



Statement of Senator Dianne Feinstein on Proposals  
To Tear Down O'Shaughnessy Dam  
May 18, 2005

**“I strongly believe that tearing down a dam that provides more than 2.5 million Californians with high quality drinking water is a terrible mistake.**

**The fact of the matter is that California needs every drop of high quality water that it can get. I have been working for more than a decade to increase California's water supply through a state-federal partnership known as CALFED. CALFED calls for the development of between 1.2 and 1.5 million acre-feet of additional water storage a year. Eliminating the 360,000 acre-feet of high quality water that Hetch Hetchy provides would run counter to the goals of CALFED. We should be looking for ways to increase our water supply, not ways to diminish it.**

**Additionally, this would be a hugely expensive endeavor. Some say that draining the reservoir would cost somewhere between \$500 million and \$1.6 billion. The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, however, believes the cost to be several times greater, because the estimates don't include many of the major costs associated with replacing the infrastructure supporting Hetch Hetchy. At a minimum, any plan to restore Hetch Hetchy would require:**

- New interties;**
- New pump facilities;**
- New conveyance facilities;**
- Increased local storage;**
- New treatment facilities;**
- Purchase of water in critically dry years;**
- Replacement of lost power from the Hetch Hetchy Project;**
- Compensation to Modesto and Turlock Irrigation Districts for storage in the Don Pedro Reservoir; and**
- Operation, maintenance and powering of all these new facilities.**

**Hetch Hetchy also provides 400 megawatts of power to our State. The California Energy Commission estimates that California needs an additional 3000 megawatts of power by 2008 in order to avoid a return to energy emergencies and blackouts. In a time when energy is in short supply, it would be foolhardy to take this reliable supply of power offline.**

**Much of the water and power infrastructure of the State, including Modesto and the Central Valley, has developed with the contributions of Hetch Hetchy in mind. Twenty percent of Modesto Irrigation District's electric power is provided by the Hetch Hetchy system, most of it at cost. The Hetch Hetchy system also provides an important flood control function for the City of Modesto, which experienced heavy flooding in January 1997. And the City of San Francisco paid one half of the cost of the New Don Pedro Project, based on its ability to divert water further up the Tuolumne.**

**There is no question that Hetch Hetchy Valley is a remarkable environmental treasure. But the decision to put up the O'Shaughnessy Dam was made over 80 years ago. To tear it down now simply does not make sense.**

**The bottom line is that Hetch Hetchy is a critical source of water and power for the State of California. Draining the reservoir would be far too expensive and leave the State vulnerable to both drought and blackout. The O'Shaughnessy Dam should not be torn down."**

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