



American River North Fork outside Colfax, California, July 2018.

Proposition 3: An \$8.87 billion water and habitat bond

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2018, ENVIRONMENT, MY TURN

By Jerry Meral

My turn: Proposition 3 will provide clean, safe, reliable water



By Jerry Meral, *Special to CALmatters*

California needs a clean, safe and reliable water supply to meet its needs as the population grows and the climate changes.

Proposition 3 will provide that water supply for people, agriculture, and our native fish and wildlife. Proposition 3 is a general obligation bond, and will not raise taxes. Some of its most important features include:

- ∞ Providing safe drinking water for disadvantaged people who lack clean water.
- ∞ Treating watersheds to make them more fire resilient, and to improve conditions after fires so that our watersheds continue to produce abundant water. This will protect the lives and homes of people who live in the watersheds, while increasing the amount of water we can capture from runoff.
- ∞ Preparing our cities and farms for long-term drought.
- ∞ Improving the quality of water in our rivers, lakes, streams and coastal waters.
- ∞ Improving the safety of dams including Oroville and many other dams in Southern California.
- ∞ Restoring the capacity of canals which provide us with vitally important water.
- ∞ Preparing for drought by conserving water in urban and rural areas through leak detection and greater efficiency.
- ∞ Recycling wastewater for irrigation and industrial uses.
- ∞ Desalting and purifying contaminated groundwater and making it safe for use.
- ∞ Capturing stormwater and putting it to use.
- ∞ Reducing flood risk and diverting flood water to productive use.

Proposition 3 also provides water for ducks, shorebirds, and other wildlife. It will restore fish habitat, making our salmon and other fisheries more productive.

As our population grows, we must re-invest in our water supply systems and better manage our water. Proposition 3 includes modern, proven methods of supplying that water.

Fire destroys homes, ranches, and wildlife habitat. Our drying climate and warming temperatures increase fire danger, and greater fire intensity increases the damage fire does to our water supply.

After a fire, dense stands of young trees can increase fire danger, use excessive amounts of water and contribute to an unhealthy forest. By better managing our watersheds, we can reduce fire danger, improve water quality, increase water supplies, and produce a healthier and fire safe forest.

Local neighborhoods will benefit from Proposition 3 through stream improvement, tree planting, river parkway improvements and other projects that benefit urban areas. Disadvantaged youth will be employed to clean up creeks, build trails along rivers, and restore watersheds.

We cannot rely on the federal government to fix our water problems: we have to do it ourselves.

The benefits of Proposition 3 have been recognized by nearly everyone. Conservation and environmental groups endorse Proposition 3. They include National Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy, California Wildlife Foundation, Planning and Conservation League, Ducks Unlimited, Save the Bay, California Trout and 90 other national, state and local conservation groups.

More than 60 local water agencies support Proposition 3. They want their customers to have clean, safe and reliable water supplies, and they know that Proposition 3 will help them provide those supplies.

The business and agricultural communities unanimously support Proposition 3. Leading groups such as the California Chamber of Commerce, Agricultural Council of California, Bay Area Council, Silicon Valley Leadership Group, San Diego Chamber of Commerce

and dozens of others recognize the benefits Proposition 3 will bring to California's water supply.

Disadvantaged communities support Proposition 3. The Community Water Center, a leading advocate for providing clean safe drinking water for people who have contaminated water supplies, knows Proposition 3 will clean up water systems in poor communities throughout the state. Your yes vote on Proposition 3 will be a vote for a clean, safe and reliable water supply.

Jerry Meral is director of the director of the California Water Program of the [Natural Heritage Institute](#), and is the lead proponent of Proposition 3, jerrymeral@gmail.com. He wrote this commentary for CALmatters.