

BASS LAKE BULLETIN

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DROUGHT REMAINS A PART OF CALIFORNIA LANDSCAPE

By most estimates, California appears to be ebbing away from drought conditions — but some say it will take more time to recover.

Despite considerable snowfall in the Sierra during the New Year weekend, the water content of the statewide snowpack remains below average for early January, reports the California Department of Water Resources (DWR). DWR conducted its first media-oriented snow survey on January 3 at Phillips Station just off Highway 50, three miles from Echo Summit. The snow water equivalent was 6 inches, compared with the early-January average of 11.3 inches. Statewide readings from electronic sensors indicate water content of 7.2 inches, 70 percent of the January 3 average.

California normally receives two-thirds of its precipitation from December to March. These readings provide a key starting point for the season, but don't indicate how the season will end. The driest water year across the region was 1924, with just over 17 inches of precipitation. The wettest year for the Northern Sierra region was 1983, when 88.5 inches of precipitation was reported.

Daniele Zaccaria, agricultural water management specialist with the University of California Department of Land, Air, and Water Resources, says that while the state's area of exceptional drought is dwindling, the fact remains that drought is a normal part of the state's climate. "Drought is part of our climate — it's a recurring phenomenon," says Zaccaria, who spoke at the recent Fall

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CALIFORNIA POLS SET TO UP GAS, DIESEL TAX

A renewed effort to fund transportation work is underway at the California statehouse. Professional drivers are eyed as major contributors for the funding plan.

An indication of just how important a transportation funding solution is in Sacramento, the first bills introduced in each chamber for the 2017 regular session address methods to raise more than \$6 billion for state and local roads, trade corridors, and public transit.

Efforts to raise the gas taxes in 2016 were stalled by Republican opposition. However, the attainment of a Democrat supermajority in both houses of the Legislature in the November election all but ensures that the bills will be enacted.

Sen. Jim Beall, D-San Jose, and Assemblyman Jim Frazier, D-Oakley, are behind the funding bills, SB1 and AB1.

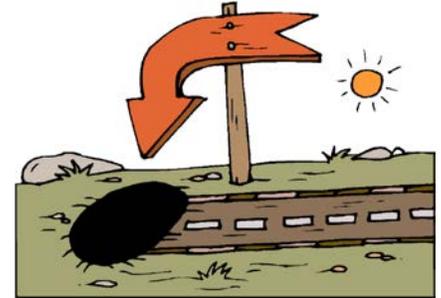
"Without action soon, our crumbling roads will severely affect California's economy," Beall said in prepared remarks.

The lawmakers offered similar plans during a recently completed special session on transportation. However, the proposals never gained momentum during a session billed as necessary to address some of the nearly \$140 billion in state and local needs over the next decade.

"My commitment to passing a comprehensive funding plan that addresses California's failing transportation system will not waiver," Frazier stated.

The main component of the new package would raise nearly \$3.8 billion mostly via

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MONEY WOES BESET CAPITAL SOUTHEAST CONNECTOR

Lack of funding stalls work

Additional stretches of White Rock Road someday will be expanded to four lanes with a center median — but only if proponents can find the money.

For years, leaders in east Sacramento County have been laying the groundwork for what they call the Capital SouthEast Connector, a 34-mile beltway that would carve through ranchlands behind Folsom and Rancho Cordova, serving as a commute alternative to Highways 50 and 99.

It's been a slow slog, beset by lawsuits, coordination issues, and most notably a lack of money.

The effort suffered a setback in November when voters rejected Measure B, the Sacramento County transportation half-cent sales tax that would have provided \$125 million for the project — more than a third of the connector's estimated \$335 million construction cost.

Despite that, proponents say they intend to get the massive project built. They just aren't sure when.

The planned connector would be a four-lane expressway with a center median and a bike trail, much of it an expansion of Grant Line Road and White Rock Road. It would connect to Highway 50 at the Silva Valley interchange in El Dorado County at its northeast end, as well as to Highway 99 in south Elk Grove and Interstate 5 south of Sacramento at its southwest terminus.

The connector joint powers board — made

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Hello All,

I would like to wish everyone a happy, healthy and comfortable 2017. Our new year will allow all of us to welcome the new changes in our local government that are upon us. Having John Hidahl step in as our new District One Supervisor will be an opportunity for all of us to welcome a local resident with over 35 years of knowledge about our District. Also, having Allan Priest as our new President of the EDH CSD Board of Directors should allow our BLAC membership a strong voice in the CSD structure. Ben Paulson is our newest member of the EDH CSD Board of Directors. Ben and I had a discussion at a recent DRC & CAC luncheon in December 2016. He shared with me that he was rewriting a lot of the software that will aid all of us to have a better understanding and access to information at the CSD. I will make sure BLAC will maintain our highly regarded position in our EDH community with all CSD Board of Directors.

