

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 1649**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Salas**

**(Coauthors: Assembly Members Bigelow, Gallagher, Gray, and  
Patterson)**

(Coauthors: Senators Berryhill, Cannella, Fuller, Galgiani, and Vidak)

January 12, 2016

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An act relating to water storage.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1649, as introduced, Salas. Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014: water storage projects.

Existing law, the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014, approved by the voters as Proposition 1 at the November 4, 2014, statewide general election, authorizes the issuance of general obligation bonds in the amount of \$7,545,000,000 to finance a water quality, supply, and infrastructure improvement program. The act continuously appropriates \$2,700,000,000 to the California Water Commission for public benefits associated with water storage projects, as specified.

This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to ensure surface water storage is funded and built consistent with the goals of Proposition 1 and that the commission fulfills the original intent of the water storage project provisions of Proposition 1. The bill would make findings and declarations of the Legislature, including, but not limited to, that, of the water storage projects available, the Temperance Flat Dam and Sites Reservoir will meet statewide goals and provide those specified public benefits to the greatest extent.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the  
2 following:

3 (a) According to the United states drought Monitor, over 90  
4 percent of California is in “Severe Drought,” raising concerns over  
5 water supply dependability and underscoring the need for  
6 immediate statewide action.

7 (b) On November 4, 2014, voters approved Proposition 1, the  
8 Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of  
9 2014, which authorizes \$7,545,000,000 in general obligation bonds  
10 to finance a water quality, supply, and infrastructure improvement  
11 program, and continuously appropriates from the revenue of those  
12 bonds \$2,700,000,000 for water storage projects, including, but  
13 not limited to, dams and reservoirs.

14 (c) With the promise of increased water storage, voters approved  
15 Proposition 1 by 67 percent. The argument in favor of Proposition  
16 1 in the state’s official voter information guide states “Proposition  
17 1 invests in new storage increasing the amount of water that can  
18 be stored during wet years for the dry years that will continue to  
19 challenge California.”

20 (d) Expanding and improving California’s water storage capacity  
21 is long overdue. The last time California saw significant state and  
22 federal investments in the state’s water storage and delivery system  
23 was in the 1960s, when the state’s population stood at 16 million.  
24 Today, that same system supports 38 million individuals and will  
25 need to support 50 million by 2050.

26 (e) Statewide water storage goals, as outlined in Chapter 8 of  
27 Proposition 1 (Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 79750) of  
28 Division 26.7 of the Water Code), are necessary to update  
29 California’s aging water infrastructure, provide reliable water  
30 supply for the public and our agricultural economy, and protect  
31 the environmental health of the Delta.

32 (f) A water storage project may only be funded by Chapter 8 of  
33 Proposition 1 (Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 79750) of  
34 Division 26.7 of the Water Code) if it provides specified public  
35 benefits, including: ecosystem improvements; water quality

1 improvements to the Delta and river systems that provide public  
2 trust resources or restore groundwater resources; flood control  
3 benefits, including increases in reservoir storage capacity in  
4 response to decreasing snow pack; emergency response, including  
5 securing emergency water supplies for salinity repulsion; and  
6 recreational purposes.

7 (g) Of the water storage projects available, the Temperance Flat  
8 Dam and Sites Reservoir will meet statewide goals and provide  
9 all of these public benefits to the greatest extent. These projects  
10 will allow California to store more water in years of high rainfall,  
11 which will ease pressures placed on the Delta and groundwater  
12 supply during years of prolonged drought, and facilitate the storage  
13 of snow melt and timed releases of water to improve flow  
14 conditions and water temperatures.

15 SEC. 2. It is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation  
16 to ensure surface water storage is funded and built consistent with  
17 the goals of Proposition 1 and that the California Water  
18 Commission fulfills the original intent of Chapter 8 of Proposition  
19 1 (Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 79750) of Division 26.7  
20 of the Water Code).