

## California Department of Water Resources NEWS

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### **DWR Water Purchase Program To Consider Reservoir Water Sources Only, Will Hold More Workshops**

SACRAMENTO--State water officials today announced that they plan to withdraw the groundwater component of a proposed water purchase project and that additional workshops are scheduled in July to receive more public input and give the public more opportunity to learn about the project.

The Department of Water Resources is proposing the Supplemental Water Purchase Program to increase water supply reliability for State Water Project contractors.

A draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been circulated for the six-year program, which originally proposed, as the preferred alternative, the potential transfer of up to 400,000 acre-feet of water in water-short years from a combination of (1) surface waters which are replaced by additional groundwater pumping, and (2) reservoirs with temporarily surplus supplies. Such water would be purchased from willing sellers and provided to participating SWP contractors. The draft EIR also analyzed, as an alternate project, a transfer program involving only water from reservoirs.

Two workshops were held in May to gather public comment, one in Yuba City on May 14, and one in Willows on May 15. DWR also met with county supervisors, water district officials and community interests from throughout the Sacramento Valley on several occasions to discuss the proposed program.

DWR officials said many of the concerns raised about the program focused on its groundwater portion, with many persons suggesting that more opportunity for public comment was needed.

"DWR takes seriously the comments we received on this water purchase program," said Scott Jercich,

the engineer in charge of the EIR review for the program. "Based on these comments, we plan to eliminate the groundwater component of the project from the alternatives that DWR will consider upon completion of the EIR."

While the project will not include a groundwater component, groundwater programs have potential in some areas, but only after substantial additional technical and institutional issues have been addressed. For such programs to succeed, more coordination with local government is needed.

"We are scheduling more public workshops to give interested parties and the public more opportunity to learn about the proposed project and provide comments," said Jercich.

Additional workshops scheduled thus far are as follows:

- July 8, Modesto Irrigation District, 1231 11th Street, Modesto.
- July 10, Chico Municipal Center, 421 Main Street, Chico, and
- July 14, Woodland Public Library, 250 First Street, Woodland.
- July 16, Auburn Civic Center, 1225 Lincoln Way, Auburn.
- July 28, Red Bluff Community Center, 1500 South Jackson Street, Red Bluff.
- July 29, Granzella's Inn, 391 Sixth Street, Williams.

The meetings all are scheduled to begin at 6 pm and continue until 9 p.m.

Jercich noted that eliminating the groundwater component means the proposed program would be limited to surface water, a maximum of about 200,000 acre-feet annually.

The program would involve both options and direct purchases. Water would come from surplus reservoir storage, from the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys. The program would use existing water storage and transport facilities.

July 30 is the deadline for public comment on the program EIR.

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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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