

California Department of Water Resources NEWS

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Public Comment Period Extended for Supplemental Water Purchase Program

SACRAMENTO--The deadline for public comment on the draft environmental impact report for the State Water Project Supplemental Water Purchase Program has been extended to May 30, 1997, the Department of Water Resources announced today.

The Department is proposing the Program to increase water supply reliability for the State Water Project contractors. The draft EIR describes the six-year Program, which could transfer up to 400,000 acre-feet of water annually from willing sellers to participating SWP contractors. The amount transferred, together with the original SWP allocation, would not exceed the annual entitlement of each participating contractor. The Program would involve both options and direct purchases. Water for the Program would come primarily from the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys. The water would be obtained from surplus reservoir storage and through substitution of groundwater supplies for water normally provided by surface flows. The Program would use existing water storage and transport facilities, and incorporates features which minimize and mitigate overall environmental impacts. There is, however, the potential for unavoidable significant impacts to some reservoir-related recreation. The Program will benefit California by reducing economic losses due to water shortages in regions supplied by the SWP.

The original deadline for comments on the EIR was April 15, 1997. The comment period was extended in response to requests for more extensive public review of the report.

In addition to extending the public comment period, the Department will hold at least one public workshop to invite interested parties to learn more about the program. Department staff will be available to discuss the Program and to respond to questions from the public at that time. The date, time and

location of the workshop(s) will be announced in a future notice.

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The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs. The State Water Project provides water to two-thirds of California's population.

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