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Four Water Agencies Sign Agreement Stating Temperance Flat Reservoir Cooperation

Fresno, Calif. – Today four agencies representing water users in the San Joaquin Valley signed a joint letter pledging collaboration to develop the Temperance Flat Reservoir project on the San Joaquin River northeast of Fresno. The joint letter was signed this morning (March 31) during a news conference at Fresno City Hall. Signatories included representatives from the Friant Water Authority, San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority, San Joaquin Valley Water Infrastructure Authority, and San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority. The event was hosted by Fresno Mayor Lee Brand, who pledged his support of the group's ongoing efforts to jumpstart the reservoir project.

In the joint letter, addressed to California Water Commission Acting Executive Officer Taryn Ravazzini, the agencies pledge to work with the United States Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and contribute equally on staff, funding, support, and other resources to support the Temperance Flat project. Currently, the four agencies are collaborating on technical analyses and an operations plan that would build upon previous Temperance Flat studies, and also provide clarity to how partners in this project — including the State of California — could benefit from new investments in storage on the San Joaquin River. The stated goal of this effort is to develop and submit an application for Proposition 1 storage funding to the California Water Commission by August 14.

A new reservoir in the upper San Joaquin River watershed has been considered for decades to improve operational flexibility, water supply and reliability for the San Joaquin Valley's water users. Temperance Flat Reservoir, which would have a capacity of 1.3 million acre-feet (2.5 times that of existing Millerton Lake), is proposed on a site several miles upstream from Friant Dam that was the originally proposed location for a Millerton-area reservoir in 1930. The present Friant Dam location was selected to reduce construction costs.

With the 2014 passage of Proposition 1, formally known as the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act, California voters authorized \$7.545 billion in general obligation bonds, which includes \$2.7 billion for surface water storage development. The California Water Commission is administering the program to award grant funds to eligible projects through a competitive process.

"The limitations of California's aging water infrastructure to meet present and future challenges have never been more apparent than today. Recent extremes we've experienced — back-to-back drought and flood years — demonstrate the challenges that new storage could help address," said Jason Phillips, Chief Executive Officer of the Friant Water Authority. "Temperance Flat would be connected to both the Delta

and the extensive regional plumbing south of the Delta. The project could provide a secure place to store supplies for dry years, improve the capture of high flows for groundwater infiltration in wet years, and provide additional controllable supply that could improve water supply reliability or support ecosystems. Today's letter provides an important step towards crystalizing the benefits of Temperance Flat and understanding how investors could share in them."

"If the supply of food and fiber that is produced in the Central Valley and enjoyed by millions around the world is to continue, then a dependable water supply must be developed. California's forefathers provided a foundation in water that has benefited us through the years and construction of Temperance Flat Reservoir enables us to build on that valuable history and provide an essential portion of the needed water supply that will benefit cities, disadvantaged communities, farms, groundwater recharge and responsible environmental benefits," said Steve Chedester, Executive Director of the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority.

"Greatly reduced Central Valley Project water deliveries because of Delta environmental restrictions have been the rule for nearly a decade, with severe economic and social impacts caused by diminished water supplies for agriculture, cities and disadvantages rural communities, business and industry," said Steve Worthley, San Joaquin Valley Water Infrastructure Authority President and Chairman of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors. "Over the past year, the Authority and a growing number of other water agencies have worked tirelessly to support Temperance Flat and to encourage planning and development of other new valley water infrastructure."

"A quarter century of failed regulatory fish policies has crippled the ability of the Central Valley Project to adequately serve its agricultural, municipal, and environmental responsibilities," said Water Policy Administrator Ara Azhderian of the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority. "These failed policies have hurt many working families, disadvantaged communities, wildlife refuges and the groundwater basins we all have had to rely upon to compensate for the loss of our promised surface water. Working together, regional water agencies, local government, communities and other stakeholders have come together to partner with the United States Bureau of Reclamation and the State of California to develop Temperance Flat Dam. Temperance Flat has great potential to help restore lost water supply and recover our depleted groundwater basins, enhance fish and wildlife, and help rejuvenate the communities that provide so much for our state, nation and the world."

"It completely defies logic to release water, which could be used for human, agricultural, or environmental use, out to the ocean, especially after five years of devastating drought conditions. The entire state of California needs its water infrastructure updated, and that includes building water storage projects, like Temperance Flat Dam. The future viability of the San Joaquin Valley is dependent upon a reliable water supply. Efforts to store water must be improved, both below and above ground, during wet years so water is available during the dry years." – Congressman Jim Costa

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