

COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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November 4, 2019

Governor Gavin Newsom
1301 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

On October 22, 2019, the Imperial County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the Proclamation of Local Emergency for Air Pollution at the Salton Sea to address extreme conditions peril to the safety of the residents and properties located within Imperial County.

In the 1980s and 1990s, inflows to the Salton Sea were approximately 1.2 to 1.3 million acre-feet per year, with the majority of the flow from agricultural returns augmented with inflows from Mexico and other sources. However, with the signing of the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) in 2003, farmers became more efficient with the use of irrigation water. As directed in the QSA, mitigation water, meant to replace conserved agricultural runoff, stopped flowing into the sea in 2015. This in combination with a decrease of inflows from Mexico have resulted in less water flowing into the Salton Sea creating the extreme air pollution Imperial County residents are currently experiencing.

By 2017, approximately 16,200 acres of playa were exposed along the Salton Sea shoreline. It is estimated that by 2047 approximately 74,000 acres of playa will be exposed. This equates to approximately 4 miles from the point of the shoreline in 2003 to the edge of the water. An animation of this progression, documented by the IID, can be found at <https://youtu.be/Sua-gQyTScU>.

As harmful dust is exposed at the Salton Sea, dangerous air pollution, including PM¹⁰ and PM^{2.5}, is emitted into the air causing extreme conditions to the environment. Imperial County officials have determined these conditions are beyond the control of our services, personnel, equipment and facilities. By declaring an emergency, we are seeking to streamline the permitting process and gain additional supportive resources to accelerate the mitigation efforts to address air quality impacts to Imperial County residents and properties.

Following is a specific list of equipment and resources we are seeking:

"Establishing Direction Creating Opportunity"

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

RESOURCE REQUESTS

- **Epidemiologic Study (Exhibit A)**

An in-depth epidemiologic study, in partnership with local schools, is needed to investigate the prevalence of asthma, asthma exacerbations, and other health related symptoms among school-aged children and to examine the relationship between asthma and personal, familial and environmental risk factors. The study could be done in partnership with a regional university familiar with environmental, respiratory health and other issues surrounding the Salton Sea.

Additional resources would be necessary to support the proposed study, which would require the deployment of a local Public Health team composed of the following:

- Epidemiologist
- Data Analyst
- Four to six community health workers familiar with the region

- **Emissive Soil Analysis (Exhibit B)**

To better understand potential health impacts associated with exposed playa due to the receding Salton Sea, funding is requested to conduct soil testing along the exposed shoreline around the sea and the areas between the exposed playa areas and populated communities to examine the potential toxicity of the dust and the extent of saltation and the creation of missive soils.

Resources necessary to support an Emissive Soil Analysis program include the following:

- Environmental Compliance Specialist III to conduct regular sampling and reporting
- Environmental Toxicologist
- California Analytical Laboratory (ELAP certified) testing
- Partnership with the California Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), or a regional research university familiar with environmental, respiratory health and other issues surrounding the Salton Sea for data analysis and evaluation.

- **Toxic Air Data Analysis**

Funding is requested to conduct a toxic air data analysis by placing air monitoring stations at nearby school sites, local townships and any areas where large number of people congregate or live near and around the Salton Sea.

Resources necessary to support Toxic Air Data Analysis program include the following:

- Toxic air monitoring stations
- Environmental Toxicologist
- Research Scientist

EQUIPMENT REQUESTS

A groundwater test in Salton City will be performed to determine if water is available and water quality for native vegetation enhancement within the project area. The test will be constructed in two phases: 1) drilling a pilot boring to conduct water availability and water quality analysis and 2) completing a test well. Vegetation enhancement acts as playa coverage and surface stabilization. Vegetation enhancement in the area around the

"Establishing Direction. Creating Opportunity."

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Alamo River (Alamo South and Red Hill Bay West) can be utilized on other areas around the Salton Sea where a river or drain has available water and soil conditions are suitable for vegetation.

Exhibit C identifies project area locations along the Salton Sea shoreline where the following requested equipment would be used for the aforementioned projects.

- **Swamp Dozer – Komatsu LGP Dozer D6Pxi-24**

This equipment will be utilized to extend the agricultural runoff drains to allow redirection of drains into either the Salton Sea or a water conveyance system to provide water to additional areas around the Salton Sea for habitat or air quality projects. Certified personnel are requested to operate the machinery properly.

