



Jesse Arreguín
Councilmember, District 4

CONSENT CALENDAR
September 22, 2009

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Jesse Arreguín

Subject: Opposing the Expansion of the Pardee Reservoir and Supporting the Designation of the Mokelumne River as a National Wild and Scenic River

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a Resolution opposing the expansion of the Pardee Reservoir proposed in the East Bay Municipal Utility District's proposed 2040 Water Supply Management Plan and supporting the designation of the Mokelumne River from below Salt Springs Dam to the existing upper limit of the Pardee Reservoir as a National Wild and Scenic River.

BACKGROUND:

The Mokelumne River and the Pardee Reservoir currently provides 90% of the water to EBMUD's 1.3 million customers. The East Bay Municipal Utility District's (EBMUD) proposed 2040 Water Supply Management Plan includes a \$ 1.5 billion expansion of the Pardee Dam. The proposed 400-foot Pardee Dam, would raise the reservoir 50 feet and increase its capacity by nearly 80%.

The proposed expansion will cause many environmental and economic problems:

- The dam would drown three miles of the Mokelumne River with water diverted from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.
- The larger reservoir would inundate sites of cultural significance such as a sacred Miwok Indian willow-gathering area, the historic 1912 Middle Bar Bridge, ecosystems that support endangered species, and leave an ugly, lifeless bathtub ring in the summer.
- Local businesses would lose \$1-2 million in annual revenues from popular recreation activities including whitewater rafting, kayaking, angling and camping.

EBMUD is using a flawed demand analysis, based on 2005 pre-recession, pre-drought estimates, to ramp up its water demand projections to unnecessarily high levels. It can meet future demand without an expensive new dam.

Additionally, EBMUD is not doing enough to promote reasonable conservation alternatives, such as greywater recycling, “cash for grass” programs, or a more progressively tiered pricing system. 3% of EBMUD customers use over 1500 gallons/day while most customers use less than 200 gallons/day.

A Pardee Dam expansion would accommodate wasteful water practices and shortchange people who already conserve, who will still be required to achieve the same percentage reduction of water use during a drought. Expanding the dam would irreversibly harm the Mokelumne River, surrounding communities, and the entire Sacramento Delta region.

Water conservation and efficiency measures are the cheapest, easiest, and least destructive ways to meet demands and extend supply. Cities like Los Angeles and Seattle parlayed conservation and efficiency into significant decreases in water use despite growing populations. Just last year, the San Francisco Public Utility Commission shelved its plans to take an additional 25,000,000 gallons/day from the Tuolumne River, citing environmental concerns.

To protect the remaining free flowing sections of the Mokelumne River from dams, diversion and inundation, conservation groups are urging Congressional leaders to introduce legislation to designate the Mokelumne River from below the Salt Springs Dam to the existing upper limit of the Pardee Dam as a National Wild and Scenic River.

The City of Berkeley should join counties, cities, conservation and recreation organizations, historical preservation groups, tribal members and community organizations such as the California Democratic Party, the Sierra Club, and the Foothill Conservancy in opposing the expansion of the Pardee Dam and supporting the designation of the Mokelumne River as a National Wild and Scenic River.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

NONE.

CONTACT PERSON:

Jesse Arreguín, Councilmember, District 4

981-7140

Attachments:

1. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO.

OPPOSING THE EXPANSION OF THE PARDEE RESERVOIR AND SUPPORTING THE DESIGNATION OF THE MOKELUMNE RIVER AS A NATIONAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVER

WHEREAS, the Mokelumne River already provides 90 percent of the water for East Bay Municipal Utility District customers; and

WHEREAS, the East Bay Municipal Utility District's (EBMUD) proposed 2040 Water Supply Management Plan includes a \$ 1.5 billion expansion of the Pardee Dam. The proposed 400-foot Pardee Dam, would raise the reservoir 40 feet and increase its capacity by nearly 80%; and

WHEREAS, building a new, 400-foot dam on the Mokelumne River is an extremely costly, carbon-intensive option for dry-year water supply that will become less reliable over time as our climate changes; and

WHEREAS, residents of Berkeley, who already use relatively little water, may be forced to help pay for this project through higher rates and surcharges; and

WHEREAS, other, more reliable, less costly and more sustainable alternatives for dry-year water supply are available to EBMUD; and

WHEREAS, future growth in the East Bay and related public investment should be carried out in a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable manner that does not export environmental harm to other regions or cause the decline of urban communities; and

WHEREAS, the Mokelumne River is an important tributary of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta; and

WHEREAS, the Mokelumne River is valued by the people of its local communities as a place for recreation, respite and relaxation, similar to the East Bay's public parks, and it is open to all people regardless of age or income; and

WHEREAS, damaging the Mokelumne River by enlarging Pardee Reservoir would destroy American Indian sacred and cultural sites, valuable historic resources, miles of habitat suitable for salmon and steelhead restoration, and recreational resources important to local foothill economies; and

WHEREAS, the expansion of Pardee Reservoir is opposed by major conservation, fish, and recreation organizations; the cities of Richmond, Jackson, Lone, Sutter Creek and Plymouth; the Amador Water Agency; the County of Amador; members of foothill tribes; and countless individuals in the foothills and East Bay alike; and

WHEREAS, protecting the Mokelumne River's remaining free-flowing reaches will protect the river's water quality, sustain fish populations, protect important cultural and historical sites, and preserve river recreation and scenic beauty for those who visit from the East Bay as well as those who live nearby.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that it hereby opposes the expansion of Pardee Reservoir proposed in the 2040 East Bay Municipal Utility District Water Supply Management Plan and encourages EBMUD to employ less-destructive methods of meeting future water supply demand, including conservation, efficiency, recycling, tiered-pricing, off-stream storage and conjunctive use.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley hereby supports a National Wild and Scenic River designation for the Mokelumne River from below Salt Springs Dam to the existing upper limit of the Pardee Reservoir.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to our Congressional representatives and members of the EBMUD Board of Directors and request that they create, sponsor or support appropriate legislation to designate the North Fork and main stem of the Mokelumne River from below Salt Springs Dam to the existing upper limit of the Pardee Reservoir as a National Wild and Scenic River.