Cogdill. Please welcome the Senator.

SENATOR COGDILL: Thank you, Governor. Good morning, thank you all for coming. This is an extremely important subject obviously, and we are very pleased to be here and have the opportunity to speak to all of you, and to acknowledge the willingness of this governor to stand up and talk about this issue that has been neglected, as has much of our infrastructure, for so long in this state. It's time that we step forward in order to make sure that we provide the resources that our children and our grandchildren are going to need as this great state moves forward.

And that's why we've put together SB 59, with the help of the Governor and with DWR, and others in the Governor's administration, as well as a number of people in the Legislature. I want to acknowledge the co-authors on the legislation; many of them are here with us today. We have over 14 co-authors in both the Assembly and the Senate, and we have representatives of both the Republican and the Democratic parties, so obviously this is a very non-partisan issue, and the Governor likes to point out. There isn't such a thing as Republican water or Democrat water; we all just need more of that very valuable resource, and make sure that we're planning for a future that we know is going to be very different than the past as it relates to how that resource comes to us. We're not going to be able to rely on the natural snowpack and reservoir that we've had in the Sierras for years and year and years, but that we're going to have to make adjustments so that we've got enough water available to sustain this economy. and at the same time make sure that our children, again, and grandchildren, have all the resources that they're going to need.

And the only way we can do that is to provide a system that operates better than the one that we have today, and we're going to make some substantial improvements in the Delta. The Governor pointed out that in the bill there's a billion dollars worth of money to deal with Delta issues that have to be addressed in addition to the water storage. And I think it's important to point out that we have storage in the bill that deals not only with above ground or surface water storage, but also below ground storage. The below ground portion is to the tune of about 500 million dollars, which is more money, I believe, than we've dedicated to that source in some time. So really it's a comprehensive, efficient approach to our water system that will involve a number of very important improvements that will allow all of these things to work together, again to provide this very important need as we move forward.

We talked a lot this morning, and saw some of the operation here relating to flood control for this state. Reservoirs provide you the best opportunity to deal with those seasonal flows, when they come, to make sure that the damage from flood is mitigated to the greatest extent possible. And at the same time that we're doing what we can to again manage that resource, make sure it gets into the ground water in an effective way, the ground water basins, and again, be there when we're going to need it and reduce our risk from the standpoint of changing the hydrology.

Our growth factors in this state—I think you're all very well aware of the amount of folks we expect to come into the state of California over the next couple of decades—and again, all of this is to be proactive and to be ready. And I certainly, again, want to acknowledge and to thank the Governor for his foresight here in realizing the problem. and having the courage to step forward and say we really need to make these improvements, and make them now, and get about this very important business. So we're just very, very pleased to be here and look forward to answering any questions that you might have.

At this point I'd like to turn the podium over to someone that spends every day of his life working in water and in this very important resource. He is the Executive Director of NCWA, and his name is David Guy. Would you please welcome him? David.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Senator Cogdill. It's a great joy to be here today sharing the podium with the Governor, Senator Cogdill, Senator Aanestad, many other illustrious members of the Legislature, talking about something that is so vital to the state of California, and that's of course water. We know what floods can do to the state. We have forgotten, I think, in the past, what it's like to go through a drought; we haven't seen one since 1994, at least in northern California, and I think we forget how important water storage is, and good water management is, when we go into those dry cycles.

I really laud the Governor's efforts to look forward, look long into the future, and recognize that we need additional water supplies, both above ground and under ground, to meet California's various needs, whether it be for fish, whether it be for farms, cities, rural communities, water fowl, the variety of purposes that use water in California all need this additional water. The Governor is looking hard into the future. Senator Cogdill, the Members of the

Legislature, have a tremendous opportunity, in my view, to capitalize on this opportunity and to look at additional water supplies for California.

It reminds me of a quote. President Kennedy, about a month before the fateful day in Dallas, was in northern California, and he was speaking up at Whiskeytown Reservoir, talking about Grand Coulee Dam and Whiskeytown, and he made the statement that every time that we bet on the future of this great country, we win. And it strikes me, Governor, that we're all behind you; you're betting on the future of this great state, and you have a lot of people behind you ready to make that work. We thank you for your efforts, thank you to the Legislature, and I'll look forward to improving the water supplies and the water quality throughout the state of California.

GOVERNOR: Thank you very much. If you have any questions, please feel free. Yes?

