



November 24, 2021

The Honorable Deanne Crisswell
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20472

Steven A. Nelsen
Mayor

Brian Poochigian
Vice Mayor

Gregory F. Collins
Councilmember

Brett Taylor
Councilmember

Liz Wynn
Councilmember

RE: Letter of Support for the Bric '21 Tulare County Drought and Flood Mitigation Project at McKay Point

Dear Administrator Crisswell:

The City of Visalia has spoken with the Tulare Irrigation District and the County of Tulare regarding their proposed BRIC '21 Tulare County Drought and Flood Mitigation Project at McKay Point (Project). We would like to express our support for the Project, as reliable water sources provide the lifeblood for both the social and economic foundations of our community. We also know that the Kaweah River, may experience severe droughts and significant flood years, which could expose the City of Visalia to a significant risk of flooding. We strongly support the Federal Emergency Management Act in funding this critical Project. The City of Visalia relies entirely on groundwater to meet the needs of our community. Other surrounding communities also share this common reliance upon groundwater. Droughts have plagued our area over the last several years. We have seen our groundwater levels decline and this has put added pressure on our delicate systems. Our other surrounding communities are harder hit by this as they are typically small Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) that lack the resources to manage declining groundwater levels and the subsequent dry wells. Increased ability to import surface water for groundwater recharge in wet years when flooding is a risk is a critical tool to build resiliency for the City of Visalia and many of the surrounding DACs.

Several of the local rivers that are subject to floods also traverse the City of Visalia. The Lower Kaweah River, commonly called Mill Creek through the City of Visalia, travels through Downtown Visalia. Also, the St. Johns River flows on the northern boundary of the City of Visalia along several housing developments. When the Kaweah River is in flood release and flood events overtop the banks of the Lower Kaweah River and St. Johns River, numerous buildings, infrastructure, homes, and critical facilities may be subject to flooding. We are also subject to flooding of the main highway artery through the City of Visalia, Highway 198. This highway has flooded on several occasions, the most recent being in 2011. Providing a reservoir to help alleviate flood flows in the Lower Kaweah River and St. Johns River would provide added protection to infrastructure, buildings, homes, and lives in the City of Visalia.

We urge your support of this vital project, and we look forward to working with the Tulare Irrigation District and Tulare County on its implementation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sincerely,

Steve Nelsen, Mayor
City of Visalia