



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State, Federal Water Projects Seek More Efficient Drought Deliveries

SACRAMENTO – In an effort to help alleviate Central Valley water shortages due to extreme drought conditions, today the California Department of Water Resources and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation together filed a petition with the State Water Resources Control Board to be able to exchange water within the areas served by the State Water Project and the federal Central Valley Project.

If granted by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), the temporary change petition would allow the State Water Project (SWP) to deliver water to areas typically served by the federal Central Valley Project (CVP) and vice versa. Together, those two projects supply more than 25 million Californians and three million acres of irrigated agriculture south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Both projects operate pumping plants in the south Delta.

“The consolidation of the SWP and CVP places of use would allow the most efficient use of limited supplies,” said DWR Director Mark Cowin. “We look forward to working with the state water board to maximize the beneficial use of available water supplies in this extraordinary year.”

David Murillo, Regional Director of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation’s Mid-Pacific Region said, “Reclamation has partnered with the state to seek out all options that will help us to stretch our limited water resources to ensure water will be delivered to those who need it during this period of drought.”

The joint petition seeks permission to consolidate authorized places of use for the federal and state project water south of the Delta starting May 1, 2014. If granted, the temporary change would last one year. The exchanges covered under the petition would not exceed 277,863 acre-feet. The SWRCB expects to act on the petition by March 28, 2014, following public opportunity for comment.

The petition and related materials are available here: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/drought/petitions/transferpetitions.shtml.

In his January 17 emergency drought declaration, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. directed the Department of Water Resources (DWR), which operates the SWP, to submit such a petition in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), which operates the CVP.

The petition would help the water districts that buy supplies from the federal and state projects cope with what are expected to be extremely low project deliveries this year. For example, one exchange would allow the Santa Clara Valley Water District to change the point of delivery of up to 130,000 acre-feet of its supplies from the federal CVP and SWP. The district buys water from both the CVP and SWP, and the exchange would help address problems with conveyance facilities. Drought threatens the availability and quality of the federal water the Santa Clara Valley Water District would otherwise take from San Luis Reservoir, so under the petition filed today, the water district could exchange its federal water for state water delivered from the Delta through the South Bay Aqueduct.

The changes sought by the petition would not result in the diversion of additional water from the Delta or of the delivery of more water to any individual SWP or CVP contractor than has been delivered historically. Instead, the requested change would provide the federal and state projects the operational flexibility to get available supplies where they are needed most and in the most efficient manner possible.

On January 31, the DWR announced that, based on extremely dry conditions to date, the water agencies that purchase water from the SWP would not get any allocation of SWP water in 2014 other than minimal flows to meet health and safety needs. The SWP contractors may request delivery of water that they had not used from previous years. In addition to SWP supplies, most of the water agencies that buy from the SWP have other sources, including groundwater and local reservoirs.

Reclamation will announce later this month how much water it believes it can deliver to customers of the CVP. Dramatic cuts in allocation are expected, given the extremely dry conditions across California.

The water districts that would be specifically authorized to exchange water under the petition are the Santa Clara Valley Water District, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Kern County Water Agency, Westlands Water District, Arvin-Edison Water Storage District, Kern Tulare Water District, the Oak Flat Water District, the Del Puerto Water District, Musco Olive Products, and the Veterans National Cemetery.

Because of the dire water supply conditions, the DWR and Reclamation continue to explore all possible opportunities to retrieve previously stored project supplies and optimize the delivery of limited supplies from all available sources. More needs and opportunities for exchanging SWP and CVP water may be developed as the irrigation season progresses, and the petition asks the SWRCB to allow the approval of future projects as part of this change if those exchanges meet certain specific criteria. Those criteria include no increase in the amount of water diverted from the Delta, no net loss of Sacramento or San Joaquin river flow, submittal of any new proposal to the SWRCB for their review and approval before the new exchange can begin, and detailed reporting of the parties involved, the amount of water involved, and the facilities required to move the water.

With California facing one of the most severe droughts on record, Governor Brown declared a [drought State of Emergency](#) last month and directed state officials to take all necessary actions to prepare for water shortages. Governor Brown has spoken with President Obama about crucial federal support during the ongoing drought, and the state [continue](#) to work with [federal partners](#) to ensure a [coordinated](#) drought response. The administration has also [expressed support](#) for federal legislation introduced by Senators Feinstein and Boxer and Representatives Jim Costa, Tony Cárdenas and Sam Farr.

Across state government, action is being taken. The Department of General Services is leading water [conservation efforts](#) at state facilities, and the Department of Transportation is cutting water usage along California's roadways by 50 percent. Caltrans has also launched a public awareness campaign, putting a water [conservation message](#) on their more than 700 electronic highway signs.

In January, the state took [action to conserve](#) water in numerous Northern California [reservoirs](#) to meet minimum needs for operations impacting the environment and the economy. The SWRCB announced it would work with hydropower generators and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to [preserve water](#) in California

reservoirs. Recently the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the California Fish and Game Commission [restricted fishing](#) on [some waterways](#) due to low water flows worsened by the drought.

The state is working to protect local communities from the dangers of extreme drought. The California Department of Public Health [identified](#) and offered [assistance](#) to communities at risk of severe drinking water shortages and is working with other state and local agencies to develop solutions for vulnerable communities. CAL FIRE hired [additional firefighters](#) and is continuously [adjusting staffing](#) throughout the state to help address the [increased fire threat](#) due to drought conditions. The California Department of Food and Agriculture launched a [drought website](#) to help farmers, ranchers and farmworkers find resources and assistance programs that may be available to them during the drought.

Even as the state deals with the immediate impacts of the drought, it is also planning for the future. Recently, the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency and CDFA released the [California Water Action Plan](#), which will guide state efforts to enhance water supply reliability, restore damaged and destroyed ecosystems and improve the resilience of our infrastructure.

Governor Brown has called on all Californians to voluntarily reduce their water usage by 20 percent, and the [Save Our Water](#) campaign launched four [public service announcements](#) encouraging residents to conserve and has resources available in Spanish. Last December, the Governor formed a [Drought Task Force](#) to review expected water allocations and California's preparedness for water scarcity. In May 2013, Governor Brown issued an [Executive Order](#) to direct state water officials to expedite the review and processing of voluntary transfers of water.



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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.