

# **Background Sheet**

## **SB 51 (Ducheny)**

### **Salton Sea Restoration Council**

#### **SUMMARY**

In 2003 the implementing legislation for the Quantification Settlement Agreement called on the state to develop a Salton Sea restoration plan. That legislation required the Secretary of Resources, through an intense public process, to prepare a restoration plan by the end of 2006. The Resources Agency presented the Preferred Restoration Plan and Funding Report to the Legislature in May 2007. This bill would develop the governance structure which would oversee project implementation and Restoration of the Salton Sea.

#### **BACKGROUND**

In 2003, legislation was enacted to implement the Colorado River Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA). The legislation provided that the State take responsibility for specified QSA environmental mitigation obligations relating to the Salton Sea and for Salton Sea ecosystem restoration. Existing law requires the Secretary of the Resources Agency, in consultation with the Department of Fish and Game, the Department of Water Resources, the Salton Sea Authority, appropriate air quality districts, and the Salton Sea Advisory Committee, to undertake a restoration study to determine a preferred alternative for the restoration of the ecosystem and the wildlife that depends on that ecosystem. The Secretary of Resources' Preferred Alternative Restoration Report and Funding Plan was submitted to the Legislature in May 2007. As part of that plan, the report highlights the need for the development of a governance structure to oversee and implement the long term restoration of the Salton Sea.

#### **WHAT THE BILL DOES?**

The bill would:

- Create the Salton Sea Restoration Council within the Resources Agency, as the governing structure responsible for project implementation of the Preferred Restoration Plan.
- The Council would be comprised of the following committees: an Executive Committee, Science Committee, Local Government forum and a stakeholder forum.
- The Executive Committee will consist of 14 voting and 7 non-voting members (federal agencies) as specified. The Executive Committee will serve as the governing body of the council and will manage project development and implementation, administer all project elements and provide overall guidance and oversight on behalf of the restoration council.
- The Science committee will consist of experts familiar with large scale wetlands and marine restoration efforts as well as dike design and water treatment. The committee will provide best available science and engineering oversight to the overall planning and implementation processes.

- The local government forum, which consists of elected representatives from within the Salton Sea Watershed will facilitate communication between local governments and landowners, the executive committee and the stakeholder committee on the progress of plan development and implementation
- The stakeholder forum, comprised of interested parties throughout the region, will assist the executive committee and other members of the council to gain a broader understanding of public and interest groups perspectives.
- Staff the Council with an Executive Director who is an employee of the Resources Agency and provide that the Department of Fish and Game and Department of Water Resources shall provide staff services that the council requires to carry out its functions, including administering grants, entering into inner-agency agreements with other departments, administering contracts, public outreach and other administrative functions.

**SPONSOR:** Author

**SUPPORT:** County of Imperial  
AFCSME  
Audubon California  
California Outdoor Heritage Alliance  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Imperial Irrigation District  
Indio Chamber of Commerce  
Pacific Institute  
Planning and Conservation League  
Sierra Club California

**OPPOSITION:** Department of Finance.

**STATUS:** Assembly Rules Committee

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