

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 27, 2016

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

**Assembly Joint Resolution**

**No. 36**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member ~~Brough~~ *Mathis***

April 20, 2016

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Assembly Joint Resolution No. 36—Relative to overflow water.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 36, as amended, ~~Brough~~ *Mathis*. Overflow water: beneficial use.

This measure would declare that overflow water from reservoirs that are a part of the federal Central Valley Project should be redirected to put the water to the most beneficial use and released in the central valley and that the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta pumping facilities should be put into operation to divert water from being wastefully sent out to the Pacific Ocean and instead sent to areas where the water is critically needed.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, The State of California has been experiencing a  
2 historic drought, lasting five years; and  
3 WHEREAS, During this state-declared drought, California has  
4 not seen a full water allocation from the federal government; and  
5 WHEREAS, On April 1, 2015, Governor Jerry Brown  
6 announced California's first mandatory statewide water restrictions,  
7 requesting a 25-percent decrease in urban water use from 2013  
8 levels; and  
9 WHEREAS, California is the world's fifth largest supplier of  
10 food, as it grows 43 percent of the nation's fruit, nuts, and

1 vegetables and more than 90 percent of the nation's almonds,  
2 grapes, and broccoli. With the current drought conditions,  
3 *California* farmers' ability to grow crops has been severely  
4 affected. In 2014, California farmers were forced to fallow more  
5 than 500,000 acres. The central valley is one of the state's most  
6 important economic regions, and with the continuance of drought  
7 conditions, the economy and agricultural production will continue  
8 to suffer; and

9 WHEREAS, Although the El Niño-fueled storms have improved  
10 the water levels in some of the state's largest reservoirs, the state's  
11 drought persists; and

12 WHEREAS, Under current federal law, the federal Bureau of  
13 Reclamation requires a dam to release water when the dam reaches  
14 a capacity of 60 percent; that water is known as overflow water.  
15 However, there is no guarantee that the reservoirs will reach those  
16 water levels again; and

17 WHEREAS, On March 18, 2016, pursuant to the federal Bureau  
18 of Reclamation's requirements, Shasta Lake Reservoir, a keystone  
19 reservoir of the federal Central Valley Project and California's  
20 biggest reservoir that serves California growers, released water at  
21 a rate of 20,000 cubic feet per second, a significant increase from  
22 the normal rate of 5,000 cubic feet per second. This was the  
23 quickest rate the bureau has released water into the upper  
24 Sacramento River since 2011; and

25 WHEREAS, Overflow water that is released from the reservoirs  
26 and into the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta ultimately ends up in  
27 the ocean; and

28 WHEREAS, There are more efficient uses of this overflow  
29 water; and

30 WHEREAS, More than 23 million Californians and millions of  
31 acres of farmland rely on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta for  
32 all or part of their water supply, and countless species count on  
33 the delta for their habitat. Releasing water into the ocean that can  
34 otherwise be used in a more efficient and beneficial manner results  
35 in damage to the farms and species; now, therefore, be it

36 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*  
37 *California, jointly*, That the State of California declares that the  
38 overflow water from reservoirs that are a part of the federal Central  
39 Valley Project, including, but not limited to, Shasta and Folsom

1 Lake Reservoirs, should be redirected to put the water to beneficial  
2 use and released in the central valley; and be it further

3 *Resolved*, That the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta pumping  
4 facilities should be put into operation to divert the water from  
5 being wastefully sent out to the Pacific Ocean and instead sent to  
6 areas, such as the central valley and southern California, where  
7 the water is critically needed; and be it further

8 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies  
9 of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United  
10 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the  
11 Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and Representative  
12 from California in the Congress of the United States, and to the  
13 author for appropriate distribution.

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