

Valley officials support bigger water bond than what Gov. Brown wants

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Marc Benjamin



Manuel Cunha Jr. board member of the California Latino Water Coalition and president of the Nisei Farmers League, bottom, addresses the media with about 20 other city mayors and elected officials and supporters behind him in front of Fresno City Hall urging the governor to address the drought and statewide water issues within a modified 2014 bond proposal. Photographed on Wednesday, August 6, 2014 in Fresno, Calif. ERIC PAUL ZAMORA — THE FRESNO BEE | [Buy Photo](#)

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Time is running out to alter an \$11.1 billion water bond that could go to California voters in November. But Wednesday a cross-section of city and county officials from around the Valley, as well as farming and business interests, joined together at Fresno City Hall to support a water bond larger than Gov. Brown wants.

The governor this week pledged support for a \$6 billion water bond for November's ballot.

Also in play is a \$9.25 billion water bond back by Henry T. Perea, D-Fresno, that is being discussed in the state Legislature. The Legislature has until next Monday to reach a compromise on the multibillion-dollar bond package or else the \$11.1 billion plan will go to voters.

Local officials say they could support Perea's measure, too.

But Tulare County Supervisor Allen Ishida said the governor's \$6 billion proposal "substantially undermines what we are trying to do today" and is far less than the \$68 billion high-speed rail plan.

Brown opposes the higher cost water bond because of the expense of paying it back.

A Public Policy Institute of California poll released this week shows California voters offering the \$11.1 billion bond 51% support. But as the cost is reduced, support rises.

Manuel Cunha, of the Fresno-based Nisei Farmers League, said the Perea-backed bond gets 54% backing of state voters.

Support grows to 59 percent for a smaller bond, but questioners did not ask what price tag respondents would accept, the PPIC said.

The bond will cover water projects ranging from dams and reservoirs to urban water recycling and groundwater contamination cleanup and sustaining the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

The reporter can be reached at (559) 441-6166, mbrbenjamin@fresnobee.com or [@beebebenjamin](https://twitter.com/beebebenjamin) on Twitter.

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