



STATE WATER  
CONTRACTORS  
FOUNDED 1982

## Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

3.8.18

**CONTACT:**

Ian Anderson  
ianderson@fionahuttonassoc.com  
818-760-2121

### **STATE WATER CONTRACTORS TEAMING UP TO ADVANCE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON LONGFIN SMELT**

*Discoveries Will Help Shape California's Future Water Management Practices*

**Sacramento, CA** – Public water agencies and researchers within the State Water Contractors (SWC) participated today in a panel discussion sharing preliminary scientific research to better understand threatened longfin smelt and their habitat in the Sacramento Bay Delta.

In a presentation at the 2018 Interagency Ecological Program (IEP) Annual Workshop in Folsom, Calif., scientists from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW), ICF and experts from the University of California, Davis, shared information and preliminary findings on several research efforts underway to explore the factors that may be contributing to declining longfin smelt populations in the Delta. ICF, a global consulting services company with renowned longfin smelt experts, is under contract with the State Water Contractors and MWD to work on and advance scientific research.

“Our member water agencies are leaders in the water science community, helping to fund and support groundbreaking research that enables us to answer key questions about longfin smelt and their habitat,” said Jennifer Pierre, SWC general manager. “Together with our state, federal and academic partners, we’re piecing together the puzzle on how to best balance the needs of people, farms and the environment for California’s future.”

In addition to bringing fresh, clean water to 25 million Californians and 750,000 acres of farmland, the SWC invests over \$1 million annually in science and research. For more information, please visit the SWC Science webpage.

The longfin smelt studies underway aim to identify the root causes of a population decline amongst longfin smelt in the Delta by answering key questions such as:

- Why do longfin smelt numbers fluctuate between wet and dry years?
- Where are longfin smelt rearing?
- How are they impacted by water quality, turbidity, salinity and temperature?

- What is their diet like?

Partners in the California water science community are using various methods for their research, including conducting field work in new geographical areas, developing and analyzing sophisticated computer modeling and leading advanced statistical analyses. Specifically, the research efforts explore various themes such as the impact of Delta outflows on the abundance and distribution of longfin smelt, as well as their dietary patterns, larvae habitat conditions and rearing patterns, and species detection assumptions and practices.

Preliminary findings suggest that the collective research will help to better understand the longfin smelt's long-term decline. A goal of better science is to provide policy leaders and regulators with better information in making future water management and restoration decisions.

"Through innovations and advancements in science and research, we are understanding more about Longfin and their habitat than we ever have," Pierre said. "Our shared discoveries have the potential to improve our management of the Delta to better meet the State's co-equal goals of improved water supply reliability and protecting, enhancing and restoring the Delta ecosystem. We look forward to continuing this important scientific work with our valued partners."

**Jennifer Pierre**  
**General Manager**  
**State Water Contractors**

###

*The State Water Contractors is a statewide, non-profit association of 27 public agencies from Northern, Central and Southern California that purchase water under contract from the California State Water Project. Collectively the State Water Contractors deliver water to more than 27 million residents throughout the state and more than 750,000 acres of agricultural land. For more information on the State Water Contractors, please visit [www.swc.org](http://www.swc.org).*