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SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT

RESERVOIR WORK FUNDING DRIES UP

Two agencies say they will not provide any more money for proposed site near Pacheco Pass because of major cost overruns and delays



The California Water Commission on Wednesday voted 7-0 not to provide any additional funding to the proposed Pacheco Reservoir project in the Diablo Range. "I don't know if we can overcome these challenges now," a member said. **PHOTO BY SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT**

By Paul Rogers
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Already facing delays and cost increases, a proposed plan to build a \$2.7 billion reservoir in the rural hills of southern Santa Clara County near Pacheco Pass has suffered two major new setbacks, leading water officials who proposed the idea to say it might be time to cancel the project that's cost \$100 million so far.

On Wednesday, the California Water Commission, a state agency that distributes state bond money to water projects, voted 7-0 not to provide additional funding to the proposed Pacheco Reservoir project, citing lack of progress by the Santa Clara Valley Water District, which has been pushing it since 2017.

"We have to really think about stages of readiness and prioritize not putting good money after bad," said commissioner Davina Hurt, an attorney who is a former mayor



of Belmont. "We should put the money toward projects that are moving closer to becoming implemented."

Meanwhile, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, a key federal agency that provides water to cities and farms across the West, said last month it will not provide any

funding for the project, help with its environmental studies or allow water from the federal Central Valley Project to be stored in it.

That information came to light in recent days in a staff report by Santa Clara Valley Water District. The agency, based in San Jose, has scheduled an update next Tues-

day for its board to discuss how to proceed.

The board's chairman said Wednesday it may be time to pull the plug.

"I think we are at a decision point and it's probably more likely than not that the board will vote to suspend it," Tony Estremera said. "I don't know if we can overcome these challenges now."

The district, a government agency known as "Valley Water," provides water to 2 million people in Santa Clara County. In 2017, it proposed building a 320-foot high dam on Pacheco Creek near Highway 152 and Henry Coe State Park. If built, the project would be the largest new reservoir in the Bay Area since Los Vaqueros Reservoir was built in Contra Costa County in 1998.

The new earthen dam on the North Fork of Pacheco Creek in rural canyons about 2 miles north of Highway 152, east of Casa de

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SILICON VALLEY

Lofgren integral to mapping project

Representative has been a force behind gerrymandering plan

By Grant Stringer
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Gov. Gavin Newsom has been the public face of California Democrats' plan to gerrymander the state, but perhaps no politician is as instrumental behind the scenes as Silicon Valley Rep. Zoe Lofgren.

The veteran Democrat, who represents part of San Jose and a swath of central California, chairs the state's Democratic congressional delegation. That group — not Newsom's office, nor state lawmakers tasked with approving the plan this week — was responsible for crafting the politically slanted maps that voters likely will consider in November.

And Lofgren was at the helm of that process this summer, much of which unfolded behind a curtain of secrecy, in response to a ploy by Texas Republicans to re-draw political districts and give their party a boost in the 2026 congressional midterm elections.

"She's brilliant," said Rep. Ro Khanna, a Democrat who represents a neighboring district in Silicon Valley.

Newsom has taken the brunt of the credit — and criticism — over the

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EDUCATION

State out to reduce chronic absences

California leaders offer new guidance to help improve attendance

By Molly Gibbs
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With California struggling to lower student absences since the pandemic, state educational leaders have pledged to reduce chronic absenteeism by 50% over the next five years.

California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond, along with state officials, unveiled new guidance to improve student attendance, including providing early intervention, keeping families engaged and ensuring that students feel safe amid rising immigration enforcement activity.

"There's a reason that sometimes families don't attend school. There's often a big challenge," Thurmond said Tuesday at an elementary school in Rancho Cordova. "It can be transportation, the impacts of poverty, health issues. Sometimes children are staying home to take care of a younger sibling. We do a lot to educate families about the importance of their children being in

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'THEY ARE HARD-WORKING PEOPLE'

ICE arrests stun Oakland neighborhood

The seven people rounded up have no criminal records

By Shomik Mukherjee
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OAKLAND — With its cathedral ceiling and a tall, red chimney, the house on 79th Avenue hardly stands out in a quiet, working-class East Oakland neighborhood where residents tend to look out for one another.

Each morning, four of the young men who lived there would shuffle

into an SUV parked out front and head to their jobs at an East Bay fast-food joint. One of them had recently been promoted to kitchen manager, his mother said.

The neighbors never saw any cause for concern. So they were left shaken when, on Aug. 12, seven people were taken from the house, swept into U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement vans and driven away to be held in detention facilities around the country.

The 10 people who lived there, a mix of extended family members and a pair of housemates, are originally from Honduras and hold vary-



Seven residents in the 2700 block of 79th Street in Oakland were being held at detention centers after being arrested by ICE agents on Aug. 12. "They were very rude and treated us all very badly," says a detainee's mother. **RAY CHAVEZ — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER**

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