



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 21, 2017

Contact:

Sam Chiu, California Natural Resources Agency

Sam.Chiu@resources.ca.gov; 916-651-7585

California WaterFix Reaches Key Milestone As State Environmental Review Is Certified

SACRAMENTO – Clearing another major milestone toward the modernization of the state’s water delivery system, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) today certified the environmental analysis of the California WaterFix. Today’s announcement follows recent federal biological opinions that confirm the project is consistent with environmental and wildlife protection standards.

“Today, we have reached our next important benchmark in moving California towards a more reliable water supply,” said DWR Acting Director Cindy Messer. “With this certification, our state is now closer to modernizing our aging water delivery system in a way that improves reliability and protects the environment.”

The WaterFix will modernize a 50-year-old water delivery system that is increasingly vulnerable to disruption by natural disaster and climate change. With new intakes along the Sacramento River, the project also would give water project operators the flexibility to divert water at times of high flow when the risk to native fish at the new diversion facilities is minimal, thus better balancing water supply and environmental protection needs.

Today’s certification comes after more than a decade of analysis, review, and public comment. State and federal water and wildlife agencies have been working since 2006 to find the best way to improve how the State Water Project and Central Valley Project obtain water from the channels of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Together, the projects supply 25 million Californians with some or all of their drinking water supply and help irrigate three million acres of farmland.

The [Notice of Determination and decision documents](#) signed by Acting Director Messer approve WaterFix as the proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The project helps ensure stable water supplies for millions of Californians. CEQA requires state and local agencies to identify the significant environmental impacts of their actions and to avoid or mitigate those impacts, if feasible.

DWR, which operates the State Water Project, screened more than 100 different proposals before analyzing 18 alternatives in depth in the final 50,000-page Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under CEQA. The combined public comment period on these environmental analyses lasted nearly a year.

The project was refined several times to shrink its footprint, minimize impacts to Delta landowners, and make other changes.

The CEQA certification, Notice of Determination, and decision documents put WaterFix a step closer to construction, which could begin as early as 2018. As both a modern and ambitious infrastructure project, WaterFix will require world-class engineering, efficient construction management, aggressive cost containment, and transparent business operations.

In addition to the certification, DWR also filed a “validation action” today with the Sacramento County Superior Court to affirm the department’s authority to, among other things, issue revenue bonds to finance the planning, design, construction and other capital costs of California WaterFix. A validation action is necessary to provide assurances to the financial community for the sale of the California WaterFix revenue bonds.

Meantime, DWR and the federal Bureau of Reclamation have completed a substantial portion of the proceedings before the State Water Resources Control Board to change the point of diversion for the state and federal water projects to allow operation of the WaterFix.

For more information, including fact sheets about project costs, cost allocation, project delivery and environmental benefits, visit www.californiawaterfix.com.

