



Butte County Board of Supervisors

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Members of the Board

Bill Connelly | Debra Lucero | Tami Ritter | Tod Kimmelshue | Doug Teeter

June 8, 2021

Karla Nemeth, Director
California Department of Water Resources
P.O. Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001
Dear Director Nemeth,

The Butte County Board of Supervisors brings to your attention the devastating situation at Lake Oroville. The current situation goes beyond our unresolved issues regarding the impacts to Butte County from Lake Oroville. The Lake is less than half of its historic capacity and is expected to reach dead pool level later this summer. The conditions of Lake Oroville makes it inoperable as a recreation venue and its condition threatens the local ecosystem, the local economy and has become a visual blight on the region. Over 130 houseboats had to be removed from the Lake in May. We are equally troubled by what lies ahead. We call upon you to evaluate Lake Oroville operations to mitigate impending additional socioeconomic impacts to Butte County. Further, we request to meet with you regarding the use of the Governor's \$5.1 billion plan for Water, Infrastructure, Drought Response and Improved Climate Resilience to mitigate the impacts to Lake Oroville.

We recognize the critically dry conditions and that the anticipated snow pack did not contribute inflow into Lake Oroville. Unlike other reservoirs in the state and federal systems, Lake Oroville was placed with a greater burden during the current drought conditions. Changes to the operation of Lake Oroville resulting from the 2019 revised Coordinated Operating Agreement (COA) between the Bureau of Reclamation and the Department of Water Resources (DWR) exacerbated the situation. The revised COA increased the State Water Project (i.e., Lake Oroville) responsibility of meeting in-Delta standards from 25% to 55%. While the Delta ecosystem is important, the depletion of Lake Oroville redirects ecological impacts to the Feather River Watershed. Once again, the management of Lake Oroville has created significant socioeconomic, recreational and environmental impacts to Butte County and we call upon you to modify Lake Oroville operations to minimize impacts to Butte County.

Butte County is facing increasing impacts from Lake Oroville operations. We implore you to re-evaluate the operations of Lake Oroville to avoid additional impacts placed on the community. We further request to discuss with you how the Governor's Water, Infrastructure, Drought Response and Improved Climate Resilience plan can mitigate the additional impacts imposed on Butte County.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bill Connelly, Chair
Butte County Board of Supervisors

cc: Assemblymember James Gallagher
Assemblymember Dahle
Senator Jim Nielsen