



**George Miller**  
**Member of Congress**  
**1975 - 2015**

August 9, 2017

Mr. Armando Quintero, Chair  
California Water Commission  
P.O. Box 94236  
Sacramento, California 94236-0001

**Re: Support Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Proposition 1 Application**

Dear Chairman Quintero:

I am writing to express my support for the Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Project, especially the water supply benefits for wildlife refuges proposed in the Water Supply Investment Program (WSIP) funding application that has been submitted for Proposition 1 funding for this project. For many years, I was the Congressman representing Contra Costa County, including much of the service area of the Contra Costa Water District (CCWD). I was also the lead author of the 1992 Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA), including its provisions to provide reliable water supplies for the Central Valley's major wildlife refuges and migratory bird habitat. My support for the proposed project is based both on my extensive experience on water management issues in California as well as my deep appreciation for the need to provide adequate and secure water supply benefits to our state, federal and privately-managed wetland areas.

Los Vaqueros Reservoir is an off-stream reservoir in Brentwood owned and operated by Contra Costa Water District that can be expanded to provide increased drought-year water supply reliability for the Bay Area as well as important ecosystem benefits that qualify for Proposition 1 funding. The primary ecosystem benefit proposed for the Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Project is an increased supply of water deliveries to south-of-Delta wildlife refuges, which in turn will help numerous species in the Central Valley, in the Delta and in the Pacific Flyway. I consider these benefits to be critically important.

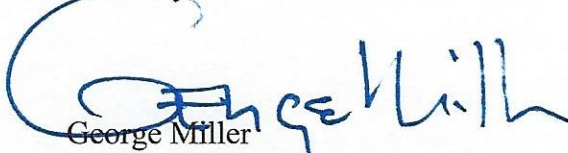
Enacted in 1992, the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) established baseline water requirements for 19 California refuges and wildlife areas. Of those, 14 refuges are located south of the Delta. In the Act's 25-year history, the state/federal partnership created by the CVPIA has consistently failed to deliver the full water supplies needed for these south-of-Delta refuges. The

proposed Los Vaqueros Expansion Project would provide a significant enhancement of CVPIA Incremental Level 4 deliveries, averaging 46,000 acre-feet annually. This water, typically used for the seasonal irrigation of wetland plants and to support water-bird habitat during the winter, is especially critical south of the Delta, where water supplies are scarce.

Only 5% of the historical footprint of the Central Valley's wetlands remain, largely as publicly and privately managed refuge lands. These wetlands serve as critical habitat to hundreds of species and are part of California's commitment to national and international Pacific Flyway agreements. Among other things, these wetlands help support bird species that travel to and from the Delta, and thus enhance overall Delta bird populations. The Central Valley wetlands also help to recharge over-drafted aquifers, serve as filters to improve water quality flowing to the Delta, and provide the public with important opportunities to interact with nature.

Expanding Los Vaqueros Reservoir is an innovative project that embodies what the voters approved when they passed Proposition 1, including significant, well-defined public benefits for the environment. I believe the refuge water supply benefits from the proposed expansion could make a tremendous difference for critical wetland habitats, and I support the CWC funding those benefits.

Sincerely,

  
George Miller  
Member of Congress, Retired

cc: CWC Staff c/o [cwc@water.ca.gov](mailto:cwc@water.ca.gov)

Jerry Brown, General Manager, Contra Costa Water District