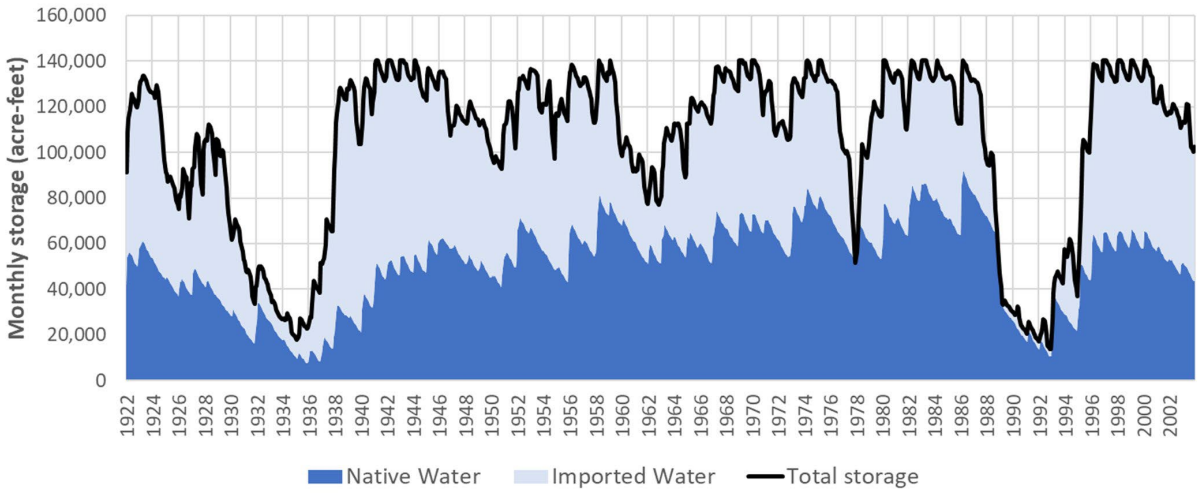
12/8/23 Water Storage Exploratory Committee
Agenda Item 4.1. Receive an Informational Update on the Proposed Operations and Benefits of Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project
Comments from Katja Irvin, San Jose Resident

Presentation Slide 2 Needs Addressed by Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project

- Restore Federally Threatened Steelhead Fish Habitat
  - Comment: There is no guarantee that the proposed additional flows and restored habitat will result in any recovery of the Steelhead. Operational parameters for the 35,000 acre-foot habitat storage reserve need to be discussed in this presentation and the ramification of those operational parameters needs to be illustrated in the data provided.
- Improve Delta Watershed Wetlands
  - Comment: More information is needed to quantify the benefits of providing water in one specific water year type (below normal).
- Eliminate Water Quality Issues from San Luis Reservoir
  - Comment: Eliminating water quality issues seems unlikely. No information has been provided to show that Delta water from San Luis Reservoir will not cause water quality problems in the new Pacheco Reservoir.
- Reduction of Downstream Flooding
  - Comment: As requested in previous public comments, reduction of flooding has not been identified as a benefit of this project and should not be included here.

Presentation Slide 4 Expanded Reservoir Water Sources



- This data is confusing and incomplete. The graph should show data through 2022 to enable analysis of more recent conditions. Also, projections should be shown out to 2030 rather than using 2030 assumptions to alter historic data. At least show what would have been stored historically based on real hydrology that occurred in those years. Then the difference between the actual historic numbers and climate change projected values can be discussed and explained. At this point, too much information is missing.
- The data points shown here are annual, so the meaning of “monthly storage” should be explained in that context.

Presentation Slide 6 Long-Term Storage of Expanded Reservoir

- The graph should show data through 2022 to enable analysis of more recent conditions.
- The graph does not show water stored for fish. This is part of project operations should be included.

Presentation Slide 8 The Project will Enhance Water Supply

"Maximum water supply increase of 24,000 acre-feet during critical year; limited by demand"

- Additional water supply is not included above as a need addressed by the project, so why is this being included here?
- Previously, staff reports have said there will be no increase in water supply other than emergency supply, and this project has been categorized as optimizing the system, not providing additional supply. Why is the narrative being changed midstream?
- How does demand limit supply?

