



San Dieguito River Park
Joint Powers Authority
18372 Sycamore Creek Road
Escondido, CA 92025
(858) 674-2270 Fax (858) 674-2280
www.sdrp.org

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Shawna Anderson
Executive Director

April 27, 2026

The Honorable Todd Gloria
City of San Diego
202 C Street
San Diego, CA 92101

Subject: Hodges Reservoir Water Level

Dear Mayor Gloria,

At the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority's (JPA) April 3, 2026 meeting, the JPA Board of Directors considered the ongoing condition of the low water level at Lake Hodges and its potential impacts to wildlife and the surrounding communities from increased wildlife risk. The low lake level currently mandated at a maximum of 280 feet by the State Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD) raises serious concerns regarding impacts to the surrounding area upstream of Hodges Dam.

The JPA acknowledges the City's efforts to ensure dam integrity and protect public safety. However, the prolonged low lake level justifies a more integrated and balanced approach to reduce impacts particularly from the resulting increased fuel load from hundreds of acres of exposed vegetation that exacerbates wildfire risk. The reservoir and surrounding open space also serve as a wildlife corridor and bird sanctuary that are harmed by the persistently low lake levels.

Therefore, the JPA urges the City to:

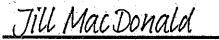
1. Evaluate the feasibility of an interim reservoir level of approximately 295 feet at Lake Hodges (approximately 40 percent capacity), subject to review, monitoring, and any appropriate mitigation measures by DSOD. Provide justification and supporting data if a 295-foot interim level cannot be achieved.
2. Engage DSOD using a holistic, risk balanced approach that evaluates seismic safety, wildfire risk, environmental impacts, water security, and community protection.
3. Recognize that maintaining the reservoir at extremely low levels introduces escalating and foreseeable risks, including increased wildfire risk and ecological degradation.
4. Proceed transparently and collaboratively with regional agencies, environmental organizations, fire authorities, and affected communities in evaluating this interim operating approach.

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An interim solution to maintain the water level at Lake Hodges to 295 feet is reasonable and would have multiple benefits to the surrounding wildland-urban interface including reducing the fuel load in an area that has suffered severe wildfires in the recent past, improving access for aerial firefighting operations, supporting broader public safety protections, increasing access to water for breeding and other wildlife support, and improving public access to a recreational resource.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions concerning this letter, please feel free to contact the JPA's Executive Director Shawna Anderson at shawna@sdrp.org.

Sincerely,


Jill MacDonald (Apr 28, 2026 11:08:56 PDT)

Jill MacDonald, Deputy Mayor, Solana Beach
JPA Chair

Cc: JPA Board of Directors
City of San Diego Council Members - Joe LaCava, Jennifer Campbell,
Stephen Whitburn, Henry L. Foster III, Marni von Wilpert, Kent Lee, Raul
Campillo, Vivian Moreno, Sean Elo-Rivera
City Public Utilities Dept - Juan Guerreiro, Megan Hickey, Ally Berenter

Passed April 3, 2026 JPA Board Meeting:

AYES: 6 (MACDONALD, KHOURY, HAYES (ALT), GAASTERLAND, MARTINEZ,
MAEDA)
NOES: 0
RECUSED: 1 (ELLIOTT (ALT))
ABSENT: 2 (VON WILPERT, LAWSON-REMER)