

Vidak introduces bill to streamline water bond projects

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Senator Andy Vidak (R-Hanford) has introduced a bill that would streamline the environmental review process for water projects funded by the 2014 water bond.

The bill, SB 127, would require any challenges to an environmental impact report (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act to be resolved or addressed within 270 days of the report's completion.

The rule only applies to projects included in the \$7-billion water bond passed by voters in November. The bond includes money for water quality, supply and infrastructure improvements.

If the bill passes, for it to take affect the state Judicial Council on or before July 1, 2016 would have to adopt a rule of court to establish procedures for dealing with proceedings seeking judicial review of a public agency's action in certifying an environmental impact report within the 270-day time frame.

"Dozens of communities in my district lack access to clean drinking water," Vidak said. "If we can change the CEQA process to help billionaire developers build sports complexes for millionaire players, we should be able to do the same to accelerate the completion of desperately-needed water projects for our most disadvantaged communities."

Vidak is referring to legislation passed in 2013 that exempts large stadium projects, specifically the proposed Sacramento Kings basketball arena, from certain CEQA rules.

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