

Poll: Californians' support for water bond sinking

By Bettina Boxall, Los Angeles Times

Judging by a new statewide poll, California lawmakers were smart to pull an \$11.1-billion water bond off last fall's ballot.

The Legislature has twice postponed the bond measure's day at the polls, worried that it would go down to defeat at a time of high unemployment and budget woes. Though the economy and budget problems have eased a bit, support for the bond has continued to decline.

A poll released Wednesday by the Public Policy Institute of California found that 42 percent of likely voters favored the funding measure, compared with 51 percent of likely voters a year ago who said they would vote for it.



The water bond would bring money to Lake Tahoe.
Photo/LTN file

Among those polled, 44 percent said they supported the bond – now headed for the November 2014 ballot – and 48 percent were opposed. Seven percent were undecided.

Pollsters found that the bond fell short of majority support

in all age, education, gender and income groups. Opposition was greatest in the Central Valley and among Republicans.

But overall support jumped to majority approval when respondents were asked how they would vote on a smaller bond.

Passed in 2009, the funding bill was immediately criticized as too big and laden with pork. The \$11 billion would pay for projects around the state, including new storage, watershed improvements, recycling and restoration of the Sacramento-San Joaquin delta.

The poll results were based on a survey of 1,703 adults, who were interviewed in English or Spanish on land-line telephones or cellphones.