



California State Senator, Third District

Lois Wolk

News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 19, 2014

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First water bond to earn passage from committee gets second round of support

Wolk bond funds broadly supported projects for safe & reliable water supply, other statewide needs

SACRAMENTO—Senate Bill 848 by Senator Lois Wolk (D-Davis), the first water bond proposal from either the California State Senate or Assembly to be approved by a committee or floor vote, earned passage from its second committee today.

The Senate’s Environmental Quality Committee voted 6-2 to approve the \$6.895 billion water bond measure, which aims to replace the \$11.14 billion water bond currently slated for the November 2014 state ballot.

“While the water bond currently before voters is too expensive and too controversial to garner voter support, communities and watersheds throughout California need funding to begin immediately addressing critical water needs, especially given the drought conditions the state is currently facing. Three percent of Californians, close to 1 million people, do not have access to water that meets primary drinking water standards,” said Senator Wolk. “SB 848 would offer voters a more sensible bond that focuses on getting help to where it is most desperately needed through broadly supported, shovel-ready projects that will increase water reliability at the local and regional levels in the next 5 to 10 years.”

SB 848, also known as “The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality & Water Supply Act,” includes funding for projects to address urgent statewide needs for water treatment for communities without safe drinking water and water supply reliability, and the crisis in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

SB 848 also includes incentives to help permanently reduce reliance on the state’s most stressed watersheds, and directs funding to development of regional water supplies throughout the state that are resilient to climate change.

SB 848’s supporters include the American Planning Association, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, Clean Water Action, Community Water Center, The California Association of Mutual Water Companies, the Nature Conservancy, Natural Resources Defense Council, Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, Sierra Club California, Solano County Board of Supervisors, Sonoma County Water Agency, Ventura County, Trout Unlimited, and Yolo County Board of Supervisors.

The bill will be heard next Wednesday in the Senate Governance and Finance Committee.

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Quotes from Supporters of SB 848 (Wolk)

The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality & Water Supply Act of 2014

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Riverside County Supervisor and former State Senator John J. Benoit

"I strongly support Senator Wolk's legislation, which places a water bond addressing California's urgent water needs before the voters," said Riverside County Supervisor and former State Senator John J. Benoit. "I applaud Senator Wolk for including funds for watershed preservation, for the Salton Sea and helping our local Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy protect water quality and habitat for multiple threatened and endangered species."

Sacramento County

"SB 848 invests in clean, safe drinking water, which is essential to the prosperity and welfare of communities in the Delta and throughout the state. This proposal also recognizes the importance of regional solutions," said Sacramento County Supervisor Don Nottoli, who is also a member of the Delta Protection Commission.

Ventura County

"Ventura County, a member of the Water Bond Coalition, supports the inclusion of \$2 billion in Integrated Regional Water Management funds in SB 848, which allows the County to take the next steps in implementing the priority water quantity and water quality projects identified in our Countywide Plan," said Vice-Chair Supervisor Kathy Long.

WATER AGENCIES

The California Association of Mutual Water Companies

"The California Association of Mutual Water Companies (CalMutuals) thanks Senator Wolk for including mutual water companies as eligible applicants for funding under SB 848," said Jim Byerrum with CalMutuals. "Doing so reflects the present-day reality of the 1200 mutual water companies throughout the state, particularly those small systems that serve disadvantaged communities who desperately need financial assistance to be able to continue to provide quality water to their shareholders and customers. CalMutuals is eager to work with Senator Lois Wolk as SB 848 works its way through the legislature."

Sonoma County Water Agency

“We serve urban communities, rural communities, and vitally important agricultural communities, said Kristopher Tjernell. “SB 848 includes significant provisions to help address the unique and quite challenging water quality improvement needs in each of these sectors.”

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE GROUPS

Clean Water Action

"The funding set aside in this bond for safe drinking water and wastewater projects will make a real difference to communities throughout the state, including the most at-risk and disadvantaged communities," said Jennifer Clary with Clean Water Action. "There are families in California whose well water is laced with nitrates, communities whose drinking water supplies are impacted by inadequate or antiquated wastewater infrastructure. The funding in SB 848 will help provide these communities with access to safe water."

Community Water Center

“SB 848 is a responsible bond that addresses urgent public health needs for very basic services like safe drinking water and targeted wastewater infrastructure in disadvantaged schools and communities throughout the state,” said Omar Carrillo with the Community Water Center, who also testified in support of the measure. “I also applaud SB 848’s inclusion of technical assistance to help secure water bond funding needed to provide very basic water services in disadvantaged and other communities, including those with private well owners and small water systems.”

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS

Natural Resources Defense Council

"SB 848 is a sound investment in California's water future," said Doug Obegi with the Natural Resources Defense Council. "SB 848 will increase the drought resilience of communities across California by providing matching funds for water recycling, conservation, groundwater cleanup, and similar projects. The bill will also help provide safe drinking water to the three million Californians who cannot drink the water out of their tap, as well as protect California's rivers and watersheds, and the thousands of jobs and communities that depend on their health."

The Nature Conservancy

“SB 848 will provide funding for critical actions necessary to improve California’s overall water management,” said Jay Ziegler with the Nature Conservancy. “The need for the investments outlined in the proposal is even more pressing given the historic drought. California needs an integrated water strategy that balances water supply reliability and environmental protection. SB 848 will accomplish this by funding groundwater recharge, stormwater retention, conservation, water storage and recycling projects.”

FISHING GROUPS

Trout Unlimited

“We commend Senator Wolk for her leadership in developing this water bond proposal,” said Brian J. Johnson, California Director of Trout Unlimited. “SB 848 includes funding for projects that will improve water supplies, water quality, and trout and salmon rivers across California and we are pleased that it has passed out of the Senate Committee on Environmental Quality.”