I'm honored to have been voted in at our Annual BLAC Christmas Party as the new President of our organization. As you all know, our past President, John Thomson, not only created BLAC along with his wife, Fran Thomson, Kathy Prevost, Jeanette D'Amico, Hal Erpenbeck and many additional neighbors over fifteen years ago but has been the President as well. It will be difficult to fill John's President position, but I look forward to keeping BLAC moving forward and being an organization that's the best voice in any part of El Dorado Hills. John will be my mentor as we move into the coming year, but all of you can be assured I will do my very best in representing the folks along Bass Lake Road.

Please feel comfortable to contact me on any subject matter that you may have a concern with here

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DROUGHT *(continued)*

Desert Crops Workshop at Imperial, an event sponsored by Western Farm Press.

California, he says, is suffering from two kinds of drought: meteorological (a simple lack of rain and snow), and hydrological (reduced water supplies). Despite better rain and snow conditions in 2016 than the previous several years, he says drought remains the dominant condition across the state. Only the far northern counties of Shasta, Siskiyou, Trinity, Humboldt, and Del Norte are completely out of drought conditions, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The U.S. Drought Monitor, a color-coded map depicting California's severity of drought, shows that only the southern Sierra Nevada, southern San Joaquin Valley, and Central Coast continue to experience the most severe drought conditions. Much of the southern half of the state continues in extreme drought, though much of the low desert growing region along the U.S. border with Mexico is doing slightly better, experiencing only "severe" drought conditions.

Even with the improved conditions, Zaccharia expects the probability of drought to increase, along with its severity, as the effects of climate change continue.

EID's service area, like much of California, has endured a significant drought in recent years. The State Water Resources Control Board early on required that we meet conservation targets. EID customers met those targets and then some.

Then the State Water Board required a "stress test" that allowed water purveyors to analyze whether their supplies would last over three years of dry conditions. EID—and a fair number of other purveyors across the state—found that the district and its supplies passed the stress test and we no longer required a specific conservation target.

The state is looking to change that and we will find out what the new requirements may be in the coming months.

The investments the district has made in improving our infrastructure and increasing our water supply over the decades has paid off with increased drought resiliency.

EID has asked its customers to continue their water wise practices and be mindful of the following permanent water use restrictions: (1) no watering within 48 hours of precipitation, (2) no irrigating of lawns in a way that causes runoff, (3) no using non-recirculated water in a fountain or other decorative water feature, (4) no hosing off sidewalks and driveways, (5) no washing automobiles with hoses that do not have a

shut-off nozzle, and no using potable water to irrigate turf in street medians. ~

Credit: Todd Fitchette, Western Farm Press; Jesse Saitch, EID; and DWR

GAS TAXES *(continued)*

increases in the gas and diesel tax rates.

A 12-cent gas tax increase is included. AB1 calls for the increase to be applied at once. SB1 would phase-in the increase over three years. The tax would be raised by 6 cents the first year, and another 3 cents each of the next two years.

Increasing the gas tax will increase the effective sales tax charged for a gallon of gas, since the gas tax is an excise tax upon which the sales tax is collected.

Not to be outdone, the diesel rate would be increased by 20 cents to raise \$600 million annually. The money would be designated for freight, trade corridors and goods movement.

California's current collection method for fuel taxes would also be abandoned. No longer would the state Board of Equalization annually adjust the excise tax rates. Instead, the price-based tax rates would be restored.

In addition, the sales tax applied to diesel purchases would be increased. SB1 calls for a 4 percent increase while AB1 would impose a 3.5 percent increase.

Revenue from the diesel sales tax increase, however, would not directly benefit trucking. The money would be deposited into an account for transit and intercity rail projects.

The Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association supports efforts to raise revenue for transportation work in the state. However, the group opposes any plan that calls for truckers to foot more of the responsibility to help bail the state out of its funding hole.

Additional components in the funding plan would increase annual vehicle registration fees by \$38 and apply an annual \$100 fee for zero-emission vehicles. The changes would raise \$1.3 billion annually.

Hidden in the fine print is a provision that all tax and fee rates would be indexed to inflation to allow for increases every three years.

