

In an about-face, Arnold Schwarzenegger and California legislative leaders [have called for removal](#) of the \$11.1 billion water bond from the November ballot and trying again in 2012. The legislature agreed last fall to put the measure on the ballot as part of what was billed as a [comprehensive water reform package](#). Now, faced with substantial opposition to the bond, and an economic climate that's not likely to be friendly to any big bond measure, some of the same people who put it there in the first place want the measure pulled back.

It's not clear that will happen. It will take a two-thirds vote in the legislature by early August to remove the measure. Some prominent water users, who would be the primary beneficiaries of the bond, support postponing it. A few other fans of the measure still think it can pass (although that seems very unlikely without the Governor's support) and are resisting delay. Many opponents are calling for simple repeal of the measure, without rescheduling. [Aquaforia](#) has compiled the various media reports and press releases. [I particularly liked [Linda Sheehan's piece](#) in the SF Chronicle's City Brights Blog, arguing that Californians should insist on much clearer water accounting and stronger enforcement of water law before they approve funding for new dams or reservoirs.]

Assuming the water bond is either delayed or repealed, the substantive provisions of the water reform package would not be affected, as Rick pointed out in his [Ecology Law Currents article](#) on the package. But, as he also notes

how Delta ecosystem restoration and contemplated water projects will be financed if that measure is rejected at the polls in November is very much an open question.

There will be other repercussions as well. The bond measure contains funding for a number of projects unrelated to the Delta, leading opponents to criticize it as pork-laden. Some of those projects might be desirable, however. One of them is dam removal on the Klamath River; the bond measure includes the \$250 million California has agreed to contribute toward the expected \$450 million cost. It's not clear to me that California taxpayers, rather than those who have been the beneficiaries of the environmental damage the dams have done, should be on the hook for that money. But unless another source is found, the [settlement agreement calling for dam removal](#), which has generated a great deal of excitement, could collapse.