



City of Biggs

Agenda Item Staff Report For the Regular City Council Meeting: April 10, 2018

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
FROM: City Administrator
SUBJECT: SB 955 (Nielsen) Letter of Support

Background

Please see attached fact sheet for a current summary of SB 955, and a sample letter of support.

Recommendation:

Authorize the Mayor to sign a letter of support for SB 955 expressing official support for SB 955 by the City Council of the City of Biggs.

Mark Sorensen, City Administrator



FACT SHEET

Senate Bill 955

SUMMARY

The bill will create the Citizens Advisory Commission for Oroville Dam. The purpose of the Citizens Advisory Commission (CAC) is to give stakeholders within the Dam's footprint a forum for engaging with the Department of Water Resources (DWR), the Dam operator, on issues of public safety, maintenance and operations, and capital improvement projects.

BACKGROUND

Since its completion in 1968, the Oroville Dam has provided water and power to millions of Californians, including through the State Water Project, provided recreational facilities, and supported native ecosystems.

Local residents, however, are most immediately affected by operations at the Dam and bear the disproportionate burden of risk from any potential natural or man-made disaster.

On February 7, 2017, those risks were very clear as a crack in the primary spillway following the release of water precipitated a week-long panic as residents were unsure of what action to take or where to go should the Dam collapse or emergency spillway fail. After days of indecision and conflicting information, nearly 200,000 residents evacuated from their homes and fled for safer ground.

Now that the state has undertaken a project to repair the damaged spillway and is considering further renovations at the 50-year old site and on the many appurtenances required for the functioning of the State Water Project, there is a call for greater local input into the Dam's on-going operations.

EXISTING LAW

There are analogous citizens' commissions, made up of regional stakeholders, to advise government and engage with representatives of state prisons found in the Penal Code and for the Sacramento River under the SB 1086 Advisory Council.

THIS BILL

SB 955 would create the CAC for Oroville Dam to provide local residents representing a wide cross section of the community, operators of the dam itself, and water users the opportunity to gather at a regularly appointed time to discuss maintenance, findings, reports, and upcoming actions, and to conduct other communications regarding operations, maintenance, and all other activities at the site.

The 27-member CAC would each serve for a term of no more than 3 years, and be made up of appointees from:

- City and county governments
- Organized labor
- Chambers of commerce
- Law enforcement
- Water contractors
- Subject-matter experts
- Representatives of DWR
- Legislative representatives

The CAC would publish a report at least once every three years that provides an overview of ongoing maintenance and improvements made at the dam and its site, as well as a register of communications received, upcoming site plans, and a list of recommendations for further action regarding the Dam and its site. The CAC will not be empowered to make regulations or rules to bind operations at the Dam, but serve in an advisory capacity to DWR.

SUPPORT

Oroville Dam Coalition (Sponsor)

CONTACT

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March XX, 2018

Senator Bob Hertzberg, Chair
Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water
State Capitol, Room 5046
Sacramento, CA 95814



RE: SB 955 (Nielsen), Ver. 98 – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Hertzberg:

I am writing to express our support for SB 955, which would create the Citizens Advisory Commission for Oroville Dam. The Commission would give the communities around the Dam a venue to discuss and resolve important local issues regarding operations and upkeep at the site with the Department of Water Resources, as well as create an environment of trust between state stakeholders and local communities within the footprint of the Dam.

For decades, many in our community have been concerned about how the Dam has been managed and disappointed by the lack of open dialogue between its operator, the Department, and ourselves. Following the near disaster last year with the breakdown of the main spillway and subsequent evacuation, we believe the time has come that all parties who have a stake in the Dam – operator, water users, and communities that are most directly affected by its operations – should find a way to sit down and work together to solve the problems that we face. We believe this proposed Commission could serve that purpose for the decades to come.

We are pleased that the Department and Governor's office have proven receptive to the idea in public discussions and have continued their outreach to the affected communities. We understand that the author and Administration have been in on-going discussions regarding proposed language for the Commission and believe that a fair and equitable decision can be made for all invested parties.

It is for these reasons that XX proudly supports SB 955. Please contact XX at (530) XXX-XXXX or xx@xx.com if you have questions regarding our position.

Sincerely,

XX

cc: Senator Jim Nielsen
Assembly Member James Gallagher