



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

## NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Media Advisory

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### Public Comment Period Extended for Emergency Drought Barriers

**SACRAMENTO** – The California Department of Water Resources has extended from February 25 to March 18 the public comment period on its analysis of the effects of temporary emergency drought barriers in three channels of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

Last month, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) submitted an application to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers seeking a programmatic permit to allow the installation of temporary rock barriers, if necessary. Barriers would be installed only in the event of drought conditions so severe that physical salinity control structures are needed to conserve water in upstream reservoirs for health and safety and critical environmental purposes.

Extensive environmental analysis and months of conversations with Delta residents and water district managers have led DWR to conclude that the potential installation of emergency drought barriers does not require a full environmental impact report under the California Environmental Quality Act. DWR's Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration describes the project, an assessment of potentially significant or significant environmental effects, and the commitments DWR proposes to incorporate into the project to either eliminate potentially significant or significant effects or reduce them to less than significant. Those documents are available here:

[http://www.water.ca.gov/waterconditions/docs/Emergency\\_Drought\\_Barriers\\_Initial\\_Study\\_and\\_Proposed\\_Mitigated\\_Negative\\_Declaration.pdf](http://www.water.ca.gov/waterconditions/docs/Emergency_Drought_Barriers_Initial_Study_and_Proposed_Mitigated_Negative_Declaration.pdf).

The public is invited to comment on the Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration during a comment period that began January 23, 2015 and has been extended from February 25 to March 18. Comments may be emailed to [DWREDBCOMMENTS@water.ca.gov](mailto:DWREDBCOMMENTS@water.ca.gov) or mailed to Jacob McQuirk, Supervising Engineer, Bay-Delta Office, California Department of Water Resources, P.O. Box 942836, Sacramento, CA 94236. Fax to (916) 653-6077. Comments must be submitted by 5 p.m. on March 18, 2015.

DWR's application to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for a programmatic permit seeks to allow the installation of rock barriers for no more than eight months in a single year across Steamboat Slough, Sutter Slough, and West False River. The Department's emergency barriers would be allowed as a drought management tool up to three times over the next 10 years in the event drought gets so severe barriers are necessary to conserve water needed to maintain public health and safety.

Background on the temporary emergency drought barriers is available here: <http://www.water.ca.gov/waterconditions/emergencybarriers.cfm>.

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