- **Bull Plow Equipment**

The bull plow is used for implementation of surface roughening, creating large durable ridges to promote temporary dust control on the Salton Sea playa. This dust control measure is only viable in certain areas of the playa. This waterless solution can be implemented quickly.

- **Lift Pumps**

Lift pumps will pull water from the Alamo River and directed to flood the project the Red Hill Bay project area. In addition, pumps will be utilized to irrigate vegetation areas on Red Hill Bay West and Alamo South project sites.

As reported by the California Natural Resources Agency (Exhibit D), since 2003 there has been \$653 million in federal, state and local funds authorized for appropriation for Salton Sea mitigation and restoration projects. However, during this same time frame, only \$184 million has been spent. Projects that were promised as part of the Salton Sea 10-year plan have stalled and progress has moved at an alarmingly slow pace.

Therefore, the Imperial County Board of Supervisors respectfully request that you recognize the extreme harmful conditions in and around the Salton Sea and proclaim a State of Emergency exists in Imperial County.

Sincerely,



Tony Rouhotas, Jr.
CEO

cc: Senator Ben Hueso
Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia
Secretary Wade Crowfoot, California Natural Resources Agency
Jeff D. Toney, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
Henry Martinez, Imperial Irrigation District

"Establishing Direction. Creating Opportunity."

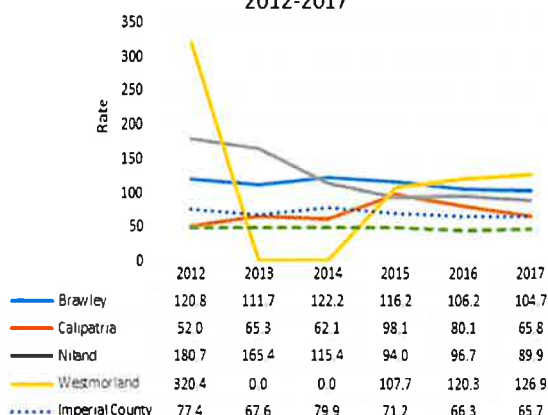
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

EPIDEMIOLOGIC STUDY OF IMPERIAL COUNTY COMMUNITIES SURROUNDING SALTON SEA

Respiratory Health Issues

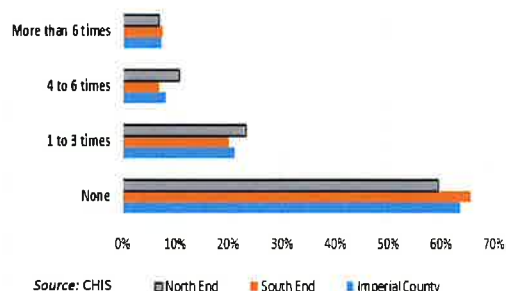
- Emergency department visits and hospitalizations due to asthma are declining countywide. However, asthma rates remain high in northern Imperial County and continue to be an issue for the communities surrounding the Salton Sea.
- Age-adjusted rates for emergency department visits are higher in northern Imperial County than countywide or statewide. In 2017, Westmorland's ED visit rate was nearly double that of Imperial County overall and almost three times greater than the rate for California as a whole. →
- Imperial County partnered with the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) in 2016 and 2017 to learn more about how air quality and respiratory health issues impact residents in the northern Imperial County. A higher proportion of CHIS respondents in the north end reported visiting the ER or urgent care for asthma in 2017 than in 2016.
- A higher proportion of CHIS respondents in northern Imperial County reported reducing or changing their activity levels due to the air quality. →
- A higher proportion of County residents (12%) report active asthma prevalence than statewide (8.7%). The County's prevalence rate is highest among children aged 0-17 (19.1%). However, CHIS data are not available to determine asthma prevalence among youth in the communities surrounding the Salton Sea.

Asthma Emergency Department Visits,
Age-Adjusted Rates per 10,000 residents,
2012-2017



Source: Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development
*Data are missing for Westmorland in 2013 and 2014

Reduced or Changed Activity Levels Due to Air
Quality in Past 12 Months
Imperial County, 2017



Source: CHIS

Gaps in Knowledge

More information is needed to better understand the prevalence of asthma in the communities around the Salton Sea and how this relates to asthma exacerbations and triggers that cause these attacks, in particular among school-aged children who report the highest rates of active asthma prevalence.

