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AB-707 San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority: B.F. Sisk Dam Raise and Reservoir Expansion Project. (2025-2026)

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CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2025–2026 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

NO. 707

Introduced by Assembly Member Soria

February 14, 2025

An act relating to the San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority, and making an appropriation therefor.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 707, as introduced, Soria. San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority: B.F. Sisk Dam Raise and Reservoir Expansion Project.

Existing law provides various sources of funding for water and transportation projects.

This bill would appropriate \$455,500,000 from the General Fund to the San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority for the purpose of funding the State Highway 152 Route improvements required to complete the B.F. Sisk Dam Raise and Reservoir Expansion Project.

Vote: 2/3 Appropriation: yes Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) The human right to water as state policy was enacted in 2013. Climate change is impacting the ability of existing water infrastructure to provide safe, affordable, and reliable water supplies to all Californians.

(b) Improved water storage and improved water conveyance have been identified in numerous reports as necessary infrastructure improvements to adapt to a changing climate and improve water security for Californians.

(c) Improving surface and groundwater storage is a necessary step to improving water resilience and protecting communities from the impacts of drought and climate change, which will improve the accessibility of safe and reliable drinking water and other beneficial uses of water.

(d) The B.F. Sisk Dam, which impounds water to create the San Luis Reservoir, is the hub of the water storage infrastructure for the federal Central Valley Project and State Water Project south of the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary and water stored in the San Luis Reservoir provides important storage capacity that benefits agricultural, municipal and industrial use, and refuge water supplies.

(e) Over 750,000 acres of farmland receive water from the State Water Project and nearly 2,500,000 acres of productive cropland are benefited by the operational flexibility provided by water storage at San Luis Reservoir.

(f) A significant number of the communities that are reliant on conjunctive use of water delivered through the south-of-Delta facilities of the Central Valley Project, including the San Luis Reservoir, are considered disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged.

(g) These communities, particularly throughout the San Joaquin Valley, face adverse impacts associated with reduced water supply, including lack of drinking water, loss of job opportunities, and job security.

(h) The B.F. Sisk Dam Raise and Reservoir Expansion Project, when complete, would expand the capacity of the 2,000,000 acre-foot reservoir by 130,000 acre-feet — enough to supply nearly 400,000 homes a year.

(i) In extremely wet years like 2017 and 2023, the San Luis Reservoir fills and California misses an opportunity to capture and store even more water for use during subsequent dry years.

(j) The B.F. Sisk Dam Raise and Reservoir Expansion Project has been awarded federal funding for a project to both improve the safety of the dam and to raise the reservoir by 10 feet to increase water storage capacity.

(k) The B.F. Sisk Dam Raise and Reservoir Expansion Project enjoys widespread support at the federal, state, and local levels, including being included in California's Water Supply Strategy: Adapting to a Hotter, Drier Future.

(l) The project's estimated cost to construct is \$1,000,000,000.

(m) Roughly 50 percent of the project costs are related to improvements on State Highway Route 152 — most of which is related to transportation public safety, unrelated to the reservoir expansion project itself.

(n) The required State Highway Route 152 improvements provide a statewide public safety benefit and should be funded by the state for the benefit they deliver, ensuring water affordability for communities remains affordable.

SEC. 2. The Legislature hereby appropriates the sum of four hundred fifty-five million five hundred thousand (\$455,500,000) from the General Fund to the San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority for the purpose of funding the State Highway Route 152 improvements required to complete the B.F. Sisk Dam Raise and Reservoir Expansion Project.