

The Water Bond (Proposition 1): Questions and Answers

What is Proposition 1?

Proposition 1, the **Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014**, is on the November 4 statewide ballot. The Legislature overwhelmingly passed the water bond and the Governor signed the bill into law. The bond would “authorize \$7.12 billion in general obligation bonds for state water supply infrastructure projects, such as surface and groundwater storage; ecosystem and watershed protection and restoration; drinking water protection; water supply management; water recycling and advanced water treatment technology; and flood control.”

Is there strong support for Proposition 1?

The Legislature passed the water bond with a 77-2 vote of Democrats and Republicans throughout the state. All Northern California members of the Legislature voted for the water bond. Proposition 1 is supported by the Northern California Water Association, California Rice Industry Association, California Farm Bureau Federation, Western Growers, the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the League of Cities, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, Audubon California, American Rivers and many others.

Is the water bond designed to help with future droughts?

Yes, the Legislature in passing the water bond expressly recognized that “California has been experiencing more frequent and severe droughts and is currently enduring the worst drought in 200 years. These droughts are magnifying the shortcomings of our current water infrastructure.” Every part of the water bond, except for the section on flood management, is designed to improve California’s water supplies for future drought.

Does the bond protect Northern California water rights and supplies?

Yes, Proposition 1 contains language that water rights and area and watershed of origin supplies will be protected in California.

Will new storage be funded under the water bond?

Yes, the water bond contains \$2.7 billion that is continuously appropriated for “public benefits associated with water storage projects that improve the operation of the state water system, are cost effective, and provide a net improvement in ecosystem and water quality conditions.” This could include the public benefits associated with surface storage projects such as Sites Reservoir in Northern California. The Legislature has stated that “California has been experiencing more frequent and severe droughts and is currently enduring the worst drought in

200 years. These droughts are magnifying the shortcomings of our current water infrastructure.” For more information on Sites Reservoir, please see [link to Q/A]

Will the bond improve drinking water supplies?

Yes. “Every Californian should have access to clean, safe, and reliable drinking water.” The bond contains \$520 million for “projects that improve water quality or help provide clean, safe, and reliable drinking water to all Californians.”

Will the bond benefit birds and fish?

Yes, there are several provisions in the bond that will fund programs for birds and fish. This includes \$1.5 billion for “Protecting Rivers, Lakes, Streams, Coastal Waters, and Watersheds.” Proposition 1 is supported by Audubon California, Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, California Waterfowl Association and several other organizations that support bird and salmon populations.

Is Proposition 1 the same bond that was passed in 2009?

No, Proposition 1, which is a \$7.12 billion general obligation bond, was passed in 2014 and it replaced the earlier bond passed in 2009, which was an \$11.14 billion bond.

Does Proposition 1 contain measures to assure fiscal responsibility?

Yes, the water bond is a general obligation bond governed by the State General Obligation Bond Law, where the state’s general fund pays for the bond. Each state agency that receives funding from the water bond “shall be responsible for establishing metrics of success and reporting the status of projects and all uses of the funding on the state’s bond accountability Internet Web site.” The current water bond was reduced from the previous \$11.14 billion to \$7.12 billion.

Additionally, with respect to fiscal responsibility, the Legislature unanimously passed Proposition 2 that is also on the November 4 ballot, which establishes a rainy day fund in the State Constitution that will require the Legislature and the Governor to save money when times are good and to pay down debts.

Does the Water Bond fund tunnels in the Delta?

No, the bond expressly provides that the bond will “not be expended to pay the costs of the design, construction, operation, mitigation, or maintenance of Delta conveyance facilities.” In passing the bond, the Legislature made it very clear that the water bond is “delta-neutral.”