

# The Fresno Bee

## Temperance Flat dam idea gets Tulare County backing to help in drought

by Marc Benjamin

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Tulare County supervisors added their support Tuesday to the concept of a Joint Powers Authority to get Temperance Flat Dam built, an idea supported by Fresno and Kings counties last week.

Tulare County supervisors voted 5-0 to back the Joint Powers Authority, a proposal initially pushed by Fresno County supervisors to ensure that state Proposition 1-A bond money could be made available for construction of the dam to augment water storage east of Millerton Lake. Madera County supervisors are expected to discuss the issue in August.

Tulare County Supervisor Allen Ishida said Tuesday that a JPA would put pressure on federal officials to “finish the feasibility study and authorize the building of Temperance Flat.”

In addition to the three counties, other agencies pledging support to the effort include: Fresno and Madera irrigation districts; Chowchilla Water District; Table Mountain Rancheria; and the cities of Mendota and Orange Cove.

The counties are being pressed into action after the splintering of the Friant Water Authority. It was the most likely group to serve as the lead agency for the JPA before fracturing earlier this year because of disagreements among about half of its 21 member agencies.

Those agencies had differing ideas about the most serious problems the Friant Water Authority faced in acquiring water.

Fresno County Supervisor Henry R. Perea said there had been no effort to start a program to claim a share of the \$2.7 billion of bond money that will be available for water storage, and time was slipping away. State water officials will award Prop 1-A money in early 2017.

The \$2.6 billion Temperance Flat project would add more than 1 million acre-feet of storage above Millerton Lake. Sites Reservoir, near Maxwell in Northern California, also is in the running for water storage funding. Its projected cost is \$3.9 billion. Officials expect to use federal funds to supplement the state bond money on water storage projects.

Perea, who has been promoting the JPA concept with fellow supervisors Brian Pacheco and Buddy Mendes, said the idea is gaining traction.

“A lot of people of prominence in the ag community get it and have been messaging us positively,” Perea said.

Mendes said Tuesday that he also has spoken with Kern County officials about backing the JPA concept.

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