



Federal legislation advances in support of Lake McClure Storage Enhancement

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Bipartisan legislation intended to support the Lake McClure Storage Enhancement Project has passed the U.S. House of Representatives.

“This first step is crucial to the ongoing effort to increase end-of-year carry-over storage capacity at Lake McClure,” said Hicham ElTal, MID Deputy General Manager of Water Supply and Rights. Similar legislation must also pass in the U.S. Senate.

Authored by local Congressman Jim Costa, H.R. 5726 was introduced in May with a bipartisan group of California co-sponsors: Reps. Jeff Denham (R); Tom McClintock (R); and Davis-area Member John Garamendi (D).

The legislation would provide required authorization paving the way for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to review and consider revisions to its operations manual for Lake McClure.

“We are grateful for the efforts of our local Congressman, Jim Costa, as well as the co-sponsors of the legislation,” said MID’s ElTal.

The proposed enhancement project would allow for up to an additional 57,000 acre feet of carryover water storage in 1-million-acre-foot Lake McClure. The project becomes most crucial in critically dry years when there is minimal inflow to Lake McClure. For instance, in 2015 the reservoir received a mere 160,000 acre feet of runoff water, less than 20 percent of what the reservoir might receive in a more typical year.

The Lake McClure carry-over storage enhancement project would be accomplished with two components:

- A physical modification of the existing spillways at Lake McClure to provide additional flood control space if needed; and
- An update of the USACE flood control manual for Lake McClure, taking into consideration new watershed data and science that has become available since the original manual was published more the 30 years ago.

The District has offered to pay the costs associated with USACE review and potential revision of the Lake McClure manual. However, the Corps has said that it cannot accept non-federal funding for this purpose without statutory authorization. Should the legislation by Rep. Costa and the other local Members of Congress become law, MID would be allowed to contribute the funds required to pay for the manual review.

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