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From: McGhee, Ken@CalWater

Sent: Monday, November 15, 2004 8:26 AM

To: McIntire, Angela@Calwater

Subject: FW: 1. DWR'S CALIFORNIA WATER NEWS - Top Topic for 11/12/04: Hetch Hetchy Dam Removal Study

For the EJ listserv!

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-----Original Message-----

From: water_news-admin@water.ca.gov [mailto:water_news-admin@water.ca.gov] **On Behalf Of** Cohen, Jeff

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2004 8:38 AM

To: water_news@water.ca.gov

Cc: Agency_Newsclips@resources.ca.gov

Subject: 1. DWR'S CALIFORNIA WATER NEWS - Top Topic for 11/12/04: Hetch Hetchy Dam Removal Study

California Department of Water Resources

California Water News

A daily compilation for DWR personnel of significant news articles and comment

November 12, 2004

Top Topic: Hetch Hetchy Dam Removal Study

In Brief

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK (AP) - The Hetch Hetchy Valley has been under water for eight decades, serving as a reservoir for San Francisco's drinking water. Now officials in the Department of Water Resources and the Department of Parks and Recreation have promised to study the possibility of restoring the area. The restoration project could cost up to \$1.6 billion. #

State officials to study effects of restoring Hetch Hetchy valley; Challenge is to find resources to supplant water stored there - San Francisco Chronicle

Hetch Hetchy revival revisited; State agencies to investigate the submerged Yosemite National Park valley. - Fresno Bee

State to examine Hetch Hetchy restoration - Sacramento Bee

Removal of Yosemite Dam to Be Studied; A state agency will consider restoration of the Hetch Hetchy Valley. - Los Angeles Times

**State officials to study effects of restoring Hetch Hetchy valley
Challenge is to find resources to supplant water stored there
San Francisco Chronicle - 11/12/04
By Charlie Goodyear, staff writer**

SACRAMENTO - Just five weeks after environmentalists announced a study claiming to show the feasibility of draining the Hetch Hetchy reservoir in Yosemite National Park, state officials said they will consider the idea.

In a letter sent this week to two state legislators who back the plan, California's secretary of resources, Mike Chrisman, said he has asked the Department of Water Resources to examine the possibility of removing the San Francisco-owned dam that has flooded the spectacular Hetch Hetchy valley for the last 80 years.

"California, its governor and its citizens are committed to economically feasible restoration of ecosystems and preservation of open space," Chrisman wrote in his letter.

But, he added, "one of the foremost challenges posed by the proposal stems from the fact that California, faced with significant water demands, needs a net increase in water storage capacity, not a decrease."

Any plan to move the reservoir would need to ensure, at a minimum, replacing what Hetch Hetchy now supplies, Chrisman said.

The positive response from the state comes as San Francisco is planning a \$3.6 billion upgrade of the dilapidated Hetch Hetchy system. In September, Mayor Gavin Newsom said he needed to study the proposal to dismantle O'Shaughnessy Dam, on the Tuolumne River, more fully before making a decision.

The dam was built in 1923, and the water stored up behind it now serves 2.4 million people in the Bay Area as well as agribusiness in the Central Valley. It also produces hydroelectric

power.

In September, a conservation group called Environmental Defense said its research showed water storage could be moved out of the valley and alternative power developed so that "Hetch Hetchy could be restored to its former glory." The proposal could cost anywhere from \$500 million to \$1.6 billion.

Tom Graff, the California regional director for Environmental Defense, applauded Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's administration for responding to the proposal.

"Secretary Chrisman's letter is a significant step forward, but now comes the difficult task of getting everyone to work together on a study that will win broad public acceptance," Graff said.

Environmental Defense conducted its study using water models provided by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission.

Graff said any decision on the reservoir should involve all communities and interests affected by it.

"I'm still hopeful that city officials, the PUC, the mayor and others will see this as a chance to look carefully at what could be an extraordinary opportunity," he said. #

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2004/11/12/BAGUT9Q9Q81.DTL>

Hetch Hetchy revival revisited State agencies to investigate the submerged Yosemite National Park valley.

Fresno Bee - 11/12/04

By Mark Grossi, staff writer

Two state agencies will investigate the long-debated revival of a Yosemite National Park valley that has been submerged under San Francisco's reservoir of drinking water for eight decades.

Environmentalists, who have waged tenacious protest against the reservoir at Hetch Hetchy Valley in Central California, celebrated Thursday over the announcement from Resources Agency Secretary Mike Chrisman.

