



COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0509

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April 29, 2021

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee of Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger:

I am requesting funding in the amount of \$1,000,000 for South System Groundwater Recharge Project in the fiscal year 2022 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

The project sponsor for this project is North San Joaquin Water Conservation District and the project is located at 19934-20840 North Tretheway Road, Acampo, CA 95220.

The funding is designated for the following:

- 1) Adding three remotely monitored and controlled valves, water measurement meters, and telemetry at main lateral junctions (the Manor Lane Box, Mettler Box and Handel Road Box) in the existing main conveyance pipeline.
- 2) Replacing three unused/broken concrete pipe laterals with new PVC laterals that are easy for landowners to connect to for their pressurized irrigation systems (Manor Lane Lateral, Mettler Recharge Lateral, Handel Road Lateral).
- 3) Adding District owned turnout structures with meters at multiple strategic locations along the new laterals to facilitate delivery of surface water to vineyards and orchards during the non-irrigation (dormant) season for groundwater recharge.
- 4) Purchasing lay-flat pipe and necessary connections to enable the District to conduct Flood MAR on leased fields during the dormant season.
- 5) Adding a new 24-inch pipeline in the last 2,000-foot segment of the existing pipeline to eliminate capacity restraints in the existing concrete line and increase delivery capability for both in-lieu and direct groundwater recharge at the bottom end of the South System.

The South System Groundwater Recharge Project will modernize the southern portion of the District's surface water irrigation system, which was built in the 1960s and is in disrepair,

therefore allowing the District to recharge groundwater and provide surface water to growers who currently rely only on groundwater to irrigate their crops. Use of taxpayer funds for the South System Groundwater Recharge Project is justified because the project: 1) will help achieve a sustainable groundwater balance in the critically overdrafted Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Basin, which has a current estimated overdraft of 78,000 acre-feet annually (AFA); 2) will help build long-term resilience to drought in the region by providing a new surface water supply to growers; and 3) will benefit the Mokelumne River fishery by helping the District manage diversions to benefit endangered fish populations, such as salmon and steelhead.

The South System Groundwater Recharge Project will improve the water balance by 4,650 AFA, therefore representing a significant step forward in efforts to achieve a sustainable groundwater balance in the Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Basin. The Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Basin is a highly productive agricultural region of the San Joaquin Valley in California and the source of a significant amount of the nation's fruit and nut production. California's 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act requires local agencies in critically overdrafted groundwater basins across the state to develop coordinated plans to achieve a sustainable groundwater balance by 2040. The California Department of Water Resources, the agency in charge of implementing the Act, also provides state funding through competitive grant programs to help agencies achieve this goal. Federal funding for the South System Groundwater Recharge Project, combined with state funding the District has already secured, will help to achieve a sustainable groundwater balance in this critically overdrafted basin.

The South System Groundwater Recharge Project also will build long-term resilience to drought by providing surface water for irrigation in-lieu of groundwater pumping, increasing the water efficiency of the irrigation system, and enabling the District to directly recharge groundwater during the non-irrigation season for underground storage of water for use during drought. The new automated and metered facilities will increase the efficiency and flexibility of the South System, reducing current system losses from as high as 50% to less than 25%. The meters and automated valves also will enable the District to quickly and more precisely control the flow of water in the system to match user demand.

Finally, the proposed project will benefit the fishery of the Mokelumne River by helping the District match its river diversions to system demands so the District can avoid large diversions of water from the river when those diversions are not needed to meet in-district demand. East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) releases water from Camanche Reservoir upstream on the Mokelumne River for the benefit of salmon and steelhead runs in the river. The Project will help NSJWCD ensure that its diversions do not interfere with flows released for fishery purposes and will allow critical flows to remain in the channel for use by the instream fishery and Delta outflow.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project.

Sincerely,



Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress