



STATE WATER
CONTRACTORS
FOUNDED 1982

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 23, 2024

CONTACT:

Erin Curtis
(714) 349-3434

ECurtis@fionahuttonassoc.com

State Water Contractors Respond to Updated Allocation of State Water Project Supplies for 2024

Allocation increases to 40% from 30% in March

Sacramento, CA — Today, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) announced that public water agencies are now expected to receive 40% of contracted water supplies from the State Water Project (SWP) this year. The increase, up from 30% in March, comes on the heels of DWR's April 1 snow survey, which recorded a statewide snowpack at 110% of the average — a significant improvement compared to 28% of the average in January.

Statement from Jennifer Pierre, General Manager of the State Water Contractors:

"While we are glad to see this modest allocation increase for public water agencies who rely on SWP supplies, it is still far below the amount of water we need. Water deliveries should be far higher in a good water year like we've had — there is a lot of water in the system, California reservoirs are full, and runoff from snowpack melt is still to come. Today's modest allocation highlights just how difficult it is to operate within current regulatory constraints and with infrastructure in need of modernization. Even in a good water year, moving water effectively and efficiently under the current regime is difficult.

Earlier this year, water operators reduced the amount of water they could divert from the Delta to protect endangered salmon and steelhead near the pumps. In a year with great hydrology, the unprecedented and significant export restrictions between January and March cost over a million acre-feet of water supply for the SWP, likely hampering our readiness for the next drought.

In addition, had the Delta Conveyance Project been operational this year, it could have captured and moved about 909,000 acre-feet of water between January 1 and April 4 while keeping endangered species safe. That's enough water to supply about 9.5 million people, or 3.1 million households — 35% of the SWP's service population — for an entire year.

While the presence of these fish hampered our ability to move and capture water for the entire winter and early spring season, it is important to note that water operators were able to protect many of them despite reports to the contrary. Most winter-run Chinook salmon and Central Valley

steelhead categorized as captured or 'taken' at the pumps survive, are transported downstream, and then released to continue migrating to the Pacific Ocean. Scientific research indicates that salmon and steelhead salvaged at the pumps and released downstream are more likely to survive as they travel to the ocean than those that approach intake facilities but are not entrained. While there is a lot of evidence that salmonids this year experienced good survival conditions, there is no evidence that the significant salvage experienced this year had any meaningful effect on the salmonid population.

Protecting species is critically important, as is ensuring the 27 million people, 750,000 acres of farmland and countless businesses who rely on SWP supplies continue to receive affordable, high-quality water required to live and work. Infrastructure like the Delta Conveyance Project and updated regulatory rules like the Agreements to Support Healthy Rivers and Landscapes will allow us to better manage our water supplies for both people and fish. We must upgrade our decades-old infrastructure to keep pace with California's rapidly changing climate and modify our regulations to reflect the best available science to ensure we can move excess flows efficiently with minimal impact on fish and capture precipitation when we get it for use when we don't."

###