

Rep. Costa Remarks
Proposals for a Water Resources Development Act of 2024: Members' Day
Hearing
2167 Rayburn House Office Building
Thursday, January 11, 2024

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, thank you for holding this hearing and giving members an opportunity to discuss their priorities for the 2024 Water Resources Development Act.

I appreciate this Committee for sticking to the traditional biennial WRDA process and committing to work in a bipartisan manner.

In California's San Joaquin Valley, we grow the food that feeds the world. We have a saying, "where water flows, food grows." Water supply reliability is a critical factor in our region's health and economic well-being.

The projects managed by the Army Corps, along with the federal Bureau of Reclamation and the State Water Project play an essential role.

Pine Flat Dam

One of my top priorities with an Army Corps nexus is the proposal to raise Pine Flat Dam. Pine Flat Reservoir's current capacity is one million acre-feet of water. Simply raising Pine Flat Dam by twelve feet would provide over 120,000 acre-feet of additional storage, improving storage management in the face of climate extremes like intense drought and floods.

Additional benefits include increased flood protection, additional groundwater recharge opportunities to restore our over-drafted aquifers, and additional agricultural and municipal water supply for disadvantaged communities.

A feasibility study for raising Pine Flat Dam was included in the Corps 2023 Section 7001 report, and I look forward to continuing to advance this important project through WRDA and other avenues.

Eastman Lake Enlargement

Similar to Pine Flat, I support efforts to enlarge Eastman Lake, which is located in Madera County. A feasibility study modification was also included for Eastman Lake in the 2023 Section 7001. The proposal would increase the Lake's capacity from 150,000 to 200,000 acre-feet.

This project would provide additional flood control benefits, reduce demand for groundwater, and help meet water demands in the region.

Environmental Infrastructure Authorizations for Fresno and Tulare Counties

I am seeking to authorize both counties in my district, Fresno and Tulare, as new geographic areas eligible for Environmental Infrastructure assistance.

Environmental Infrastructure assistance is another tool in our water toolbox that our region should be able to access.

As an arid region that experiences wide swings in precipitation and water availability, ranging from extreme droughts to intense storms and flooding, the region needs eligibility to use these authorities to upgrade and modernize our water infrastructure.

This includes efforts to develop projects such as construction of water distribution works, stormwater management, surface water protection, and environmental restoration, that may be necessary for a sustainable water future in the region.

As the Committee continues to draft the 2024 Water Resources Development Act I look forward to working with you to advance these priorities and achieve our shared goals of maximizing the beneficial, efficient, and sustainable management of our nation's water resources.