

# Letter: DWR must work harder to win Oroville's trust

By [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR](#) |

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Risa Johnson's careful reporting on the Oroville Dam (Sept. 6) gives further evidence of the state Department of Water Resources' continued arrogance and naïve belief in the gullibility of the community.

Despite consensus that the spillway incident was the result of DWR's errors, DWR expects the Federal Emergency Management Agency to pay for the reconstruction. Maintenance is the responsibility of the State Water Contractors, which get free water. If FEMA does contribute, this would weaken efforts to hold DWR accountable and create a moral hazard, in that those responsible for the failure would benefit from it.

With more effrontery, the DWR spokesperson implies that she speaks for the Department of Dam Safety. She tells us that both the DWR and the DODS believe that once the spillway is rebuilt the dam will be safe, ignoring such things as the crumbling gates, river tunnel and powerhouse, the unexplained green spots, the questionable management, maintenance and design and the anachronistic operating methods.

A comprehensive independent forensic report of the dam is needed so that the risks can be assessed. The DWR continues to resist this. The DWR denied that the spillways would fail. They are still in denial. The risk of inundation remains unknown.

ORAC has withdrawn from the settlement agreement. Other organizations that signed it 15 years ago should review their participation.

The Feather River Recovery Alliance ([www.notjustaspillway.com](http://www.notjustaspillway.com)) is dedicated to providing the truth about the dam and encouraging the DWR to change so that it can be trusted.