

California Legislature Wants Oversight On Water Bond Money

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American River, Central Valley, California

William Berry, flickr

In total, California has \$7.5 billion in bond revenue to work with. Most will be allocated to state departments through the budget process.

Democrat Mark Levine chairs the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife committee, which will hold an oversight hearing on the bond. Levine says the state should be cautious.

"If we look into the past there have been spectacular failures as well as amazing successes about the projects and infrastructure that the state has engaged in," he says. "And the most important thing to me is that we spend this money wisely."

Republican Assemblyman Frank Bigelow is also concerned about how the money will be spent. He has some priorities he'd like the state to focus on.

"To start with I'd like to see that the money is actually starting to put surface storage up front," he says. "Clearly we're in another drought. Clearly we need more water storage above ground."

But there are limits to what the Legislature can control. Lawmakers can provide some direction to state departments, but they can't fund specific projects. And Governor Jerry Brown is not inclined to let his departments go on a spending spree.

"No one wants to keep money in the bank. We want to use it," he says. "But we don't want to use it without understanding what we're doing."

Brown says all of the money will be allocated within the next four years.

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Katie Orr covers everything from the Governor to state agencies. She received her Masters in Political Science from San Diego State University. In her spare time Katie enjoys wine tasting and shopping, though she tries not to combine the two.

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