Touted as a way to benefit highways, local streets, transit, bikes and pedestrians, the Democrat-led initiative would divide new revenue between the state and local governments for road maintenance and rehabilitation.

A two-thirds majority vote is needed for passage in each chamber. The required margin was enough to derail efforts during the past year because Democrats were un-

LETTER (continued)

in our neighborhood. I've been your neighbor for the past two and a half years since my wife and I relocated from the SF Bay Area. I was personally involved in various appointed committees for the Town of Los Gatos during the forty-two years I lived in that community. I feel that the experience I gained working with the businesses, neighbors and our town's employees will allow me the benefit of working with all issues that may arise. Reaching out to our community, businesses, government agencies and organizations will allow our BLAC members to keep informed.

Vision is the art of seeing what is invisible to others.

Happy New Year!

Regards,

Dale A. Chambers

President

GAS TAXES (continued)

able to secure enough Republican votes to pass increases.

As a result of the November election, Democrats have achieved the supermajority necessary at the statehouse to push through legislation without needing to woo any Republicans to their side.

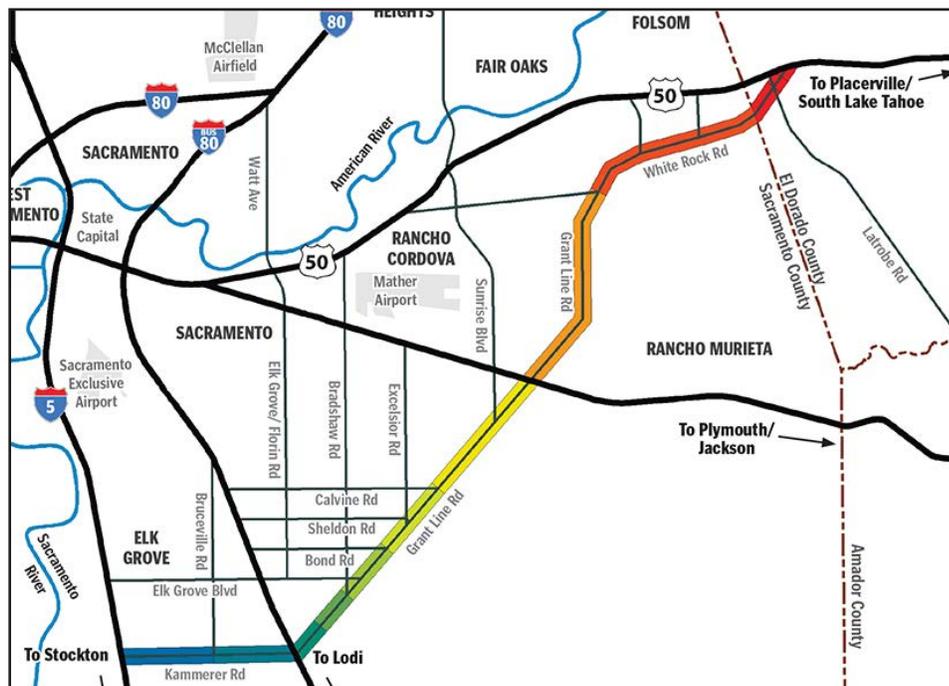
Multiple initiatives sought by GOP lawmakers are included in the Democratic plan. The first initiative calls for establishing an Office of Transportation Inspector General to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of agencies that spend transportation-related revenues.

A requirement to shift \$500 million in existing truck weight fees back to roads is also included.

Since 2010 state lawmakers have diverted from the state's highway account to the general fund the vehicle fees paid by commercial drivers. The revenue is used to repay transportation bond debt.

If approved, the shift would be completed over five years.

Source: Keith Goble, Land Line Magazine



Proposed route of the SouthEast Connector, planned to stretch from Highway 5 in Elk Grove to Highway 50 in El Dorado Hills

CONNECTOR (continued)

up of representatives from Sacramento and El Dorado counties, and from the cities of Folsom, Elk Grove and Rancho Cordova – will reconvene in January to discuss next steps.

Incoming joint powers chairman David Sander, a Rancho Cordova councilman, said the lack of visible progress on the project doesn't mean the cities and counties aren't working hard and making some progress behind the scenes.

"No dirt is being moved, but an awful lot of paperwork is," Sander said. "I'm not sure what requires heavier equipment."

The agency is conducting environmental, engineering and design studies to prepare for construction if and when new local, state or federal transportation funds arrive.

Sander estimates it will take another several decades to get the expressway built. Even then, it will be a smaller road than first imagined. Previously, officials talked of building six lanes in some spots, with interchanges instead of intersections, with an estimated cost at one point of \$700 million.

