AMENDED IN SENATE FEBRUARY 26, 2018

SENATE BILL No. 919

Introduced by Senator Dodd

January 22, 2018

An act to add Section ~~180~~ *144* to the Water Code, relating to water resources.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 919, as amended, Dodd. Water resources: stream gages.

Under existing law, the State Water Resources Control Board administers a water rights program pursuant to which the state board grants permits and licenses to appropriate water. Existing law, the Open and Transparent Water Data Act, requires the Department of Water Resources, the board, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to coordinate and integrate existing water and ecological data from local, state, and federal agencies. ~~Existing law provides for the establishment of the California Water Quality Monitoring Council, which is administered by the board, and requires the council to undertake various actions relating to water quality data collection, and to review existing water quality monitoring, assessment, and reporting efforts and recommend specific actions and funding needs necessary to coordinate and enhance those efforts.~~

This bill would require the ~~board,~~ *Department of Water Resources,* upon appropriation by the Legislature, to develop a plan to deploy a network of stream gages that includes a determination of funding needs and opportunities for reactivating existing gages. The bill would require the ~~board,~~ *department,* in consultation with the *board, the* Department of ~~Water Resources,~~ *Fish and Wildlife, the Central Valley Flood Protection Board, interested stakeholders, and, to the extent they wish*

to consult, local agencies, to prioritize the deployment of stream gages based upon gaps in the existing system of gages and specified considerations.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) Fourteen percent of the state's significant stream segments are well gaged.

(b) California's current stream gage network is poorly funded and not well organized, and data on existing gages pertaining to funding, location, and operating condition is difficult to find.

(c) The stream gage network fails to report key variables such as flow, temperature, and drainage.

(d) For a stream gage to be effective in helping inform water management during climate extremes and highly variable flows, it should record quality data, report key variables such as flow and temperature, and make its data accessible to the public promptly.

(e) The largest individual sponsor of stream gages in California is the United States Geological Service (USGS), which works largely in partnership with a variety of state and federal agencies that provide funding to support gages and at least 57 percent of USGS-funded gages are also funded by a local agency.

(f) The data about which specific agencies are already funding particular stream gages is available for only 20 percent of active gages in California, and to better understand the gage landscape in the state, it is critical to know which agencies are funding particular gages.

~~SEC. 2. Section 180 is added to the Water Code, to read:~~

~~180. (a) Upon appropriation by the Legislature, the board shall develop a plan to deploy a network of stream gages that includes a determination of funding needs and opportunities for reactivating existing gages.~~

~~(b) The board, in consultation with the department, shall prioritize the deployment of stream gages based upon gaps in the existing system of gages. Criteria for prioritization shall include all of the following:~~

~~(1) Integrating with the existing gage network.~~
~~(2) Consistency with the California Water Action Plan.~~
~~(3) Evalusting conditions, including flow settlements, voluntary flow agreements, and ability to integrate multiple benefit water management strategies.~~
~~(4) Ability to provide data to help protect threatened and endangered fisheries and wildlife.~~
~~(5) Prioritizing watersheds that are included in state wildlife action plans, integrated regional water management plans, or other multibenefit program categories, or areas with approved sustainable groundwater management plans.~~
~~(6) Prioritizing areas where local agencies may enter cost-share arrangements to facilitate ongoing integration and use of best practices in water management.~~

SEC. 2. Section 144 is added to the Water Code, to read:

144. (a) Upon appropriation by the Legislature, the department shall develop a plan to deploy a network of stream gages that includes a determination of funding needs and opportunities for reactivating existing gages.

(b) The department, in consultation with the board, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Central Valley Flood Protection Board, interested stakeholders, and, to the extent they wish to consult, local agencies, shall prioritize the deployment of stream gages based upon gaps in the existing system of gages. Criteria for prioritization shall include all of the following:

(1) Integrating with the existing gage network.
(2) Consistency with the California Water Action Plan.
(3) Evaluating conditions, including flow settlements, voluntary flow agreements, and ability to integrate multiple benefit water management strategies.
(4) Ability to provide data to help protect threatened and endangered fisheries and wildlife.
(5) Ability to provide data to help with drought, floods, and impacts from wildfires and other natural disasters.
(6) Ability to provide data to assist with groundwater management.
(7) Prioritizing watersheds with historical gage data.
(8) Prioritizing watersheds that are included in state wildlife action plans, integrated regional water management plans, or

other multibenefit program categories, or areas with approved sustainable groundwater management plans.

(9) Prioritizing areas where local agencies may enter cost-share arrangements to facilitate ongoing integration and use of best practices in water management.

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