

West Sac's supervisor says this region played big role in shaping state water bond

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Yolo County Supervisor Oscar Villegas says this region played a big role in deciding what to keep and what to throw away as the upcoming \$7.2 billion state water bond was drafted for the November ballot. Villegas, who represents Clarksburg and most of West Sacramento, joined fellow Yolo supervisor Jim Provenza in a subcommittee that worked with other regional and state officials on the bond.

"Yolo County was intimately involved in the negotiations of what the bond ought to look like," he told the News-Ledger on Monday. "We were representing Yolo County on a coalition of Delta counties. There are five counties actively involved in protecting the Delta."

This coalition worked with state senators Darrell Steinberg and Lois Wolk and others officials involved in the process.

"There was a frenzy of activity in the last week as the deadline approached and there was a need to get something before the governor," said Villegas.

So what's in the bond? What will voters be funding if they pass it?

"There's a series of different things," said Villegas. "The biggest is water storage, which I think everybody agrees is a huge need. It will (also) go for water recycling, groundwater cleanup, restoration in the Delta and for flood protection."

Also important is what isn't in it, said Villegas. He feels that the water bond, as drafted, will avoid funding the controversial "tunnels" project meant to ship water from the Delta area to Southern California.

"We did not want this bond to be used for that," Villegas said. So the tunnel plan remains alive, but separate.

"The other thing we pushed for was funding for the Delta Conservancy," he added. "This involves restoration work needed in the Delta, for the health of the Delta habitat as well as for the levees. Another thing I think is critical is that there is language included for agricultural sustainability. There is so much ag land in Yolo that is going to be affected by the redistribution of water. Bond funds could be used for ag sustainability."

Villegas said he agrees with Senator Wolk's view that the bill "is not perfect, but it's a lot better than what we had." And he recommends a "yes" vote on it in November, saying it will help the area's farming, flood protection and water supply.