Presentation Slide 9 San Luis Reservoir Low Point Water Quality Issues

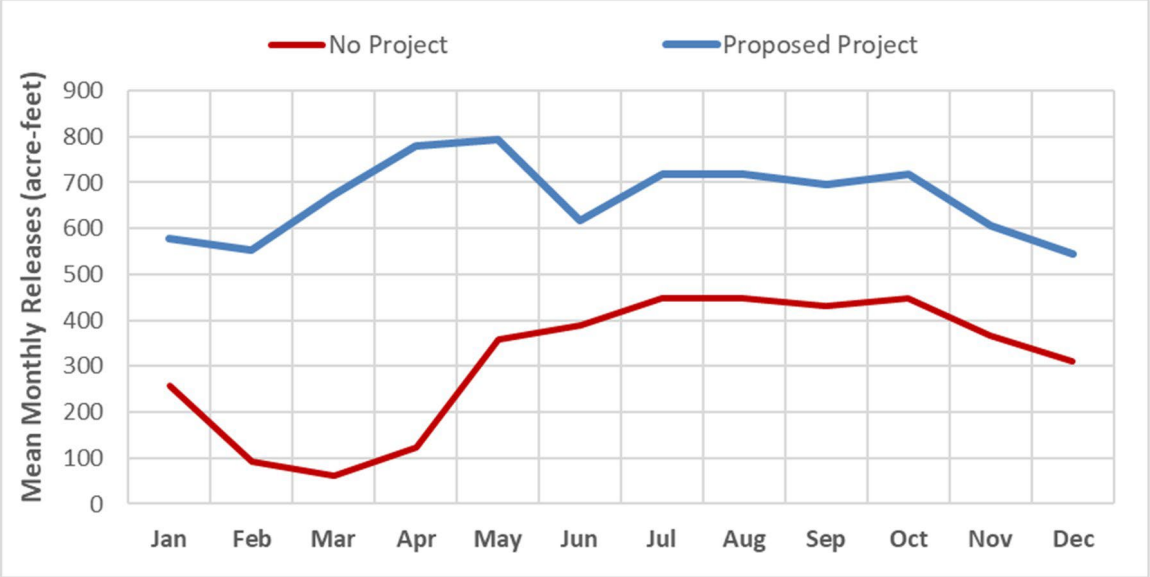
"Spikes in taste and odor measuring times normal levels, which cause problems in today's domestic supply"

- These water quality issues have been mitigated to date using other methods. These other methods are surely more cost effective than building this new dam.

Presentation Slide 10 Eliminates San Luis Low Point Water Quality Issues

- Much more explanation and analysis are needed to explain how a new reservoir will "eliminate" water quality issues caused by poor-quality imported water. Why won't similar water quality issues occur in the new reservoir? Due to costs for pumping and evaporative loss Pacheco should only be used when the groundwater basins are full, so will often be at low levels and will be warm, conditions conducive to algae blooms and other water quality issues.

Presentation Slide 13 Improved Releases from Expanded Reservoir



- What is "no project"? Is that San Luis Reservoir and rebuilding the current North Fork dam? Does it include the expansion of San Luis Reservoir? Or what are the assumptions behind this?

- Where is this water coming from? This seems to say there will be several hundred acre-feet additional water supply every month. Do we plan to export that much more water from the Delta?

Presentation Slide 14 Enables Federally Threatened Steelhead Recovery
"Enables development of an independent population in the Pajaro River watershed" and "Increases South Central California Coast Steelhead cohort score between 147%"

- Simply releasing more water and restoring the streambed below the new dam does not guarantee development of an independent population.
- Who has verified the 147% increase in cohort score? This should be verified by NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service. In Draft EIR comments, NMFS questioned how the objectives for water supply reliability/operational flexibility and for increasing habitat for steelhead via improved flow and water temperature conditions will be managed during drought periods. This should be discussed.

Presentation Slide 16 Enhances Bay-Delta Ecosystem
"Dedicates 2,000 acre-feet for wetlands in below-normal water years"

- Additional analysis would be useful. How much would have been supplied between 2012 and 2022 using actual hydrology for those years?

Presentation Slide 18 Reduces Flooding in Downstream Communities
"Reservoir expansion can reduce peak flood flows by up to 46% in Pacheco Creek"

- As previously noted, flood protection is not officially a benefit of this project and is purely incidental. To continue highlighting flood benefits is misleading.

There is not enough information provided to understand the assumptions behind this information and the Board should request an independent review of this analysis because it seems that many issues are not fully addressed.