Q: Governor, would you talk a little about the growth that's coming to California, and how water plays into that? I know that's something that you've talked about.

GOVERNOR: I think that one of the reasons why we need above the ground water storage is because we will see an increase in population. We know that it's approximately 30 percent over the next 20 years, and that is an equivalent, like I said, of three cities the size of Los Angeles, so we are talking about an enormous increase. And as we increase the population, we need, of course, to build our infrastructure, if it is transportation, if it is building schools, if it is fixing our levees, but also above the ground and below the ground water storage. It is absolutely essential if we want to guarantee in the future having enough water and protecting our people from the floods. So, like I said, it is my responsibility to not just think 1 year ahead or 2 years ahead, but to think 20, 30, 40 years ahead. This is very important. We have to do now the planning and now the building, so we protect future generations. Yes?

Q: You've approved some pretty significant raises for your agency heads and department directors. Are you worried at all about the message that might send in what might be a tight fiscal year?

GOVERNOR: I think it is a good message, that we are going to be competitive with other government agencies, because remember that the state is approximately at 60 percent of what we offer to our employees than what they offer on the local level, in local government, the counties and the cities and so on. Those people are making much more money. So what we are trying to do is just to be competitive, so we get the most talented people.

Q: Governor, can you update us on negotiations among the Big Five about prisons? The lawmakers are going to leave for about a week here, coming up. It doesn't seem like you've gotten anything done yet. What can you tell us about where you are on that?

GOVERNOR: Well, I'm very happy how far we have come with the negotiations, and I have to compliment both the Democrats and the Republicans, because both of the parties have shown the willingness to really make it work and to do something that is good for the people, which means that we are not going to let the federal judge put a cap on our state prisons, and let then people get out of prison before they have served their term, and before they are capable, really, of being out in society.

So I think everyone is stepping up to the plate. We are very close to an agreement. If it doesn't get done this week it will get done after we come back from Easter vacation. But I still have great hopes that it will be done, that we will have some basic agreement this week. That's what I'm shooting for, and this is the direction we are going. So I have great hopes, and then we can go and start tackling health care reform and infrastructure, and all the other things that are very important to the state of California. Yes?

Q: Speaker Núñez and other Democrats have really been sort of adverse to the thought of having dams or any other water storage. Have you worked with them on this proposal? And how much water, excess water storage, will be created? How many new dams can we expect?

GOVERNOR: Well, you know, in all of those issues, if it is health care, if it is education reform, with all of those issues there are different opinions on how to solve the problem. But I think this is what leadership is all about, is to bring people together that have two different opinions about it, and philosophically in different directions, bring them together and then come up with something that really serves the people. Because in the end we are all public servants, we have to serve the people.

And this is why it is important when I say the word 'willingness'. There is great willingness in the Capitol to make it work and to solve this problem, because the choices are very, very bad. The choices are that you have a federal judge step in and say, "We put a cap on the state prisons, and you only can have 130,000, or 140,000 inmates, prisoners." And then we have to release the rest of them. So that would mean that there would be criminals, dangerous criminals, roaming the streets and the neighborhoods.

We don't want that. Democrats don't want that, Republicans don't want that. So this is a motivating factor there that will bring everyone to the table to come up with an agreement to make sure that no one gets released from prison, from our prisons, just because of overcrowding. We can not let anyone get out of prison because of overcrowding. They can only get out when they have served their term and when they are not a danger anymore to society. Thank you. Yes, please.

Q: Do you yourself have any personal concerns about dams and what that might do to the environment? Did you know Democrats and many environmentalists are concerned about that?

GOVERNOR: Yes. I think that as the question was over here, and you have the same, that I'm not concerned about someone saying that we shouldn't build dams and that we shouldn't build water storage, because in the end we have to negotiate the issue and make sure that everyone comes together and agrees. And we have seen that, that many times we start with the negotiations and people have different opinions, like I said, about everything. But then you bring them together. This is what's interesting about it.

Q: (Inaudible)

GOVERNOR: I think that we have to protect the environment. We have to do everything that we can to protect the environment. But at the same time as we protect the environment, we have to protect the people. And the people have to be protected from dangerous floods, and the people have to be protected so that we have enough drinking water in 10, 20, and in 50 years from now. That is as important as everything else. So we can always do both. We can always protect the environment and at the same time protect the people, protect the economy, and make sure that we can move forward in a progressive way.

Thank you very much. Thank you.