



News for Immediate Release

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Contacts:

- Katherine Kelly, Bay-Delta Office Chief (916) 653-1099
- Sue Sims, Public Affairs Office (916) 769-4237

DWR RELEASES DRAFT EIS/EIR FOR SOUTH DELTA IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

SACRAMENTO - The Department of Water Resources (DWR) today released the draft Environmental Impact Report for the South Delta Improvements Program (SDIP). The release of the draft will begin a formal public process on a plan to improve water quality and protect fish in the southern part of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, while increasing the reliability and amount of water supplies for Californians.

“The SDIP represents a balanced approach to water management,” said DWR Director Lester Snow. “It will improve water quality for south Delta farmers, protect migrating salmon, and allow the State Water Project to operate more effectively.”

DWR proposes to implement the program in two separate decision-making stages. During the first 90-day review period, proposed physical improvements to the South Delta infrastructure will be considered. A second public review period will consider proposed operational improvements to the State Water Project (SWP). Staging the decision-making process in this way will allow DWR to incorporate new scientific data and research on the conditions that are currently impacting Delta fish populations before a final decision is made on SWP operations.

The improvements program is a key part of DWR’s overall Delta management strategy. Among the proposed physical changes is replacement of seasonal rock barriers with four permanent operable gates. This will protect fish and improve water circulation and quality in the South Delta. Some channel dredging and modifications to local agricultural diversions are also included in the proposed plan. In total, these actions will improve water quality and give farmers improved access to irrigation water.

The operational component of the plan proposes to use existing SWP facilities to provide more water to communities, businesses and agriculture south of the Delta when water supplies are available and it is environmentally sound to do so. The alternatives in the draft EIR would increase the total amount of water diverted by an average of up to three percent to five percent annually.

DWR and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation are responsible for implementing the South Delta Improvements Program.

Copies of the environmental documents are available at <http://sdip.water.ca.gov/> or by calling Wanda

Headrick (916) 653-7129.

The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.