



Bureau of Reclamation
Mid-Pacific Region



California Department
of Water Resources



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Notice of Availability for Partially Recirculated Draft EIR/ Supplemental Draft EIS on the Bay Delta Conservation Plan/California WaterFix *Media Call and Public Meetings Scheduled*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The Bureau of Reclamation and the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) today released for public review a joint Partially Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the Bay Delta Conservation Plan/California WaterFix. Public commenting on the document is open from July 10 until Monday, August 31, 2015.

The document describes changes and refinements made since last summer to the plan that seeks to secure California's water supplies and improve ecosystem conditions in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The Delta is the West Coast's largest estuary and is the hub of the state's water distribution system. It provides water to two of every three Californians and one-third of all irrigated agriculture in the state. The Delta also harbors several aquatic species at risk of extinction.

Reclamation and DWR will host a media-only conference call on Monday, July 13, 2015, to discuss the release of the revised document.

WHAT:

Media-only conference call about the Bay Delta Conservation Plan/California Water Fix RDEIR/SDEIS, followed by a question-and-answer period.

WHEN:

Monday, July 13, 2015 at 10:30 a.m.

STATEWIDE MEDIA CALL-IN NUMBER:

(800) 288-8974

Note: This line is for media only.

WHO:

Mark Cowin, Director, California Department of Water Resources
David Murillo, Regional Director, Bureau of Reclamation

A fact sheet and answers to frequently asked questions are available at www.baydeltaconservationplan.com and www.californiawaterfix.com.

In 2007, state and federal agencies started pursuing an ambitious and comprehensive conservation plan under Section 10 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and California's Natural Community Conservation Planning Act. The approach included new water conveyance facilities and sought to secure water supplies and contribute to the recovery of listed species under a single regulatory package. A draft Bay Delta Conservation Plan and draft EIR/EIS were released for a public comment period that began in December 2013 and closed in July 2014.

Based on project revisions and in consideration of comments received, state and federal agencies announced in April 2015 a change in their approach to seeking a permit for a project that would accomplish the dual goals of securing water supplies and restoring the Delta's native fish populations. Rather than pursue the project as a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), under Section 10 of the ESA, and a Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP), under the state's Natural Community Conservation Planning Act, the state and federal agencies have chosen to study additional alternatives to achieve the dual goals through implementation of new water conveyance facilities built in compliance with Section 7 of the ESA and Section 2018(b) of the California ESA.

The draft document released today for public review includes analysis of three new sub-alternatives as well as additional analysis and refinement of the previous draft environmental document. The additional alternatives do not contain an HCP/NCCP, as was proposed as part of the alternatives analyzed in the previously circulated documents. The State will restore more than 30,000 acres of Delta habitat separately through California EcoRestore. This restoration will be implemented on an accelerated timeline independent of the proposed water conveyance facilities.

DWR has identified sub-alternative 4A (California WaterFix) as its preferred alternative. The 2013 Draft EIR/EIS had previously identified Alternative 4 (BDCP) as DWR's preferred alternative. Reclamation has selected Alternative 4A as the preferred alternative under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This alternative would consist of a water conveyance facility with three intakes on the Sacramento River north of Courtland and measures necessary to minimize or avoid project effects. Alternative 4A is proposed to make physical and operational improvements to the State Water Project (SWP) system in the Delta necessary to restore and protect ecosystem health, water supplies of the SWP and Central Valley Project customers south of the Delta, and water quality within a stable regulatory framework, consistent with statutory and contractual obligations.

"The new alternative described in these documents would help restore natural flow patterns in the Delta," said California Department of Water Resources Director Mark Cowin. "With California WaterFix, we will not need to rely solely on south Delta pumping plants that can cause harmful reverse flows in nearby channels. We'll gain the flexibility to move water when and where it is safest for fish. With the release of a revised plan today, we are a step closer to finally modernizing our 50-year-old water conveyance system in the Delta and improving the reliability and sustainability of water supplies for California."

David Murillo, Director of the Bureau of Reclamation's Mid-Pacific Region said, "Reclamation is committed to this partnership with the State of California to find a long-term, sustainable solution to water issues in the Bay-Delta. We have much work to do to improve water supply reliability and ecosystem health in the Bay-Delta. The release of these documents today represents a plan greatly improved by public input, and we look forward to feedback on the new alternatives outlined."

Reclamation and DWR are lead federal and state agencies, respectively, for NEPA and the California Environmental Quality Act. To view or download the RDEIR/SDEIS, or for a list of locations to access a

DVD of the document, please go to www.baydeltaconservationplan.com. If you encounter problems accessing the documents, please call 916-978-5100 or email mppublicaffairs@usbr.gov.

Two public meetings are scheduled:

- Sacramento – Tuesday, July 28, 2015, 3 to 7 p.m., Sheraton Grand Sacramento Hotel, Magnolia Room, 1230 J Street, Sacramento, C.A., 95814.
- Walnut Grove – Wednesday, July 29, 2015, 3 to 7 p.m., Jean Harvie Senior and Community Center, 14273 River Road, Walnut Grove, C.A., 95690.

Written comments are due by close of business Monday, August 31, 2015. Comments should be mailed to BDCP/WaterFix Comments, P.O. Box 1919, Sacramento, C.A., 95812, or emailed to BDCPComments@icfi.com.

For additional information, please contact Theresa Olson, Reclamation, 916-930-5676 (TTY 800-877-8339) or Cassandra Enos-Nobriga, California Department of Water Resources, 916-651-0178.

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The mission of the California Department of Water Resources is to manage the water resources of California in cooperation with other agencies, to benefit the State's people, and to protect, restore, and enhance the natural and human environments. Visit DWR's website at www.water.ca.gov.

Reclamation is the largest wholesale water supplier and the second largest producer of hydroelectric power in the United States, with operations and facilities in the 17 Western States. Its facilities also provide substantial flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife benefits. Visit Reclamation's website at www.usbr.gov.