Closing the Gaps

An in-depth epidemiologic study in partnership with local schools is needed to investigate the prevalence of asthma, asthma exacerbations, and allergy-related symptoms among school-aged children, as well as to examine the relationship between asthma and personal, familial, and environmental risk factors.

Additional resources would be necessary to support the proposed study, which would require the deployment of a local Public Health team composed of an epidemiologist, data analyst, and four to six community health workers familiar with this region. The study could be done in partnership with a regional university familiar with environmental, respiratory health and other issues surrounding the Salton Sea. A study of this magnitude would provide invaluable information to improve the understanding of the respiratory health of the youth in this region.

EMMISSIVE SOIL ANALYSIS

- Sediment analyses previously conducted suggest that selenium, at levels that impact avian reproduction, is the only constituent in playa dust that exceeds any threat level
- A study conducted nearly two decades ago reported “potentially significant levels of constituents of concern” in the sediment and soil samples taken from the region around the Salton Sea. The study recommended additional sampling to further characterize soils for risk assessment purposes. The study does not elaborate on the specific constituents, but sediment samples in the Salton Sea have revealed elevated levels of heavy metals such as arsenic, selenium, lead, and mercury in addition to pesticides and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).
- Exposed to elevated concentrations of these toxic metals for prolonged periods of time can have public health implications such as impaired immune systems, neurological disorders, and chronic respiratory disease.

Study Components

In order to better understand potential health impacts associated with exposed playa due to the receding Salton Sea, Imperial County Public Health Department is requesting funding to conduct soil testing along the exposed shoreline around the sea to examine the potential toxicity of the dust. Soil testing also should be performed between the exposed playa areas and populated communities to determine the extent of saltation and the creation of missive soils.

Soils samples will be collected and submitted to a California state-certified analytical laboratory for analysis. Soil samples collected, at a minimum, will be analyzed for the following: California Assessment Manual (CAM) 17 metals using EPA SW-846 Test Method 6000/7000; and, Organochlorine pesticides and PCBs using EPA SW-846 Test Method 8081/8082

A field sampling plan will be developed to ensure constituents of concerns are identified and the testing methodology is appropriate and consistent with SW-846.

