

SAN LUIS & DELTA-MENDOTA WATER AUTHORITY BOARD OF
DIRECTORS REGULAR TELEPHONIC MEETING
MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 10, 2022

The Board of Directors of the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority convened at approximately 9:30 a.m. via teleconference in accordance with Government Code section 54953(e) and Resolution No. 2022-499 adopted by the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority Board of Directors on January 13, 2022, with Chair Cannon Michael presiding.

Directors and Alternate Directors in Attendance

Division 1

David Weisenberger, Director (left during item 11)
Bobby Pierce, Director - Vince Lucchesi, Alternate
Anthea Hansen, Director
Rick Gilmore, Director - Lea Emmons, Alternate

Division 2

Ryan Ferguson, Director
William Bourdeau, Director
Ara Azhderian, Alternate for Michael Linneman
Bill Diedrich, Director

Division 3

Dan McCurdy, Director - Jeff Bryant, Alternate
Chris White, Director (arrived during item 11) - Jarrett Martin, Alternate
Cannon Michael, Director
Ric Ortega, Director (arrived during item 14) - Ellen Wehr, Alternate

Division 4

John Varela, Director - Aaron Baker, Alternate
Gary Kremen, Director - Richard Santos, Alternate
Jeff Cattaneo, Director
Joe Tonascia, Director

Division 5

Bill Pucheu, Director
Tom Birmingham, Director
Manny Amorelli, Director

Authority Representatives Present

Federico Barajas, Executive Director
Pablo Arroyave, Chief Operating Officer
Scott Petersen, Water Policy Director
Frances Mizuno, Special Projects Administrator
Rebecca Akroyd, General Counsel
Joyce Machado, Director of Finance
Lauren Neves, Accountant III
Cathy Bento, Accountant II
Darlene Neves, Operational Accounting Supervisor

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Jaime McNeil, Engineering Manager
Bob Martin, Facilities O&M Director
Stewart Davis, IT Officer
Gerald Robbins, Special Programs Manager

Others in Attendance

Dana Jacobson, Valley Water
Dennis Cardoza, Foley & Lardner, LLP
Brandon Souza, California Farm Water Coalition
John Wiersma, Henry Miller Reclamation District
Steve Stadler, San Luis Water District
Vincent Gin, Valley Water
Cindy Kao, Valley Water
Don Rocha, Valley Water

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Chair Cannon Michael and roll was called.

2. Board to Consider Additions or Corrections to the Agenda of Items, as authorized by Government Code Section 54950 et seq.

General Counsel Rebecca Akroyd reported that there are three corrections to the Agenda: 1) Top of the Agenda should reference Resolution 2022-499 adopted January 13, 2022, 2) Item 13 related to the B.F. Sisk Dam Raise Activity Agreement will be pulled from the Agenda, and 3) Related to Item 16 striking reference to the water transfer approval agreements.

3. Opportunity for Public Comment

No public comment.

CONSENT ITEMS

4. Agenda Items 4-7: Board to Consider: a) January 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes, and January 20, 2022 Special Meeting Minutes b) Acceptance of the Financial & Expenditures Reports, c) Acceptance of Treasurer's Report, d) Staff Reports.

On a motion of Director Rick Gilmore, seconded by Director Bill Pucheu, the Board accepted the January 13, 2022 meeting minutes (with non-substantive edit), January 20, 2022 Special Meeting Minutes, Financial Expenditures Reports, Treasurer's Report, and Staff Reports. The vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Weisenberger, Pierce, Hansen, Gilmore, Ferguson, Bourdeau, Azhderian, Diedrich, McCurdy, Jarrett Martin, Michael, Wehr, Varela, Kremen, Cattaneo, Tonascia, Pucheu, Birmingham, Amorelli

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ACTION ITEMS

5. **Agenda Item 8: Board of Directors to Consider Adopting Resolution Re-Ratifying the Proclamation of a State of Emergency by Governor Gavin Newsom (Mar. 4, 2020), Proclaiming the State of Emergency Continues to Directly Impact the Ability of Members of the Legislative Bodies of the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority to Meet Safely in Person, and Re-Authorizing Remote Teleconference Meetings for Such Legislative Bodies for the Period February 10, 2022 through March 12, 2022 Pursuant to Brown Act Provisions.**

General Counsel Rebecca Akroyd reported that the Authority would like to allow the opportunity to conduct business remotely in compliance with Government Code section 54953(e). Akroyd reported that staff is proposing adoption of a new resolution, and as drafted, the resolution, which will take the Authority through March 12, 2022, makes all the requisite findings to continue to meet via teleconference pursuant to AB 361.

