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SWC Response to Draft Environmental Impact Report on California Endangered Species Act Permits for the Long-Term Operation of the State Water Project

Sacramento, CA – Today, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) released a [Draft Environmental Impact Report \(EIR\)](#) to support the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) permit for the long-term operation of the State Water Project (SWP). The purpose of a CESA permit is to allow for incidental take of threatened and endangered species during otherwise lawful activities, such as the delivery of water. The CESA permit is expected to include criteria for State Water Project operations that minimize and fully mitigate State Water Project operational impacts. The Draft EIR includes several alternatives for operations, including a Proposed Project.

In addition, the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) [announced actions related to the operation of the SWP](#), including the state’s intention to file litigation against federal government agencies over the proposed biological opinions issued on October 22 for the long-term operation of the federal Central Valley Project (CVP) and the SWP.

“We appreciate DWR for advancing the State Water Project CESA permit process. The Proposed Project reflects scientific research and information that has been developed over the last decade since the current permit was issued, includes the operational flexibility we need under climate change hydrology while maintaining critical species protections, and includes true adaptive management to ensure the continued application of best available science in the operations of the State Water Project. These permit conditions are critical as the state works to improve water management to meet the needs of our environment and the millions of Californians that depend on it every day.

“However, we are disappointed that the state’s concerns related to the federal biological opinions weren’t worked out around the negotiating table as opposed to being pursued through litigation. We are concerned about the impact any litigation may have on the Voluntary Agreements process, state and federal water project operations and other collaborative joint efforts to address issues in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.”

Jennifer Pierre
General Manager
State Water Contractors

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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.