

Judge Allows CPM's Clients' Allegations of DWR's Corruption, Discrimination, and Harassment related to the Oroville Dam Crisis to Move Forward

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On March 14, Judge James McFetridge denied the California Department of Water Resources request to limit the scope of the claims in the lawsuits filed as a result of the Oroville Dam spillway failure in February 2017. Plaintiffs, represented by Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy, alleged that racism and sexual harassment in the workplace by DWR, theft and self-dealing by DWR employees, and a culture of corruption were among the factors that contributed to the February 2017 failure and evacuation of 188,000 people. In denying DWR's motion, the Court allowed plaintiffs to pursue their allegations, writing that they "remain included in this case."

"In 2019, people want accountability for gross misconduct by those in power," said CPM's Niall McCarthy. "The toxic workplace culture at DWR described in the complaint cannot be ignored in analyzing the Oroville Dam crisis. The harassment, racism, and corruption go directly to the inability of DWR to perform safety functions."

"Independent experts, who have provided thousands of pages of analysis to the public, have determined that human factors within DWR contributed to the crisis," explained CPM attorney Eric Buescher. "A workplace with a corrosive culture cannot be expected to function at the level the public expects from those charged with keeping us safe."

Trial is set for the case in June of 2020.

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