

# Madera County supervisors back Temperance Flat group

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Madera County supervisors joined a growing group of government leaders seeking money from the state's water bond to build Temperance Flat Dam east of Millerton Lake.

On Tuesday, supervisors voted 5-0 to back the concept of a joint powers authority, an idea supported last month by Fresno, Tulare and Kings counties.

The proposal initially was pushed by Fresno County supervisors to ensure that state Proposition 1-A bond money could be made available for construction of the dam to augment water storage. Efforts are moving ahead to enlarge Shasta Dam and build the Sites Reservoir in Colusa County, but no similar effort was being made to push Temperance Flat.

Prop 1-A has \$2.7 billion available for water storage, and the San Joaquin Valley was falling behind. State water officials will award the bond money in early 2017.

The counties are being pressed into action after the splintering of the Friant Water Authority. It was the most likely group to serve as the lead agency for the JPA before fracturing earlier this year because of disagreements among about half of its 21 member agencies.

\$2.6 billion

Estimated cost for Temperance Flat Dam

The \$2.6 billion Temperance Flat project would add more than 1 million acre-feet of storage above Millerton Lake.

After funding is secured by the state, the group can seek additional money from the federal government, said Mario Santoyo, executive director of the Latino Water Coalition.

Santoyo said that 15 million acre-feet of water has spilled over Millerton Dam and gone to the ocean in the past 30 years because of the lack of storage capacity.

That water creates no benefits for the Valley, its farmers and residents who rely on water coming from Millerton.

Madera County Board Chairman David Rogers said it's imperative for the county to participate.

"The value of our land is sustained by the ability to get water," he said.

Cities and several irrigation districts also support the joint powers authority. Support also is being sought from supervisors in Kern and Merced counties.

Following the meeting, Santoyo said the agencies that are part of the group will join together to discuss bylaws for the agency.

He hopes the JPA will be ready to start lobbying in Sacramento within two to three months.

"If it was my choice we'd have something rolling right now," Santoyo said.

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