



News for Immediate Release

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DWR Certifies South Delta Improvements Program Environmental Impact Report

Sacramento- Department of Water Resources (DWR), in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, today certified the South Delta Improvements Program (SDIP) Final Environmental Impact Report. Release of the report certifies environmental assessments, but until a biological opinion is rendered under the federal Endangered Species Act, no action will be taken to construct the facilities.

The SDIP is a multi-faceted project proposed to be implemented in two stages. Stage one includes installing and operating permanent gates to protect San Joaquin River salmon and improve water levels and circulation in South Delta waterways. Stage two would increase the flexibility of the diversion operations in the South Delta for the State Water Project. DWR is only proposing to move forward with stage one, to install permanent gates, to replace temporary structures installed and removed each year. Any activity regarding stage two will require further study and public input.

The SDIP Final EIR evaluates alternatives for the proposed stage one action to construct four permanent operable gates on Middle River, Grant Line Canal and Old River in the South Delta. The gates will protect salmon in the San Joaquin River during the spring and fall, and improve water levels and circulation for local agricultural water supplies. The proposed project also includes limited dredging of portions of Middle River, Old River, and West, Grant Line, Victoria and North Canals to improve flows in south Delta channels; and extension of up to 24 agricultural intakes.

A final decision on stage one, documented in a Notice of Decision (NOD), will be made in conjunction with the federal government's Record of Decision (ROD). The NOD will identify the recommended action to be implemented and include the environmental commitments and mitigation measures to be applied to the action. The ROD cannot be made until at least 30 days after the Notice of Availability is published in the Federal Register. The NOD and the ROD will not be issued until environmental permits are granted.

DWR, together with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, prepared the Final EIR pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and the California Environmental Quality Act. SDIP is the result of an extensive public participation effort and environmental review to manage water project operations in a way that is beneficial to Delta water users and protect the Delta's valuable ecosystem. Copies of the final document will be sent to stakeholders. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has filed the document with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The document is available online at

http://sdip.water.ca.gov/documents/final_eis_eir.cfm

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.