



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 22, 2012

Contact:

**Ted Thomas, Information Officer
(916) 653-9712, (916) 798-1701
tthomas@water.ca.gov**

Fire Damages State Water Project Pumping-Generating Plant

SACRAMENTO — Fire of undetermined origin broke out in the State Water Project's Ronald B. Robie Thermalito Pumping-Generating plant near Oroville early this morning, but is not expected to interrupt water deliveries and there were no injuries. No personnel were in the plant when the fire started.

Fire at the plant, four miles west of Oroville in Butte County, was detected about 7 a.m., and was responded to by CAL FIRE. Crews fighting the fire eventually had to exit the facility due to life-threatening dangers from collapsing equipment, zero visibility and other conditions. The fire was still burning Thursday night. CAL FIRE and DWR continue to monitor the situation.

Thermalito Pumping-Generating Plant is operated in tandem with Hyatt Powerplant beneath Oroville Dam and the nearby Thermalito Diversion Dam powerplant to produce electrical power to pump State Water Project water. Water released from Lake Oroville behind Oroville Dam can be diverted around the pumping-generating plant, so deliveries will not be impacted and no flow changes are expected in the downstream Feather River. Damage to the plant, however, will reduce electrical generation, meaning the Department of Water Resources will have to purchase additional power to pump water.

The State Water Project delivers water to more than 25 million Californians and nearly a million acres of irrigated farmland.

-30-

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.