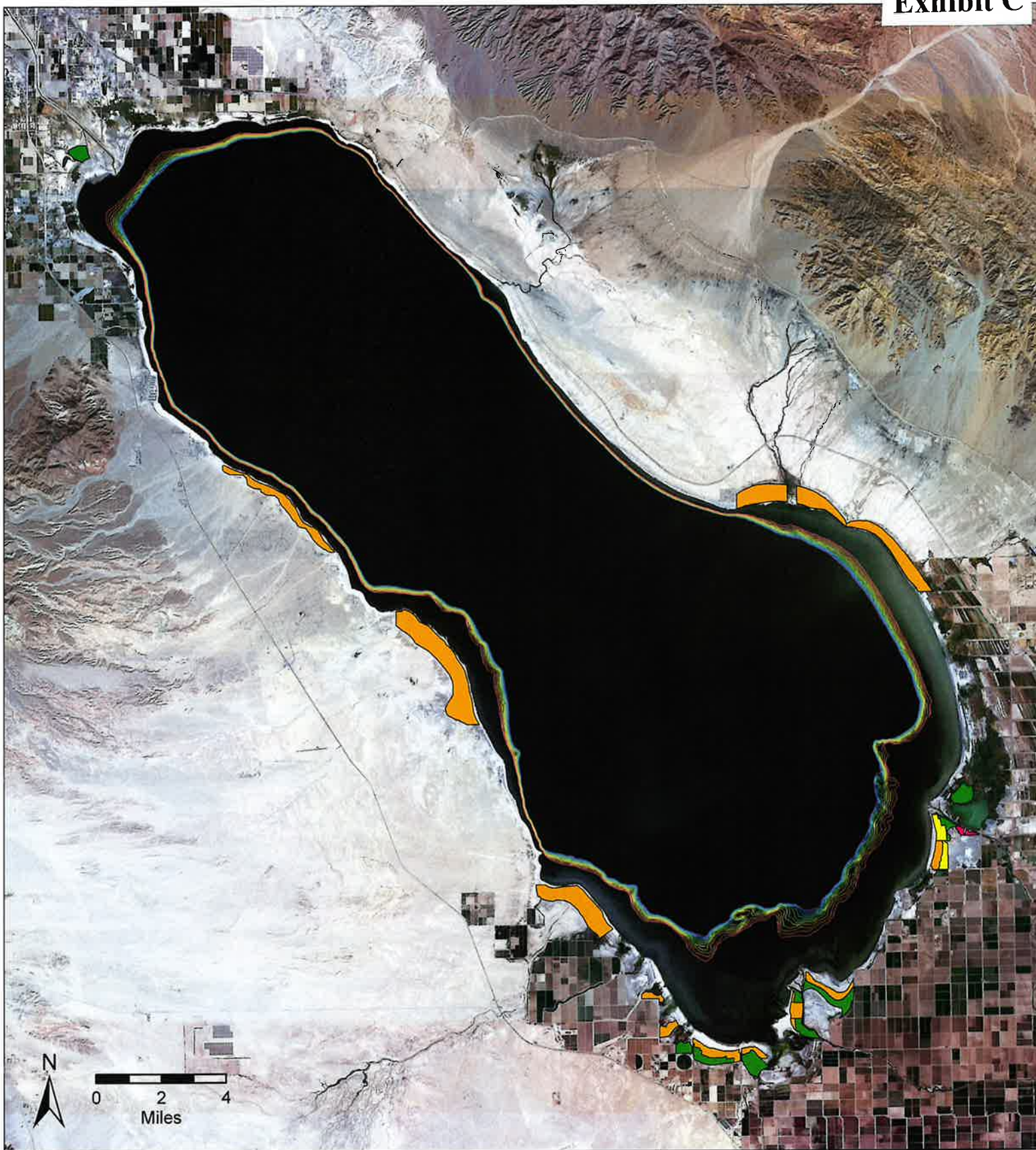
Resources Needed

Toxic air monitoring stations;

Environmental Compliance Specialist III to conduct sampling

California Analytical Laboratory (ELAP certified) Testing

Partnership with the California Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), or research university for data analysis and evaluation.



Legend

Project Status Category

- Identified
- Characterized
- Designed
- Constructed
- Constructed - Maintenance Req.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 2029 Shoreline | 2035 Shoreline |
| 2030 Shoreline | 2036 Shoreline |
| 2031 Shoreline | 2037 Shoreline |
| 2032 Shoreline | 2038 Shoreline |
| 2033 Shoreline | 2039 Shoreline |
| 2034 Shoreline | |

Air Quality Mitigation Program

Salton Sea

**Current Status of Project Locations
and Predicted Shorelines
from 2029 to 2039**

DATE: OCT 22, 2019



Handouts

SALTON SEA ROUNDTABLE MEETING

North Shore Yacht Club | October 3, 2019





Handout 1

DUST SUPPRESSION PRIORITY AREAS

Dust Suppression Priority Areas Salton Sea Management Program CA Department of Water Resources

