



A Tradition of Stewardship  
A Commitment to Service

Agenda Date: 3/12/2018

Agenda Placement: 7B

## Napa County Legislative Subcommittee Board Agenda Letter

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**TO:** Napa County Legislative Subcommittee  
**FROM:** Molly Rattigan for Minh Tran - County Executive Officer  
County Executive Office  
**REPORT BY:** Michael Karath, Staff Assistant - BOS - 299-1477  
**SUBJECT:** SB 919 (Dodd) - Stream Gages - water management

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

County Executive Office requests discussion and possible action on SB 919 (Dodd), a bill that would require the State Water Resource Control Board, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to develop a plan to deploy a network of stream gages to monitor stream health that includes a determination of funding needs and opportunities for reactivating existing gages.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

SB 919 (Dodd) would require the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), in consultation with the Department of Water Resources, to prioritize the deployment of stream gages based upon gaps in the existing system of gages and the ability to provide data to help protect fish and wildlife and benefit water management strategies. The bill would also require the SWRCB to assess the funding needs to implement a stream gage network.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Is there a Fiscal Impact?                      No

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

**BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION**

Stream gages provide essential information about one of California's most precious resources - water.

Gaps in the stream gage network make it difficult to ensure that both people and nature are getting water when and where they need it. Following a difficult five-year drought, California had one of the wettest winters on record. The State is famous for its highly engineered water system, which moves millions of gallons of water from north to south and east to west.

Thirty-nine million people and our \$47 billion agricultural industry rely on that water, not to mention wildlife from the Sierra to the sea. And yet we have surprisingly little data about how much water is moving through our streams at any given time. There are over 3,600 locations in California where stream gages have been active at some point, but only 54% have been active recently. And even fewer of those provide the kind of rich, real-time reporting needed to manage what is arguably our state's most precious and contentious resource.

Comprehensive data on gages does not exist in California. Despite the various efforts to assemble gage data, there is no single authoritative database on gage locations. Although there is a large quantity of data available about gages in California, that data is challenging to harmonize and analyze if one wants a complete survey of California's gage network. California must prepare for increases in both droughts and floods, and for more effective water management across all year types to maximize the benefits of its limited water supply. Understanding the state of our stream flows is critical to such preparedness, but our current gage network is inadequate to address this challenge.

CSAC: Pending

RCRC: Support

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

A . SB 919 - BILL TEXT - Stream Gages

B . SB 919 - RCRC Support Letter - Stream Gages

Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Molly Rattigan