



Board Agenda Item 29

DATE: September 13, 2016

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Chairman Buddy Mendes

SUBJECT: Letter of opposition to the designation of a portion of the San Joaquin River as "wild and scenic"

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Authorize the Board to sign a letter to be sent to the Honorable Sally Jewell, Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior in opposition of the designation of 7.25 miles of the San Joaquin River as "wild and scenic river" under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

The Board could choose not to execute a letter of opposition.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Unknown at this time.

DISCUSSION:

In December 2014, the Bureau of Land Management issued a Regional Management Plan determining that 7.25 miles of the San Joaquin River is eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System and suitable for a "wild and scenic river" designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. At the same time, the Bureau of Reclamation is working with California stakeholders to complete a feasibility study and to prepare a proposal to the California Water Commission to consider funding, under Chapter 8 of Proposition 1, the Temperance Flat Dam and Reservoir project. Such designation would include a segment of the same river proposed to be included within a new Temperance Flat Reservoir and would prevent the project's development.

Of major concern is that a "wild and scenic river" designation would directly conflict with any potential recommendation by the Bureau of Reclamation to move forward with Temperance Flat Dam and negatively impact the opportunity for project funding before the California Water Commission. Such an outcome would have negative consequences to water reliability for California communities including those in Fresno County which has been severely impacted by the current drought conditions and is in direct contradiction of the mutual goals to improve reliability to all water users.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Letter to Sally Jewell, Secretary U. S. Department of the Interior