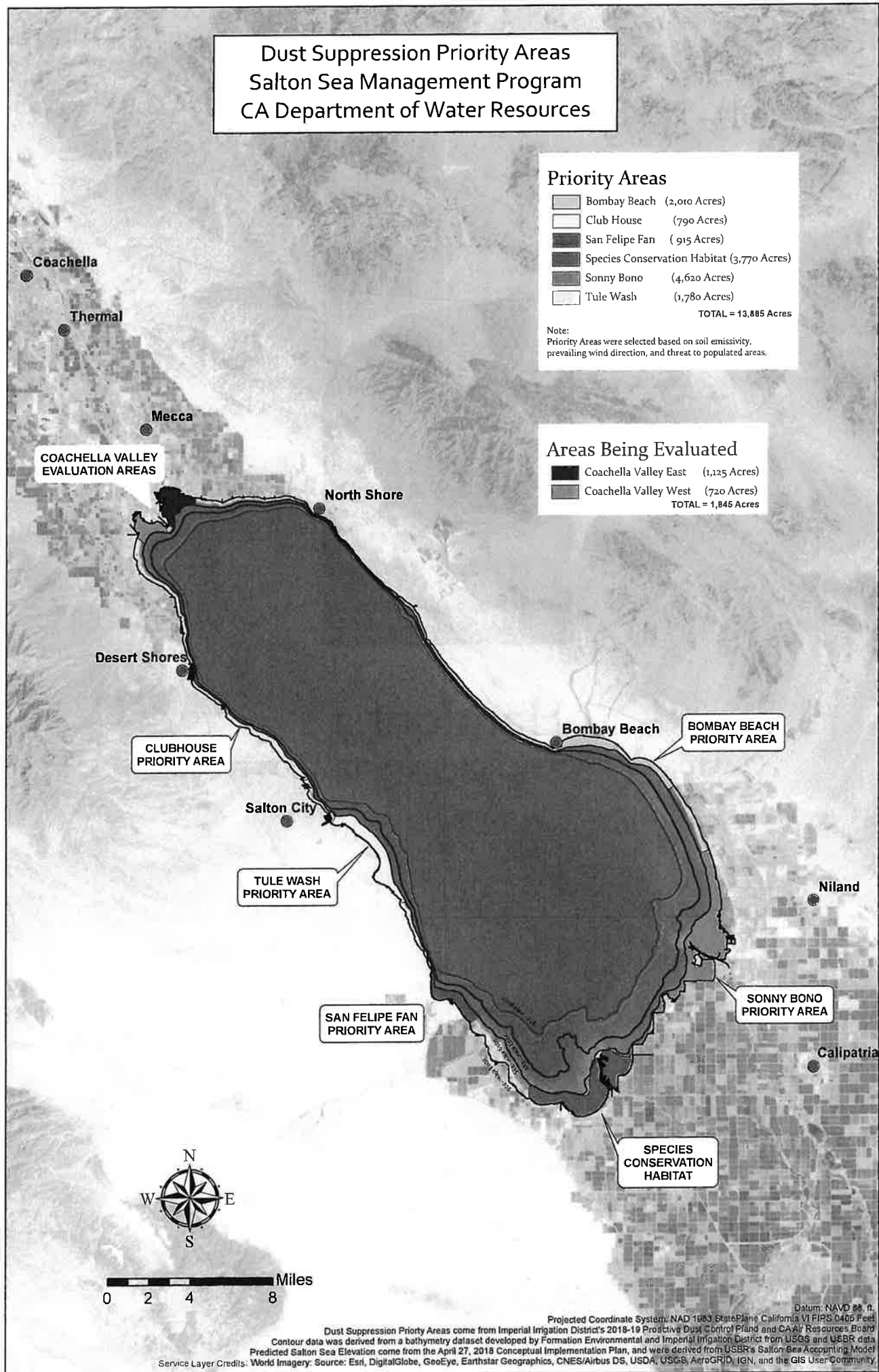
Priority Areas

Bombay Beach	(2,010 Acres)
Club House	(790 Acres)
San Felipe Fan	(915 Acres)
Species Conservation Habitat	(3,770 Acres)
Sonny Bono	(4,620 Acres)
Tule Wash	(1,780 Acres)
TOTAL = 13,885 Acres	

Note:
Priority Areas were selected based on soil emissivity,
prevailing wind direction, and threat to populated areas.

Areas Being Evaluated

Coachella Valley East	(1,125 Acres)
Coachella Valley West	(720 Acres)
TOTAL = 1,845 Acres	





