

California Department of Water Resources NEWS

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Environmental Okay is Given and Aqueduct Repair Work Begins

Environmental approval was granted today and work began on a temporary repair of a slipout at mile 62.3 of the California Aqueduct. The temporary repairs will enable flows to be restored to the aqueduct in a few days.

August State Water Project deliveries have not been affected by a temporary interruption of water flows through the aqueduct. Southern California reservoirs have an ample supply, and the SWP is providing water from San Luis Reservoir which is south of the repair site.

Regional water board approval was given at a meeting at the slipout site this morning. Participants included representatives of the regional water board, the Department of Water Resources and Tosco, an oil company whose property adjoins the aqueduct.

Tosco crews have contained oil which seeped into the aqueduct in groundwater after the slipout occurred. Containment booms have been placed upstream and downstream of the site.

The oil containment plan includes trenching to drain oily groundwater away from the aqueduct, and DWR monitoring of aqueduct water, under regional water board review.

Permanent repairs will be done later this year both at the slipout and at a leak site upstream at mile 55. The sites are about seven miles apart in a region about one mile west of Interstate 5, near the Gustine exit. Engineers noted that the area's geology over the years has posed challenges to aqueduct stability.

Engineers suspect that the slipout on the west side of the aqueduct occurred due to high groundwater pressure, problematic geology and a partial de-watering of the aqueduct to help control the leak at mile 55.

Water flow through the aqueduct was interrupted late Friday and the canal's water level was lowered 12 feet to help deal with the leak at mile 55.

Department of Water Resources engineers say it should take only a few days to provide a temporary fix to the mile 62.3 slipout. Engineers will reshape the aqueduct slope to assure stability and then apply gravel and a fabric cover on exposed portions to prevent erosion.

The California Aqueduct lies along the west side of the San Joaquin Valley, parallel to Interstate 5. It moves State Water Project water from the Sacramento- San Joaquin Delta to users elsewhere, including Southern California.

The State Water Project provides water to approximately 20 million people in California and about 600,000 acres of farmland. About 70 percent of SWP water goes to urban users and 30 percent to agricultural users.

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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