

The Water Supply and Water Quality Act Water Bond Initiative and SB 5, the Legislature's Park and Water Bond

The Legislature has passed Senate Bill 5 (DeLeon), a park and water bond, which will appear on the June, 2018 ballot. A group of citizens has prepared a water bond act initiative for the November, 2018 ballot. These two measures are completely complementary, and work together well. SB 5 emphasizes urban parks, while the water bond focuses more on traditional water programs. Many organizations support both measures.

82% of the funding in the water bond initiative is different from the funding in the legislative measure.

The water bond provides funds only for water related projects and programs. The legislative measure provides funds for both park and water projects and programs. Although some of the categories in the legislative measure resemble similar categories in the initiative, SB 5 often contains much broader language, allowing the funds to be used for a wide variety of purposes. In the few cases where both measures provide similar funding, the funded categories can easily absorb all the funding, due to the great need recognized by the drafters of both measures. (See "Funding Categories of SB 5 and the Water Supply and Water Quality Act initiative" chart on this website.)

Categories of overlap between SB 5 and water bond initiative.

Safe Drinking Water and wastewater treatment. The funding in SB 5 (\$250 million) for this important program is welcome, but inadequate. The initiative provides more substantial funding (\$750 million). More than 300 mostly low income communities in California do not have safe drinking water or sanitary wastewater disposal. The funds from both measures are still far less than necessary to solve all these problems.

Wastewater Recycling. SB 5 funding for wastewater recycling (\$100 million) is welcome, but only a small percentage of what is needed. The initiative provides a more substantial amount (\$400 million). Just as an example of the need, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is contemplating a one billion dollar wastewater recycling plant. Other such plants are also being planned. State funding can effectively supplement and incentivize local efforts like this.

Central Valley Flood Management. The combined measures provide \$500 million, but the Central Valley Flood Board has stated that the total need is \$17 billion.

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority. Bay Area voters have approved \$500 million for this \$1.3 billion program which provides funds for wetlands restoration for flood control and ecological health. While SB 5 funding (\$20 million) for this program is helpful, the initiative provides an additional \$200 million.

State conservancies and environmental agencies. Both measures provide funds to the various state conservancies and other environmental agencies. These agencies have demonstrated the ability to effectively spend billions of dollars for watershed protection, water quality improvement, habitat enhancement and similar purposes. There is no question that they can readily put to use the combined funds from both bond acts.

Salton Sea. The combination of both measures provides \$400 million for the protection and restoration of Salton Sea wetlands, and to control dust from the exposed lake bed. The total estimated cost of the Salton Sea program is \$1.5-2 billion.

Groundwater. Compliance with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act will cost many billions of dollars. The legislative measure provides \$50 million. The water bond initiative provides \$675 million.