Handout 2

SALTON SEA RESTORATION AND MITIGATION FUNDING

Funding Available for Salton Sea Mitigation and Restoration

Updated 10/02/2019

Source	Authority	Fn	Authorized for Appropriation (in millions)	Appropriated/ Committed (in millions)	Expended (in millions)	Available for additional Commitments (in millions)	Use
State		a					
DWR - Prop 50	WC - 79567		\$19.3	\$19.2	\$19.20	\$0.10	2003-2007 Programmatic EIR/EIS and related studies and planning activities. (completed)
DWR via WCB - Prop 50	WC - 79568		\$8.75	\$8.75	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$8.75M of \$14M allocated/reserved specifically for the Salton Sea for Species Conservation Habitat (SCH) construction
DWR & IID via WCB - Prop 50	WC - 79565		\$4.8	\$4.8	\$4.3	\$0.0	\$1M to DWR 2008 Salton Sea planning \$3.3M allocated to IID for construction of power lines to Species Conservation Habitat project (completed) \$0.5M of \$14M allocated to DWR and reserved for SCHt construction
DWR via WCB - Prop 12	5096(a)(7)		\$4.75	\$4.75	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$4.75M allocated/reserved for SCH
DWR via CDFW - Prop 84	WC - 75050(b)(3)		\$44.1	\$39.4	\$16.9	\$4.7	Since 2008, SCH planning, design, and staffing (\$14.5 M), plus \$21M allocated/reserved for SCH construction, \$900K for construction management, and \$3M for Financial Assistance Program projects including Red Hill Bay, Seawater Marine Habitat Pilot, Torres-Martinez Wetlands.
DWR (State Operations) - Prop 1	WC - 79736(c)		\$20.0	\$20.0	\$2.7	\$14.5	Staffing and other design costs for SSMP projects. (Of the \$20m appropriated, 5.5 million is committed to existing Salton Sea Projects)
DWR (Construction)- Prop 1	WC - 79736(c)		\$60.0	\$60.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	Construction of SCH projects.
CNRA - Prop 68	PRC - 80116		\$165.7	\$141.1	\$0.0	\$24.6	\$111.1 for construction of SCH projects. \$30m appropriated in 2018-19 will need to be re-appropriated before it can be used. Most of the \$30m is not committed to a particular project yet.
Salton Sea Authority (New River) Prop 68	PRC-80110(a)(1)	b	\$9.75	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$9.75	
Salton Sea Authority - Prop 68	PRC- 80110(a)	b	\$19.5	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$19.5	
Revive the Salton Sea Fund - TBD	R&T - 18736		\$0.1	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.1	Tax Check Off Box - Collected \$118k per SCO 6/30/18 Report
General Fund/Reimbursements	Budget Act		\$350/\$150k annually	\$350/\$150k annually	\$350/\$150k annually	N/A	CDFW receives \$300k, CNRA \$200k for positions supporting the Salton Sea annually.
CDFW Water Agency Contribution (Salton Sea Restoration Fund)	2003 Settlement Agreement	c,d	\$68.5	\$15.8	\$15.8	see note	Annual surveys to monitor bird and fish populations at the Sea, including state and federal endangered species, staff development of various implementation and monitoring plans, issuance of Section 1600 permits, CEQA review, QSA Implementation Team staffing, etc.
State Total			\$356.8	\$298.0	\$43.1	\$73.3	

Prepared by:



Funding Available for Salton Sea Mitigation and Restoration

Updated 10/02/2019

Federal										
NRCS (to Salton Sea Authority)										
NRCS (to state)										
Federal Total										
Local										
QSA Joint Powers Authority										
Local Total										
Totals										

SSMP = Salton Sea Management Program, NRCS = National Resources Conservation Service, QSA = Quantification Settlement Agreement

Footnotes/

a Bond Funds provided reflect the bond allocations available after statewide bond costs and outyear amounts already committed to by the Legislature. Statewide bond costs are authorized "off the top" in each bond act for things like the State Treasurer's Cost of issuing the bonds, Department of Finance's Costs of auditing bond expenditures, etc. Exact amounts are published on the CNRA bond accountability website.

b The Salton Sea Authority is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) of local stakeholder groups including the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla tribe, two water agencies, and two county governments.

c The QSA Authority is a JPA of three water districts: the Imperial Irrigation District, the Coachella Valley Water District, and the San Diego County Water Authority.

d While a total of \$68.5 million will be ultimately be available, \$42 million in payments must be collected between now and 2047 to support any expenditures from the fund. Expenditures are monitored to ensure expenses do not exceed available cash.

e The agencies in the QSA Authority agreed to pay \$133 million in 2003 dollars. The current estimate for the ultimate amount of this commitment (with interest and inflation) is \$288 million.

Prepared by:





Handout 3

SPECIES CONSERVATION HABITAT PROJECT

SPECIES CONSERVATION HABITAT PROJECT

SALTON SEA MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

SUMMARY STATUS REPORT

DATE: OCTOBER 3, 2019



Project Description:

The Species Conservation Habitat (SCH) Project is the first major project of the Salton Sea Management Program 2017 Phase I: 10-Year Plan. The Project will encompass an approximately 3,770-acre site of exposed lakebed located at the southern end of the Salton Sea, east and west of the New River. The SCH will create a series ponds with islands and areas of varying water depths to serve as fish and avian habitat. The project will also function as a dust suppression project. The water sources for the SCH will be brackish water pumped from the New River, runoff from the existing drainage facilities, and saline water pumped from the Salton Sea. The SCH will also serve as a reservoir, which runoffs will feed into downstream shallow habitat ponds.

Through legislative authority, DWR will be utilizing a Design-Build contractor for this project. While subject to change, the anticipated total cost is approximately \$212.6 million, and the tentative completion date is December 2023.

