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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Friends of the River Opposes Budget-Busting And Destructive Water Bond Initiatives**

In a media conference with Senate Pro Tem Don Perata today, Friends of the River denounced budget-busting and environmentally destructive water bond initiatives proposed by corporate agribusiness and development interests.

“It’s self-serving of corporate interests to delude the public into borrowing nearly \$12 billion for destructive dam projects we don’t need when these same interests can well afford to build these projects on their own,” said Steve Evans, Conservation Director of Friends of the River.

Evans characterized the initiatives recently filed with the Secretary of State by the California Chamber of Commerce as potentially “the biggest give-away of public resources to private business interests since Congress gave nearly a quarter of California to the railroad barons in the 1860s.”

Noting that California is now facing a \$14 billion deficit, Evans pointed out that the state’s own water plan shows that investing in efficient water use, recycling, and groundwater management programs will produce far more water at significantly less cost to the taxpayer.

An analysis by Friends of the River shows that the dam projects funded by the Chamber initiatives would cost billions of dollars, flood popular recreation areas and important wildlife habitat, and be net energy losers.

In September, Friends of the River and other conservation groups proposed a \$4.5 billion legislative bond package that would yield more than four times the amount of water that can be feasibly produced by the multi-billion dollar dam projects the Chamber supports in its initiatives.

“California needs to invest in its future,” Evans said. “But the Chamber of Commerce initiatives are not a solution, they’re a train wreck,” he said.

### **ABOUT FRIENDS OF THE RIVER**

Friends of the River, California's statewide river conservation group, works to preserve, restore, and sustain California's rivers, streams, and watersheds and advocates for sustainable water management. FOR accomplishes its mission through public education, citizen activist training and organizing, and expert advocacy to influence public policy decisions on land, water, and energy management issues. Visit [www.friendsoftheriver.org](http://www.friendsoftheriver.org).