Eventually, when expected east county growth causes congestion on the new road, the connector could be turned into a full expressway by turning intersections into interchanges, connector executive Zlotkowski said. Those, however, likely would have to be paid for by housing and other land developers, he said.

The group built an initial 2.2-mile section in 2012, expanding and straightening part of White Rock, from Grant Line to Prairie

City Road. That section offers a preview of what the entire corridor will look like. Future sections are expected to have a bike trail separated from the roadway.

Despite the November ballot box setback, the connector project is far from financially bereft. It is in line to receive \$118 million over the next two decades from the county's existing Measure A transportation sales tax, approved by voters in 2004. The connector group also will collect fees from developers who build housing projects near the connector corridor.

The group currently has \$15 million it plans to use in 2018 to further widen another 2 miles of White Rock Road to four lanes between Prairie City Road and the northern branch of Scott Road. Planners said they had hoped to build a longer section all the way to Latrobe Road in El Dorado County but do not yet have the extra \$24 million that would cost.

The road remains among the most polarizing projects in the region.

It is popular among officials in Folsom, Rancho Cordova and Elk Grove who say it will serve as a pressure-release valve for congested Highways 99 and 50, offering a secondary route for future east county commuters.

Folsom city officials call the connector road "an essential secondary route" to handle traffic from the 26,000 people expected to reside on what are now open fields south of Highway 50 and north of White Rock Road in the next quarter-century.

Others, including environmentalists, of-

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SHERIFF'S FACILITY LOAN APPROVED

The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors on December 28 unanimously approved a resolution to accept a \$57 million 40-year loan for construction of a new county sheriff's headquarters. The vote allowed the county to take advantage of a program of the United States Department of Agriculture that offered a low-interest rate of 2.375 percent.

Loan service is planned at about \$2.3 million a year and county officials have repeatedly said they hope to pay it off sooner than the term date. Both Chief Administrative Officer Don Ashton and county Auditor-Controller Joe Harn supported the action, though both Ashton and Harn cautioned that the repayment of the loan would place a heavy burden on the county going forward.

Before taking their vote, supervisors agonized over the commitment of funds and the "difficult decisions" that loom in the future regarding other programs and services.

The facility will be built on property that the county previously purchased in the Diamond Springs industrial park near Missouri Flat Road and Highway 50.

Credit: Chris Daley, Mountain Democrat



Raindrops
Raindrops
Are such funny things.
They haven't feet or haven't wings.
Yet they sail through the air
With the greatest of ease,
And dance on the street
Wherever they please.
—Author Unknown

CONNECTOR *(continued)*

Officials and residents of rural east Sacramento County say the road could encourage more sprawl-style growth and tens of thousands of new cars cutting through the southeast county.

The Environmental Council of Sacramento, which advocates for more infill housing development in existing urban areas, sued the connector group in 2012. Connector officials settled that lawsuit, agreeing to spend some funds to buy land on the southeast side of the road for open space preservation and species habitat. How much land and at what cost is still uncertain.

Council board member Sean Wirth said environmentalists and the connector group are in communication, and the environmentalists will continue pushing to limit the road's negative impacts. "We continue to be worried that road will allow greater access to new development," Wirth said.

Zlotkowski, the head of the connector joint powers group, said the road will be built in small chunks over the years, but the current prep work being done puts his group in a position to move quickly, if some "ifs" happen: if east county development steps up, providing fee money; and if the state and federal governments make good on efforts to stabilize transportation funding to cities and counties.

"This is a 34-mile project; that is unprecedented," he said. "It pretty much doesn't happen anymore. I think we are moving expeditiously now. If the money appears, it will accelerate quite quickly." ~

Credits: Tony Bizjak and Randall Benton, Sacramento Bee



Bass Lake Action Committee
501 Kirkwood Court
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762



BLAC FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING SET

The February Bass Lake Action Committee Board Meeting will be held at 7:00 PM on Monday, February 13, 2017, at the home of Dale and Anh Chambers, 2188 Summer Drive, El Dorado Hills, CA 95762, 530-350-8763.

All BLAC members are cordially invited to attend.

For further information about BLAC meetings and membership, please contact Vice President Kathy Prevost at 530-672-6836. ~



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John E. Thomson, Ph.D., Editor
doctorjet@aol.com - 530-677-3039

For additional information contact:
Vice President Kathy Prevost
blacinfo@aol.com - 530-672-6836