

Legislation advances in support of Lake McClure storage increase

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Bipartisan legislation intended to support the Lake McClure Storage Enhancement Project has passed the U.S. House of Representatives, Merced Irrigation District officials said Thursday.

"This first step is crucial to the ongoing effort to increase end-of-year carry-over storage capacity at Lake McClure," said Hicham ElTal, MID Deputy General Manager of Water Supply and Rights.

Similar legislation must also pass in the U.S. Senate.

The legislation could pave the way for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to consider revisions to its operations manual for Lake McClure.

The proposed enhancement project would allow for up to an additional 57,000 acre feet of carryover water storage in 1-million-acre-foot Lake McClure., MID officials said in a statement released Thursday.

"The project becomes most crucial in critically dry years when there is minimal inflow to Lake McClure," officials said. "For instance, in 2015 the reservoir received a mere 160,000 acre feet of runoff water, less than 20 percent of what the reservoir might receive in a more typical year."

District authorities said the Lake McClure carry-over storage enhancement project would be accomplished with a physical modification of the spillways at Lake McClure to provide additional flood control space and an update of the USACE flood control manual for Lake McClure



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