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Scientific Report: Yearly Greenhouse Gas Pollution From Proposed Sites Dam and Reservoir Project Would Equal 80,000 Gas-Powered Cars

New Patagonia & Friends of the River Study Estimates the Proposed Dam's Annual Emissions

SACRAMENTO — **In the midst of a historic U.S. heatwave**, Patagonia, the Ventura-based outdoor apparel company that has supported grassroots groups working to find solutions to the environmental crisis for more than four decades, and Friends of the River (FOR), one of California's most respected conservation organizations, released a damning report on the dire environmental effects Sites Dam and Reservoir Project will have on California.

A new analysis using the comprehensive **All-Res Modeling Tool** has estimated the greenhouse gas emissions that would be caused by building and operating the Sites Dam and Reservoir Project. Over the 100-year expected life cycle of the Sites Project, it is predicted to emit approximately 362 million metric tons of CO₂e or 362,000 metric tons of CO₂e/year, the vast majority of which is methane. That's the equivalent climate emissions of over 80,000 gasoline-powered passenger vehicles per year.

“For all of California's lofty climate change ambitions, it's mind-boggling that so many state leaders are trying to rush us full-bore into a boondoggle that will set us back dramatically in reaching our greenhouse gas goals,” said Jann Dorman, Executive Director of Friends of the River. **“This report should be an eyeopener for every state leader who wants to be serious about the climate crisis.”**

“Patagonia wants policymakers to operate with complete information as they make decisions that will determine the health of our planet, and until now, the proposed Sites Reservoir's climate impacts haven't been a major part of the conversation,” said Hans Cole, Head of Environmental Grants, Campaigns, and Activism at Patagonia. **“Our report is a wake-up call that huge dam projects come with costs that run far beyond their large price tags and regional ecological damage.”**

The report comes as the state of [California invested a historic \\$1.3 billion](#) in combating climate change in 2022 alone and has established a stated goal of phasing out new gasoline-powered

vehicles by 2035. Sites Reservoir has already secured \$875 million in state funding (through 2014's Proposition 1), money that is being directed into a project that competes against the state's ambitious climate change goals.

Sites Reservoir, if built, is only expected to increase California's overall water availability by less than 1% in good years. Meanwhile, the harm caused by this project's construction will be permanent and practically irreversible, setting back the state even further on its climate goals.

The **All-Res Modeling Tool** was developed using readily available emissions models that estimate greenhouse gasses from dam and reservoir projects. The tool uses data provided by public sources including the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report/Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Sites Reservoir (USBR, 2021) to calculate the total carbon footprint of the Sites Reservoir Project over its entire lifecycle.

Dams and reservoirs produce harmful greenhouse gasses (GHG) through their construction, operation, and maintenance, but most importantly by the [decomposition of organic matter](#) under, and flowing into, the reservoir ([see 2016 Washington Post article](#)). In fact, some hydropower dam and reservoir systems have been estimated to produce as much GHG as a coal-fired powerplant of similar electricity output. A full list of emissions pathways analyzed using the All-Res Model can be found on [Tell The Dam Truth's website](#).

For more than a half-century, Friends of the River (FOR) has been at the forefront of California's environmentalist movement for a sustainable water future. FOR is dedicated to protecting and restoring California's rivers, streams, and watersheds, while advocating for sustainable water management and water solutions that protect the environment. Healthy rivers are a critical component of a sustainable water future in California and FOR rejects the notion that the state must choose between healthy river ecosystems and having enough water. With the state's water crisis approaching a breaking point, FOR is in its toughest fight yet as it works to stop the Sites Reservoir boondoggle while offering more practical and sustainable alternatives to protect and restore California's rivers.

Read the full report [HERE](#).

For more information on Friends of the River, visit <https://www.friendsoftheriver.org>.

For more information on Patagonia's Action Works, visit <https://www.patagonia.com/actionworks/about/>.

For more information on the All-Res Model, visit <https://telltthedamtruth.com/all-reservoir-greenhouse-gas-model/>.

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