



March 24, 2023

California State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chair E. Joaquin Esquivel,

On behalf of the California Waterfowl Association, I write to encourage the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) to approve a water right permit for the proposed Sites Reservoir, a unique, multi-benefit water storage project that would provide a reliable water supply for California's environment, communities, and farms for decades to come.

The multi-benefit nature of the project is directly beneficial for waterfowl populations in the Pacific Flyway as it will provide a more reliable refuge water supply and mitigate the loss of winter habitat in the Sacramento Valley.

The Bureau of Reclamation's final feasibility report for Sites Reservoir notes that the project will provide a long-term average of 30,000 acre-feet of water to help deliver incremental Level 4 water supplies to National Wildlife Refuges north and south of the Delta – something that California Waterfowl is extremely supportive of. Given the fact that roughly 95% of California's historic wetlands are gone, National Wildlife Refuges very important wetland habitat in the state and a reliable water supply, which Sites Reservoir will create, is critical to ensuring that refuges can continue to do so. Additionally, Sites Reservoir would create a more resilient water supply for rice farmers in the Sacramento Valley which in turn creates a significant amount of winter habitat for migratory birds. Post-harvest flooding of working farmland is an essential component of managing waterfowl in California and as such, enhancing certainty in water deliveries to growers is a critical need.

For these reasons, the California Waterfowl Association encourages the State Water Board to timely approve a water right permit for the Sites Reservoir project.

Sincerely,

Mark Hennelly
Vice President of Advocacy
California Waterfowl Association