

Representative Jim Costa (CA-21)
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Member's Day Hearing
January 14, 2026

Good morning, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, thank you for holding this important Member's Day Hearing and providing me the opportunity to share the transportation and infrastructure priorities of California's San Joaquin Valley for 2026 and for the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2026. It is critical we continue to work in a bipartisan fashion to address our nation's infrastructure needs.

Aviation

As the Committee considers aviation priorities this year, I urge consideration of the modernization needs of international airports with air traffic control towers not owned by the Federal Aviation Administration. The Fresno Yosemite International Airport (FAT) is a critical airport for the State of California and the nation, including by connecting people the world to California's crown jewel, Yosemite National Park. The airport is experiencing record air traffic and passenger growth, in addition to serving as the base for the 144th Fighter Wing of the California Air National Guard. FAT's TRACON system and air traffic control tower are over 30 years old – beyond their useful life – and is in desperate need of improvements to ensure safe and efficient operation of the airspace. As the committee considers aviation priorities, I urge prioritization of policy changes that enable airports like FAT to access federal resources for air traffic control tower modernization and replacement.

Sustainable Rail Service

Rail safety and service are critical as we continue to ensure a safe, reliable system for the movement of our people and goods. The Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program is a critical program that funds projects nationwide that are construction ready and increase produce rail and transit service. My bill, the *RIDE FAST Act*, would reauthorize this critical program to ensure investments in passenger rail are made. It is imperative our passenger AND freight rail systems are both addressed. Our nation must have both a *safe* and *reliable* rail system for the movement of goods and people.

Supply Chains

Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated our nation must prioritize and enhance supply chain resiliency. As I have always said, food is a national security issue, and when our food supply chain is threatened, we must act. As the Committee considers supply chain priorities, I urge the committee to prioritize legislation, such as the SHIP IT Act, that enhances supply chain efficiencies. This bill would help improve our trucking system by enhancing the recruitment and retention of our trucking workforce, streamlining the Commercial Driver's License process, incentivizing new truck drivers to enter the workforce through targeted and temporary tax credits, and allowing a modest increase in the Gross Vehicle Weight limit. These provisions would ensure the supply chain is able to withstand disruptions and improve the flow of goods across the United States.

State Route 152 and B.F. Sisk Dam

As the Committee considers the Surface Transportation Reauthorization, I urge support for language that prioritizes multi-use federal infrastructure that benefits both increasing water resources and the reduction of transportation bottlenecks. This language would help expedite California's State Route 152 improvements – a component of the project to expand B.F. Sisk Reservoir. I, along with several bipartisan members of the California Delegation, recently submitted language to direct the Department of Transportation to partner and coordinate with other federal agencies to cover the transportation aspects of federally supported projects with transportation formula funds. This language would clarify that California State agencies can and should provide funds to raise SR-152 to accommodate the raised water level in B.F. Sisk Dam. I urge the Committee to support such language to enhance transportation and water resources in the San Joaquin Valley.

Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2026

As the Committee works through the development of WRDA 2026, I urge collaboration with the Army Corps of Engineers to formulate requests that help to expedite and implement existing projects in a timely manner.

Pine Flat Dam has been operating since 1954 with a capacity of 1 million acre-feet of water. While the dam was originally created with flood control as its main objective, the boom-and-bust cycle of rain and snowfall in California has necessitated increasing the tools in our water toolbox and thus has led to the current proposal to raise Pine Flat Dam. Since its authorization in WRDA 2022, incremental progress has been made on the proposal to raise the dam's spillway by 12 feet, creating an additional 120,000 acre-feet of storage. I urge the Committee and the Corps to work in tandem to implement Sec. 1203(a)(10) of WRDA 2024, as well as explore additional options to continue to expedite the feasibility study associated with the raise. This critical project will help to reduce flooding risks, as well as fortify a reliable water supply for local communities.

Historic drought throughout California has led to the over-drafting of critical aquifers, causing subsidence which in turn reduces the water table and negatively impacts the reliability of water deliveries. Prolonged drought, which has often been followed by excessive precipitation, has demonstrated the need to not only reduce the risk of flooding, but to conserve water for future use. The Redbank and Fancher Creek Project have been engaging with the Corps to advance Managed Aquifer Recharge following the passage of Sec. 8108(b) in WRDA 2022 to advance a reliable water supply, while also reducing flooding risks for downstream communities, in addition to farmers, ranchers, and dairymen and women. I urge the Committee to support efforts to expedite the feasibility study associated with this project.

In Sec. 1203 of WRDA 2024, the Committee added multiple projects, including the Pine Flat Dam Raise, to its list of projects that, if justified, should be slated for "Expedited Completion". I urge the Committee to do the same for the Chowchilla Community Water Resiliency Project, which consists of the raise, increase, and reoperation of the Buchanan Dam. Raising Buchanan Dam will create up to 50,000 acre-feet of additional storage, and will be used for beneficial downstream uses, including direct and indirect groundwater recharge.

Finally, I urge the committee to support efforts by the Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District to initiate an update of the water control manual for Terminus Dam. The current manual does not

reflect today's weather patterns, local water needs, or the operational capacity. The most recent update occurred in 2005, and continuing to operate under an outdated manual limits the ability to manage both flood risk and water supply effectively. Thus, I urge the Committee to include language that expedites the studies associated with the update to the Terminus Dam water control manual.

It is critical we continue to work in a bipartisan fashion towards addressing our nation's infrastructure needs. I look forward to working with the committee and colleagues on shared goals such as protecting our supply chains, building a sustainable rail and aviation system, and enhancing our water infrastructure. Thank you, again, for the opportunity to share these priorities on behalf of California's 21st District.