



MEMO

TO: Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors and G. Patrick O’Dowd
FROM: Lisa Moore
RE: **Federal Report**
DATE: July 16, 2024

Since our last meeting, two legislative measures of relevance to the Sea and in which we have been engaged have advanced — the Water Resources Development Act 2024 (Senate) (WRDA) and Energy and Water Appropriations FY25 (House).

First, WRDA is typically enacted by Congress every two years as a means to authorize new studies and to authorize the expenditure of resources to implement completed studies. The legislation does not itself appropriate funding, which requires a separate legislative measure. The Corps feasibility study we are currently undertaking with the Corps and the State was authorized in a WRDA bill in 2020 and received funding in a subsequent appropriation bill, both as a result of the Authority’s advocacy.

WRDA 2024 has moved through the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, and includes language offered by Senator Padilla directing the Corps to prioritize and expedite its work on the Salton Sea feasibility study. The Authority initially requested via Senator Padilla that Congress include language in WRDA 2024 to enable the Salton Sea Feasibility study to receive additional funding so that we may proceed with Course of Action 2 (COA2/full study) as recommended by the Corps. After we made this request, however, we secured this legislative authority through an earlier appropriation measure and so did not need to include it in WRDA 2024. Securing this legislative authority when we did (early) enabled us to work with Senator Padilla to secure funding in the Corps 2024 work plan for COA 2, which we secured (\$3.8 million).

Second, Congress is also working on its annual appropriations legislation for FY25. Thus far, the House has advanced the Energy and Water Appropriations bill through committee. This legislation includes a \$2 million plus up from Congressman Ruiz to increase funding for Reclamation’s Salton Sea Research Program — the account through which Reclamation funds some of its Salton Sea work.

Congressman Ruiz also included the following language in the legislation:

“Salton Sea.—The Committee remains interested in Reclamation’s role in and plans for managing the air quality impacts of the estimated 8.75 square miles of lands it owns that will emerge from the receding Sea over the next decade. Reclamation is directed to provide to the Committee not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act a briefing covering updated information on anticipated exposed federal lands over the next decade and a funding estimate associated with meeting its Salton Sea obligations.”