



Is Temperance Flat Dam Proposal Down to Its Last Strike?

Bill McEwen April 20, 2018

A proposed dam at Temperance Flat on the San Joaquin River above Friant is eligible for \$171.3 million in funding, California officials announced today.

But while that's a lot of money, it's well short of what's needed — along with federal and local financing — to make the \$2.6 billion, 1.26 million acre-foot project a reality.

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— Mario Santoya, executive director of the San Joaquin Valley Water Infrastructure Authority

“We’re not done, but we’re damn close. We’ve got one more shot” to increase the state funding, said Mario Santoya, executive director of the San Joaquin Valley Water Infrastructure Authority.

That one more shot is a meeting in early May when Temperance Flat promoters will make their case to the nine commissioners of the California Water Commission.

\$40 Million And Not One Drop of Water

Thus far, \$40 million has been spent trying to break ground on the dam. The breakdown is \$38 million in federal funds and \$2 million by the infrastructure authority.

Temperance Flat received a zero in the initial scoring of proposed water-storage projects seeking funding from Proposition 1, the \$7.5 billion “water bond” passed by voters in 2014.

“The commissioners will now have the weight on their shoulders,” Santoya said. “Voters passed Prop. 1 with the expectation of big water projects. If that doesn’t happen, they won’t vote for future water bonds.”



Photo illustration of proposed Temperance Flat Dam/ YouTube

The proposed Sites Reservoir, north of Sacramento, saw its tentative state award increase from \$662.6 million to \$933.3 million. But the estimated cost for the 13-mile long reservoir is \$5.2 billion.

Commission staff did the first round of scoring, as well as the most recent scoring which resulted in the tentative award of \$171.3 million for 18-mile long Temperance Flat. Project backers had sought \$1 billion of the \$2.7 billion set aside in Proposition 1 for water-storage projects.

Temperance Flat's Fate Rests with Water Commissioners

Santoyo said the staff's analysis of the project is befuddling.

"The bottom line is this, we submitted an appeals document that reflected a 2.8-to-1 benefit ratio. They, in turn, came back with a ratio of 0.38. There clearly is a bias from the perspective of the reviewers."



Mario Santoyo

Santoyo added that the project uses the same computer modeling for benefits as the "San Joaquin River restoration is using."

Only two of the 11 projects under consideration had scores higher than 1.0. Both are small surface-storage proposals. They are Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Project in Contra Costa County and Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project in Santa Clara County.

In a nutshell, Temperance Flat's fate rests with the commissioners.

"We'll see what kind of answer they give us," Santoyo said.

To read about funding for other water-storage projects, click on this story from the San Francisco Chronicle's Kurtis Alexander.

<https://www.sfgate.com/news/article/California-announces-tentative-funding-for-new-12851731.php>

<http://gvwire.com/2018/04/20/is-temperance-flat-dam-proposal-down-to-its-last-strike/>

Bill McEwen is news director and columnist for GV Wire. He joined GV Wire in August 2017 after 37 years at The Fresno Bee. With The Bee, he served as Opinion Editor, City Hall reporter, Metro columnist, sports columnist and sports editor through the years. His work has been frequently honored by the California Newspapers Publishers Association, including authoring first-place editorials in 2015 and 2016. Bill and his wife, Karen, are proud parents of two adult sons, and they have two grandsons. You can contact Bill at 559-492-4031 or at bmcewen@gvwire.com.