"Secretary Chrisman's letter is a significant step forward," said Tom Graff, regional director of Environmental Defense, which this year issued a study on restoring the valley. "Now comes the difficult task of getting everyone to work together on a study that will win broad public acceptance."

Chrisman's letter was a response to two Assembly Democrats, Joe Canciamilla of Pittsburg and Lois Wolk of Davis, who asked the Schwarzenegger administration in September to study restoration.

Lawmakers have said any new arrangement would have to satisfy the Bay Area, which has resisted the restoration, and downstream farmers, cities and industries. In his letter, Chrisman said the investigation would need to ensure water and hydroelectricity from Hetch Hetchy would be replaced.

"We are a rapidly growing state and we are struggling with the challenges of improving water-supply reliability and providing reliable power," Chrisman wrote.

It is not clear what role the state would play in a possible restoration. But Chrisman said the Department of Water Resources and the Department of Parks and Recreation would study the issue from all sides.

The mountain reservoir is not large — about two-thirds the size of Millerton Lake near Fresno. Environmentalists believe San Francisco's share of the Tuolumne River can be captured farther downstream from Hetch Hetchy in Don Pedro Reservoir, which is several times larger than Millerton.

But San Francisco's downstream water rights and storage are entwined with Modesto and Turlock irrigation districts in Stanislaus County. Other issues include replacement of hydroelectric power created by powerhouses in the Hetch Hetchy system.

The cost of draining Hetch Hetchy, accommodating the Bay Area's needs and satisfying all the surrounding interests would range from \$500 million to \$1.6 billion, the Environmental Defense study concluded.

For the price, the public would gain a geologic sister of spectacular Yosemite Valley, where millions view Half Dome, El Capitan and Yosemite Falls each year.

Hetch Hetchy was filled with water in 1923 when O'Shaughnessy Dam was completed on the Tuolumne, a tributary of the San Joaquin River.

Iconic conservationist John Muir fought the project, turning it into a national issue that has simmered for decades. On Thursday, Assembly Member Wolk said a restoration would be watched closely across the country.

"How can you not be excited by the notion of another Yosemite Valley?" she asked. "It needs the attention of this governor and his administration, and I'm pleased that it does." #

<http://www.fresnobee.com/local/story/9417156p-10325878c.html>

State to examine Hetch Hetchy restoration
Sacramento Bee - 11/12/04
By Herbert A. Sample, staff writer

OAKLAND - The Schwarzenegger administration has decided to assess studies of restoring the submerged Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park, an idea that has been fiercely criticized by San Francisco business and government interests.

The governor's intentions came to light Thursday in a letter sent on his behalf by Resources Agency Secretary Mike Chrisman to two Assembly Democrats who have pushed for a state examination of re-establishing the valley.

Chrisman wrote that the Department of Parks and Recreation would "review the growing body" of studies on Hetch Hetchy, including analyses by Environmental Defense, a conservation group, and the University of California, Davis.

The department also will work with the National Park Service to estimate the parkland value of a restored valley.

Further, the state Department of Water Resources will "consider" the impact on water supply for 2.4 million residents on the San Francisco Peninsula, parts of Santa Clara County and the East Bay who get their water from Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, which sits behind the 80-year-old O'Shaughnessy Dam.

"As the various interests discuss the prospect of restoring Hetch Hetchy, we must balance our dreams and aspirations, our limited financial resources, and our need for water and power reliability," Chrisman wrote in the Nov. 8 letter.

Lester Snow, Water Resources director, stressed in an interview that the state will not conduct an exhaustive analysis of restoring Hetch Hetchy, much less take a position on removing the dam.

Rather, he said the two agencies will collect data from studies dating back at least to the 1980s, gather comment and write an assessment within a year.

"Hopefully, we can provide an objective forum where both sides or the many parties that have views on this can provide information and get it treated fairly in our assessment," Snow said.

Restoration advocates hailed the letter as a leap forward for the politically sensitive concept.

"No one has wanted to study the issue. It's been a hot potato," Assemblywoman Lois Wolk, D-Davis, said in an interview. "But this administration is willing to take a look at it."

Assemblyman Joe Canciamilla, D-Pittsburg, said in a statement that he was "very pleased this administration is ready to give this proposal the serious consideration it is due."

Assemblyman Tim Leslie, R-Tahoe City, said the state's first priority must remain water and electricity supplies. "But a prospect as compelling as a restored Hetch Hetchy Valley merits a deep and thorough investigation of all the facts," he added in a statement.

Tom Graff, Environmental Defense's regional director, called the letter "a significant step forward."

In September, the group unveiled a study contending that the water and power provided by the reservoir and dam are replaceable for \$500 million to \$1.65 billion.

