



August 30, 2019

From Westlands Water District:

Today, Westlands Water District terminated its preparation of an environmental impact report pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The District was preparing the environmental impact report to assess the effects of raising Shasta Dam, as proposed by the Bureau of Reclamation, including whether the Dam raise would adversely affect the free-flowing conditions of the McCloud River or its wild trout fishery.

Under federal law, if Reclamation determines to raise the Dam, local cost share partners would be responsible for at least half of the costs. The environmental impact report being prepared by the District would have provided the information necessary for the District to determine whether it could or would become a cost share partner. The District terminated the CEQA process because the Superior Court issued, at the request of the California Attorney General, a preliminary injunction that stopped the District from preparing the environmental review document until after the Court conducts a trial and issues a final decision in the case. The practical effect of the injunction is that the District would not likely be able to complete CEQA within the schedule Reclamation has for the project.

Tom Birmingham, the District's general manager expressed his disappointment in this outcome: "no agency of the State has conducted a project-specific analysis of Reclamation's proposal, to determine if enlargement of Shasta Dam would adversely affect aquatic resources – particularly those in the lower McCloud River. Westlands took the initiative to do that assessment, through the public process established by CEQA. It is unfortunate that, as a result of the actions of the Attorney General, Westlands was enjoined from completing that analysis."

<https://mavensnotebook.com/2019/09/30/this-just-in-westlands-announces-termination-of-shasta-dam-raise-ceqa-analysis/>