Status:

DWR is in the process of two-phase, best-value procurement process to select a Design-Build Entity to deliver the SCH Project. The State completed the first phase of the procurement process, the Request for Qualifications. DWR selected three firms to be shortlisted Submitters to proceed to the second phase of the procurement process the Request for Proposals (RFP).

The California Public Works Board approved the SCH RFP's performance criteria on 7/12/2019. Contract is slated to be awarded August of 2020 and the notice to proceed should be issued in August or September of 2020.

Timelines – Procurement Schedule:

Procurement Activity	Date
Issue Industry Review RFP to the Short-Listed Submitters	July 2019
Issue RFP	October 2019
Mandatory site visit for Short-Listed RFP Proposers	November 2019
Individual Meetings/Negotiations	February – March 2020
Review and evaluate Proposals	April – May 2020
Negotiations with one or more Proposers	June 2020
Select and announce Design-Builder	July 2020
Award and Execution of Design-Build Contract	August 2020
Estimated Project Completion Date	December 2023



Handout 4

HIRING UPDATE

HIRING UPDATE

SALTON SEA MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

SUMMARY STATUS REPORT

DATE: OCTOBER 3, 2019



Salton Sea Program Positions:

CA Department of Resources Staff		
Name	Title	Tentative Start
Vivien Maisonneuve	Salton Sea Program Manager II	Position Filled
Evon Willhoff*	North Lake Program Manager I	Position Filled
Vacant	Program Manager I	Mar-20
Vacant	Program Manager I	Mar-20
Michal Koller*	Salton Sea Program Engineering Support Supervisor	Position Filled
Steven Garcia*	Senior Engineer	Position Filled
Yuanwen Lin*	Senior Engineer	Position Filled
Melissa Roberts*	Associate Program Governmental Analyst	Position Filled
CA Department Fish and Wildlife		
Name	Title	Tentative Start
Vacant	Salton Sea Program Manager	Mar-20
Nasseer Idrisi	Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist)	Position Filled
Samantha Hayes	Environmental Scientist	Position Filled
James Sheridan	Environmental Scientist	Position Filled
Sharon Keeney	Environmental Scientist	Position Filled
Jose Figueroa	Fish and Wildlife Technician	Position Filled
Bianca Copple	Associate Program Governmental Analyst	Position Filled

*Indicates hired in 2019



Handout 5

CNRA LETTER TO U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE



September 27, 2019

The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva, Chair
House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jared Huffman, Chair
House Natural Resources Committee
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans and Wildlife
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva and Chairman Huffman:

I write to share that the California Natural Resources Agency strongly supports holding a hearing this fall before the Committee on Natural Resources to examine opportunities to address the public health and ecological crisis at the Salton Sea. We join Representatives Raul Ruiz and Juan Vargas in respectfully requesting testimony from federal officials who can update on federal priorities and investments at the Sea, including the prospect of utilizing funding authorized through the 2018 Farm Bill.

Challenges that face the Salton Sea impact a large portion of California and the entire Southwest. As the Sea declines, harmful emissive dust threatens public health across greater Southern California—home to over 25 million people. The Sea's current challenges also link directly to management of Colorado River water supplies and finding solutions at the Sea will benefit collaboration among seven states that draw water from the Colorado.

California state agencies have been directed by Governor Gavin Newsom to prioritize solutions at the Sea that can suppress dust and provide critical environmental habitat for birds along the Pacific flyway. This includes implementing the 10-year Salton Sea Management Program, which aims to establish 30,000 acres of habitat and dust suppression projects around the Sea. State government is currently spending \$280 million on such projects. However, given the scale of challenges faced at the sea, this funding can only support a portion of the work that is needed.

A hearing before the House Natural Resources Committee would be very helpful to align federal, state, and local efforts for the region. It would also serve to explore possibilities for federal funding that can help to deliver the shovel-ready Species Conservation Habitat project, which will provide 3,770 acres of dust suppression and habitat at the southern end of the Sea at the mouth of the New River.

Thank you very much for your consideration of a hearing to engage Congress on this critical issue. We are committed to working with our federal partners to improve air quality, public health, and critical environmental habitat.

Sincerely,

Wade Crowfoot
California Secretary for Natural Resources

1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311, Sacramento, CA 95814 Ph. 916.653.5656 Fax. 916.653.8102 <http://resources.ca.gov>

