



Governor signs budget with more than \$47 Million for Salton Sea projects

Salton Sea funds to launch long-awaited recovery

(News Release – For Immediate Release)

The Salton Sea, suffering decades of environmental degradation and economic decline, received a major boost of hope for recovery today with the Governor’s signature on the state budget.

The budget authorizes \$47 Million for projects to rehabilitate the Salton Sea, with \$29 Million released to the Salton Sea Authority. This historic action empowers local agencies to work in cooperation with the state of California to recover this severely distressed region.

“This kind of progress does not happen without a lot of patience, persistence and cooperation among partners with diverse priorities,” stated Castulo R. Estrada, Chairman of the Board for the Salton Sea Authority (SSA). The SSA is comprised of Coachella Valley Water District, Imperial Irrigation District, the counties of Imperial and Riverside, as well as the Torres Martinez Band of Desert Cahuilla.

“We have our work cut out for us in the days ahead, but I am grateful that many people in many agencies are now working together to achieve a shared set of objectives in multi-benefit projects,” continued Estrada. “I want to thank the Legislature – especially Assemblyman Eduardo Garcia, the Governor and staff at the California Natural Resources Agency along with the NGO community for their collective actions to reverse the long trajectory of despair at the Salton Sea. Cooperation is the key here because without that, there is no progress for anyone at the Sea.”

The state budget provides \$28 million to protect vulnerable communities from exposure to America’s most polluted river – the New River which flows across the Mexican border to the Salton Sea. Balancing that investment on the south end of California’s largest inland sea is a \$19.3 million investment toward a North Lake project that will provide benefits including air quality protection, deep water habitat restoration, recreation and economic recovery for struggling communities around the Sea.

Phil Rosentrater, General Manager of the Salton Sea Authority, said the budget allocations bring new hope for a healthier and more prosperous Salton Sea region. The state is already committing hundreds of millions of dollars from Prop 1 and Prop 68 in development of a 3770 acre Species Conservation Habitat on the southwest rim of the Sea.

SSA agencies support that project as a first phase in a more comprehensive Perimeter Lake that can cover dusty playa, restore vital habitat and revitalize a recreational economy to financially sustain the Sea.

The Salton Sea, the largest inland sea in California, is fed by agricultural runoff that at one time sustained one of the nation's largest and most diverse populations of migratory waterfowl while also providing the state's most popular recreational tourist destination.

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*For information contact: Phil Rosentrater, GM/Executive Director, SSA,
PRosentrater@ssajpa.org*