



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 1, 2016

Contacts:

Nancy Vogel

California Natural Resources Agency

Nancy.Vogel@resources.ca.gov, 916-653-9402

Doug Carlson

Department of Water Resources

Doug.Carlson@water.ca.gov, 916-653-5114

Analysis of California WaterFix Potential Effects Submitted to State Water Resources Control Board

Evidence and Testimony Available for Water Right Hearing

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Yesterday, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and Bureau of Reclamation submitted testimony to the State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board) as required for the upcoming public hearings on a request to add three new points of diversion to the State Water Project, with coordinated operations for the Central Valley Project, for California WaterFix.

[The questions before the Board](#), defined by the members themselves in Part I of the hearings, are narrow: Does the new point of diversion alter water flows or affect water quality such that there would be injury to any legal user of the water, and does the project in effect initiate a new water right?

In Part I of the hearings and with the submitted testimony, DWR will present evidence to show that the proposed change will neither initiate a new water right nor injure any other legal user of water. DWR's testimony regarding its petition for change to its water right permit [is available here](#), and the petition for the new points of diversion [can be found here](#).

John Laird, Secretary for the California Natural Resources Agency, said, "With California WaterFix, we seek to improve upon the unreliable way water is now conveyed through the Delta, reduce or eliminate costs to the environment and economy from our aging water infrastructure and better prepare the state for effects of climate change. The key elements of California WaterFix have long been part of the State's comprehensive vision for the Delta, and the Water Board hearings are an important step in the advancement of the project."

Part I of the hearings is scheduled to begin July 26.

“Through hundreds of pages of testimony submitted yesterday in advance of the hearings, DWR’s team of engineers, lawyers and water experts shows that WaterFix will not establish a new water right, will not injure any other legal user of water and will not negatively impact flows or water quality,” said Mark Cowin, Director of the Department of Water Resources. “The State Water Resources Control Board has the critical responsibility to protect the rights of legal users of water. California WaterFix has benefited from extensive public comment and review, and these hearings are yet another opportunity for anyone concerned about potential effects to ask questions and get answers.”

- **WaterFix would create more flexibility to better balance water quality, fish protection and water supply:** WaterFix would allow the state and federal water projects to capture and store water during times of heavy rainfall and runoff, when diversions pose less risk to fish and water quality. Such opportunities are limited now because the existing south Delta pumps create unnatural flows that can be hazardous to fish. New intakes offer increased flexibility to the State Water Project and Central Valley Project to operate in “dual conveyance” with the existing pumps in the south Delta; this would allow, for example, utilizing northern diversions during seasonal rain events when pumping would otherwise be restricted in the south Delta.
- **This is not a new or expanded water right and protects existing water rights:** WaterFix would add new locations on the Sacramento River s from which the State Water Project and Central Valley Project may divert water based on existing water rights, and no or expanded water rights are being sought. In addition, DWR and Reclamation do not seek any modifications to the water quality standards upstream or downstream of the proposed diversion points. Those standards, which protect existing water users, must still be met.
- **WaterFix would operate within standards set by the Water Board:** DWR has a proven track record of meeting the Water Board’s Delta water quality standards. When the Water Board establishes new standards, DWR will meet its obligations under them, as has been the case for nearly four decades. Meeting the Water Board’s current and future water quality standards would be easier with the flexibility provided by the dual conveyance.
- **WaterFix will be operated in real-time:** DWR submitted extensive modeling to estimate how the project will operate during a range of scenarios. However, modeling is theoretical, and water projects are managed in real-time. While modeling is the best available tool to perform an assessment of potential water operation effects, water project operators can and do handle far more complexity than models. That human factor allows projects to stay in compliance with water quality standards nearly all of the time and adapt to future conditions that are clouded by climate change.

Part I of the hearings is expected to take several months. Part II of the hearings is expected to take place in early 2017 and will focus on the extent to which fish and wildlife and other beneficial uses will be affected by the requested change in point of diversion and any measures needed to protect fish and wildlife from any unreasonable impacts of the change.

California WaterFix would construct three new intakes on the east bank of the Sacramento River near Hood, each with a maximum capacity of 3,000 cubic feet per second. Each intake would be screened to protect fish. Water would travel from the intakes by gravity through 30-mile-long tunnels to the south Delta, where it would flow into a redesigned Clifton Court Forebay, which connects to the existing water project pumping plants. Construction of north Delta intakes would allow greater flexibility in operation of both south and north Delta diversions and better balancing of the associated water quality and hydrodynamic benefits for fish, drinking water, agriculture and other beneficial uses. Diversions at the north Delta intake would be greatest in wettest years and lowest in drier years.

California WaterFix was developed through a 10-year collaboration between the State of California, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, public water agencies, federal and state fishery agencies, non-governmental organizations, agricultural interests and the public. It is the State's plan to more efficiently and in a more environmentally protective way capture and move water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. It is a part of the State's comprehensive plan to better manage water, which includes enhanced water recycling, additional conservation, increased storage and improved groundwater management. California WaterFix would reduce the "reverse" flows in south Delta channels that pose risks to threatened and endangered fish species. It is an upgrade to the 50-year-old water system that delivers water to two of three Californians ranging from the Bay Area to San Diego. California WaterFix would protect the backbone of the state's water supply ensuring safe, clean and reliable water for 25 million people, thousands of businesses and three million acres of farmland.

###

California has been dealing with the effects of drought for five years. To learn about all the actions the State has taken to manage our water system and cope with the impacts of the drought, visit Drought.CA.Gov. Every Californian should take steps to conserve water. Find out how at SaveOurWater.com.

