



ALAMEDA COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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January 11, 2008

Delores Brown, Chief
Office of Environmental Compliance
California Department of Water Resources
901 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: ***Comments on Draft EIR for Monterey Amendment to the State Water Project Contracts and Associated Actions***

Dear Ms. Brown:

This letter is submitted by Zone 7 Water Agency (Zone 7), a public agency that contracts with the State of California, through the Department of Water Resources (Department), for water supplies from the State Water Project (SWP), and whose customers pay for, benefit from and rely on the water supplies provided by the SWP. Zone 7 provides flood protection, groundwater management and water supply within a 425 square mile watershed in eastern Alameda County in the Bay Area. We serve a population of nearly 200,000 people in the cities of Livermore, Pleasanton and Dublin. The Livermore-Amador Valley is a crossroads, providing irrigation water from the State Water Project for approximately 5,000 acres of agriculture (including a \$200 million per year viticulture industry), while also serving drinking water to the area which serves as a gateway to Silicon Valley (which is dominated by the high tech industry). Currently, in an average hydrologic year 75-80% of Zone 7's annual water supply is imported via the State Water Project (SWP).

The Department has prepared the Draft Environmental Impact Report on the Monterey Amendment to the State Water Project Contracts (Including Kern Water Bank Transfer) and Associated Actions as Part of a Settlement Agreement (Monterey Plus DEIR). The Monterey Plus DEIR re-evaluates the environmental effects of the Monterey Amendments, which have been in operation for over a decade.

The Monterey Amendment amended the 1960s-era SWP contracts between the Department and each of the 29 public agencies that contract with it for SWP supplies. The Monterey Amendment, implemented in 1996, updated a number of contract provisions to reflect the change in real-world conditions that had occurred by that time, and incorporated opportunities for modern, more progressive water management. The Monterey Amendment accomplished a number of significant things, including:

- **Settled dispute over allocations** – The amended water allocation provisions eliminate the agriculture-first shortage requirement for contract water supplies (i.e., Table A water) as well as the agricultural priority to surplus water, and instead require that all water be allocated in proportion to contractors' contract amounts. In exchange, the agricultural contractors agreed to permanently retire a portion of their contract amounts and permanently transfer an additional portion to urban contractors.

- **Gave contractors more flexibility in managing limited SWP supplies** – The amended water management provisions promote contractor banking of water in underground water storage during wet periods for their later use during dry times, and improve contractor opportunities to get more beneficial use out of existing SWP facilities.
- **Increased rate stability and funding for local investment in water management programs** – The amended financial provisions use contractor money originally committed for additional SWP facilities to instead help contractors stabilize their water rates and increase their funding for local development of water conservation, water recycling, conjunctive use, and other water management programs.

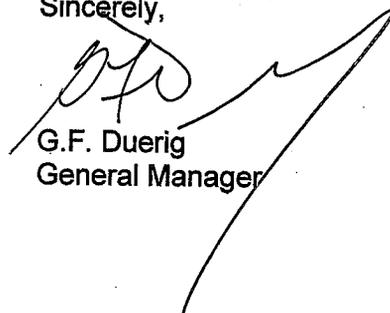
The added flexibility provided by the Monterey Amendment has allowed the SWP contractors to weather the most recent drought without enduring the substantial hardships of the drought of the early 1990s, despite increased water demands that have occurred since that time and increasing pressures on SWP operations.

The Monterey Plus DEIR includes an exhaustive analysis of the environmental effects of the Monterey Amendment and Settlement Agreement. Zone 7 feels that the Monterey Plus DEIR, which was drafted with the advisory collaboration of DWR, the State Water Contractors, Planning and Conservation League, Citizens Planning Association of Santa Barbara, and Plumas County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, adequately describes the environmental effects of the Amendment. The analysis in the DEIR shows that:

- There have been no significant environmental impacts resulting from the Monterey Amendment from 1996 through today.
- Moving into the future, environmental impacts from the Monterey Amendment in almost all resource categories are at less-than-significant levels. Those few areas where potentially significant impacts were identified are for a provision analyzed under a worst-case scenario that is unlikely to ever occur, or for certain future projects that would all be subject to additional, project-level CEQA review.

Zone 7 supported implementation of the Monterey Amendment in 1996, and supports its continued implementation into the future. Zone 7 commends the Department for having prepared this thorough and significant document.

Sincerely,



G.F. Duerig
General Manager