Critics of dismantling the dam have vowed to fight restoration, saying it would wreak havoc on Bay Area water and power supplies. San Francisco city government and the Turlock and Modesto irrigation districts use electricity generated at O'Shaughnessy Dam.

U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., who has long opposed Hetch Hetchy restoration, said in a statement: "I have no problem with a study and will be happy to look at the results. But I can't see a scenario where I would support tearing down" the dam.#

<http://www.sacbee.com/content/politics/story/11396223p-12310575c.html>

Removal of Yosemite Dam to Be Studied
A state agency will consider restoration of the Hetch Hetchy Valley.
Los Angeles Times - 11/12/04
By Lee Romney, staff writer

SAN FRANCISCO — Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's resources secretary has directed his agency to study possible restoration of the Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park, giving an unexpected official boost to the controversial idea of dismantling the dam that has been integral to the Bay Area's water supply for more than 80 years.

Mike Chrisman's decision came at the request of Assembly members Lois Wolk (D-Davis) and Joe Canciamilla (D-Pittsburg), and less than two months after the nonprofit group Environmental Defense released a study detailing possible alternatives to the Bay Area's sources of drinking water and hydroelectric power.

In a written response this week to the two legislators, Chrisman said he has asked the Department of Water Resources to review 20 years' worth of restoration proposals.

He added, "California, its governor and its citizens are committed to economically feasible restoration of ecosystems and preservation of open space. This commitment translates into an interest in reasonable proposals for expanding our trust resources."

The Hetch Hetchy system supplies water to 2.4 million Bay Area customers. Key to that

system is the O'Shaughnessy Dam, which submerged the Hetch Hetchy Valley, which many consider Yosemite Valley's once equally beautiful twin, under 300 feet of water in 1923.

Previous proposals to tear down the dam and restore the valley have gone nowhere, and the latest one, by Environmental Defense, was criticized as irresponsible by U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), a former mayor of San Francisco, whose support in changing federal law would be critical.

"In a state that has faced repeated droughts and is desperate for water sources, I believe this would be a terrible mistake," she said.

Agencies that own and operate the water system and represent Bay Area consumers also expressed skepticism, stressing that a safe and reliable water source is the region's top priority. The director of the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Assn., which represents numerous water agencies in the region, said the group would not support the idea until alternate facilities were operating.

Any solution also would have to involve the Turlock and Modesto Irrigation Districts, which own the Don Pedro Reservoir downstream on the Tuolumne River.

Still, Tom Graff, Environmental Defense's California regional director, said support from the Schwarzenegger administration for further study is a start.

"This is but one step on a long road, but I think it's a significant step," he said. "The state administration has basically said this is worthy of study. We applaud them for agreeing to that and for trying to now herd the other stakeholders and people involved."

In his letter to the two legislators, Chrisman said he also asked the Department of Water Resources to work with the National Park Service to place an economic value on a restored Hetchy Hetchy Valley, which could relieve pressures of heavy visitation on Yosemite Valley.

But the letter struck a cautious note, stressing the state's need for a net increase in water storage. "Any plan to remove or modify existing water storage systems would need to be balanced by a viable plan to, at a minimum, replace the water supply now provided by the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir," Chrisman wrote. And he warned that the state's study would be of "limited value" unless affected local agencies and federal officials participated.

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, which runs the Hetch Hetchy system, is beginning a \$3.6-billion overhaul. Restoration backers want environmental studies that must precede the overhaul to examine the possibility of razing the dam.

In its study, Environmental Defense concluded that San Francisco could continue to receive most of its drinking water and hydropower from the Tuolumne River by using the Eleanor, Cherry and Don Pedro reservoirs, also located on the Tuolumne. A pipe connecting Don Pedro to the city's water delivery system would be required.

A recent engineering study by researchers at UC Davis also concluded that Hetch Hetchy was no longer critical to the state's water storage, and that downstream reservoirs, including Don Pedro, could store the same amount of water.

Wolk and Canciamilla, chairman of the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee, asked Schwarzenegger in September to pursue a state-sponsored study.

"We urged him ... that this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and could be a true legacy," Wolk said, and "that the magnitude of it really required that the state and the governor take the leadership role and do a study to see if this really did make sense."

Wolk said plans for a state-sponsored study, also supported by Assemblyman Tim Leslie (R-Tahoe City), were encouraging.

"No one should be afraid of a full, complete and balanced study," she said. "I encourage everyone to come to the table in good faith to assist the state in preparing a thorough analysis of all the options."#

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