



FRIENDS OF THE RIVER

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A WORKING DAM AND A WILD RIVER

Constructing New Melones Dam on the Stanislaus River has cost \$341 million in Federal taxes. Interest on this principal cost will eventually raise the total cost to \$1 billion. Clearly the dam is a major investment by the taxpayer.

Since the beginning of construction in the early 1970's, the Federal Government, the State Government, and hundreds of private groups have bitterly disagreed about the desirable size of the reservoir behind the dam. Friends of the River supports H.R. 4223, a bill now in Congress to settle the controversy with a fair compromise. The bill would allow normal storage of a moderate reservoir -- extending 16 miles (rather than the maximum 25), totalling 300,000 acre-feet in volume (rather than the maximum 1.95 million).

H.R. 4223 has two purposes: preservation of the upper 9½ miles of the Stanislaus Canyon, by inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System; and operation of New Melones Dam to provide the greatest benefit to the greatest number of people.

Consider the benefits of a moderate New Melones Reservoir.

Irrigation The moderate reservoir would allow the Oakdale and South San Joaquin Irrigation Districts to continue their present diversion and use of 600,000 acre-feet per year.

Electricity The moderate reservoir would generate 150 to 200 million kwh per year.

Flood control Normal storage of a moderate reservoir would allow control of all floods in the Stanislaus Basin. 35,000 acres of farms, towns, and industries in the downstream Stanislaus Basin,

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greater improvement in downstream water quality, greater enlargement of the downstream salmon fishery, more valuable recreation.

New Melones Dam is too important an investment to be mismanaged. If the Water and Power Resources Service (WPRS), its owner, is allowed to run it like the rest of the Central Valley Project, it will return inadequate benefit. By the year 2028, only 22% of the public investment in the Central Valley Project will be returned in revenues: the Office of Audit of the Department of the Interior blames this illegal debt on WPRS' poor contracts and planning. And WPRS mismanages its dams like its budget: the Central Valley Project is the largest single cause for the rapid decline in the salmon fisheries and the water quality of the San Joaquin and Sacramento Rivers. For example, the Board of Supervisors of Trinity County blames WPRS' operation of Trinity Dam for the 90% decline in the Trinity River's salmon fishery.

Obviously, passage of H.R. 4223 would not reform the Central Valley project. But it would insure that New Melones Dam, at least, is well managed.