



House passes two bills with new directives for Army Corps and Bureau of Reclamation

Federal legislators advance Salton Sea Authority Agenda

This week, the US House of Representatives advanced two pieces of legislation to mobilize federal action at the Salton Sea.

Alex Cardenas, President of the Salton Sea Authority (SSA), and Phil Rosentrater, SSA's General Manager, commended the Congressional delegation for their work to advance these SSA legislative priorities.

"We deeply appreciate the steadfast efforts of Congressmen Raul Ruiz and Juan Vargas (D-Calif.) to mobilize federal action at the Salton Sea," said President Cardenas.

"Together, these legislative measures underscore Congress' direction and expectation that our federal partners act expeditiously to advance and invest in our state and local efforts to address the serious challenges to public health, habitat and economic opportunity at the Salton Sea," said Rosentrater. The federal government is one of the largest landowners at the sea, with public trust responsibilities that must be addressed through local-state-federal partnerships, he added.

On Thursday, the House passed H.R. 7617, which provides federal appropriations for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), two federal agencies with permitting and project responsibilities at the Salton Sea. The bill and its report include several directives supported by SSA, including measures which direct these agencies to expedite federal Salton Sea permitting, direct increased Salton Sea federal investment, and direct a more robust federal partnership in Salton Sea management efforts.

The Corps is the lead permitting agency for the state of California Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP) and it is critical that this federal permitting proceed expeditiously. SSA has actively advocated for expedited permitting for SSMP projects, including for the Species Conservation Habitat project, the Dust Mitigation Program, and the Perimeter/North Lake. Reclamation provides funding to support Salton Sea management, and the legislation directs Reclamation to mobilize additional federal Salton Sea investment.

On Wednesday, the House also passed the H.R. 7575, the Water Resources Development Act of 2020. This legislation includes a provision that authorizes a study of a Salton Sea Perimeter/North Lake project that would be eligible for construction and funding by the Corps. The study can be locally prepared, building on planning efforts by SSA and its partners, and then approved by the Corps for design and construction.

Both bills now head to the Senate, where Senators Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) have consistently championed efforts to restore the Salton Sea.

The SSA has pursued a multi-agency federal funding strategy for the Salton Sea Management Program, including the Species Conservation Habitat project at the Southern end of the Salton Sea, the Perimeter/North Lake, and the Marina at the North Shore Yacht Club, positioning such projects for Corps, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Reclamation and Environmental Protection Agency Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) funding support.

##

*For more information please contact:
Phil Rosentrater, GM/Executive Director of SSA
Prosentrater@ssajpa.org*