On a motion of Director Gary Kremen, seconded by Director Joe Tonascia, the Board adopted the Resolution Re-Ratifying the Proclamation of a State of Emergency by Governor Gavin Newsom (Mar. 4, 2020), Proclaiming the State of Emergency Continues to Directly Impact the Ability of Members of the Legislative Bodies of the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority to Meet Safely in Person, and Re-Authorizing Remote Teleconference Meetings for Such Legislative Bodies for the Period February 10, 2022 through March 12, 2022 Pursuant to Brown Act Provisions. The vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES:	Weisenberger, Pierce, Hansen, Gilmore, Ferguson, Azhderian, Diedrich, McCurdy, White, Michael, Wehr, Varela, Kremen, Cattaneo, Tonascia, Pucheu, Birmingham, Amorelli
NAYS:	None
ABSTENTIONS:	None

6. **Agenda Item 9: Board of Directors to Consider Adopting Resolution Making Single Source Findings and Authorizing Execution of Single Source Contract for Jones Pumping Plant Switchgear Building UZ11A Bushing Box Replacement and Feeder Section Repairs and Expenditure of up to \$300,000 from the EO&M Budget.**

Chief Operating Officer Pablo Arroyave reported that on October 25, 2021, a ground fault explosion occurred which impaired Building UZ11A's ability to receive power from a WAPA transformer. Arroyave reported that the bushing box and adjacent section were both damaged from the explosion. Arroyave reported that inspections were performed by Reclamation TSC and Powell, and the findings concluded that the ground fault was due to poor weatherproofing of the bushing box. Arroyave

851

reported that the findings also listed other damaged devices and components in need of repairs or replacement. Arroyave reported that currently Building UZ11A is powered by the adjacent switchgear building. Arroyave reported that another ground fault incident could potentially take down another transformer feed, which would reduce the maximum pumping capacity. Arroyave reported that the Authority is pursuing a single source contract with Powell for the repairs to Building UZ11A. Arroyave also reported that the repairs and replacements required to return Building UZ11A to normal operations can only be done by Powell, because they own certain intellectual property impacted by the repair and having the work done by another entity would invalidate the arc resistant rating provided by Powell. Arroyave reported that Powell Electrical Systems, Inc. was chosen as the single source provider for the repair services because the switchgear building was designed and built by them, and they have the intellectual property rights over the design and manufacturing of the switchgear buildings. Arroyave reported that the integral parts that need repairs/replacement are unique and require Powell's proprietary parts, and it is only practical for the services to be provided by Powell. Arroyave reported that this unbudgeted proposed expenditure of up to \$300,000 will be funded utilizing available F9 funds originally budgeted in the FY18 EO&M budget. Staff answered questions from Board members during the presentation of this item.

On a motion of Director Rick Gilmore, seconded by Director Bill Pucheu, the Board authorized execution of Single Source Contract for Jones Pumping Plant Switchgear Building UZ11A bushing box replacement and feeder section repairs and expenditure of up to \$300,000 from the EO&M Budget. The vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES:	Weisenberger, Pierce, Hansen, Gilmore, Ferguson, Bourdeau, Azhderian, Diedrich, McCurdy, White, Michael, Ortega, Varela, Kremen, Cattaneo, Tonascia, Pucheu, Birmingham, Amorelli
NAYS:	None
ABSTENTIONS:	None

7. Agenda Item 10: Board of Directors to Consider Finance & Administration Committee Recommendation Regarding Approval of Executive Compensation for Various Positions.

Executive Director Federico Barajas introduced the proposed executive salary and benefits for FY23. Barajas reviewed compensation for various positions on a table reviewed with the Board. Barajas reported that each of the benefits were tailored to the individual holding the position rather than budgeting everything at maximums as they have in the past.

On a motion of Director Rick Gilmore, seconded by Director Bill Pucheu, the Board approved the executive compensation for various positions. The vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES:	Weisenberger, Pierce, Hansen, Gilmore, Ferguson, Bourdeau, Azhderian, Diedrich, McCurdy, Jarret Martin, Michael, Wehr, Varela, Kremen,
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149

Cattaneo, Tonascia, Pucheu, Birmingham, Amorelli

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

8. Agenda Item II: Board of Directors to Consider Water Resources Committee Recommendation Regarding Proposed Fiscal Year 2023 Activity Budget and Resolution Adopting the Complete Fiscal Year 2023 Budget.

Executive Director Federico Barajas reviewed the budget process. Barajas reported that the Water Resources Committee first considered a draft FY23 Activity Budget in the December 14, 2021 budget workshop, and then in its January 10, 2022 meeting, where it adopted a recommendation that the Board adopt the proposed FY23 Activity Budget as presented. Barajas reported that subsequently, members of the Finance & Administration Committee, Board of Directors, and Water Resources Committee participated in a special workshop to discuss cost allocation assessment of various activities budgets on January 28, 2022. Barajas reported on feedback that staff has received in regards to the cost allocation survey that went out. Barajas stated that based on feedback, additional time is required to fully evaluate the cost methodology and implications for all members. Barajas reported that staff has prepared a draft resolution adopting the complete FY23 Budget, including both O&M and Activity components. Barajas highlighted changes to General Membership, SGMA, and Grassland Basin Drainage budgets. Barajas reviewed the FY23 Budget Expenditure Summary, and the FY23 to FY22 Comparison worksheets.

On a motion of Director Tom Birmingham, seconded by Director Rick Gilmore, the Board approved the proposed Fiscal Year 2023 Activity Budget and resolution adopting the complete Fiscal Year 2023 Budget. The vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Pierce, Hansen, Gilmore, Ferguson, Bourdeau, Azhderian, Diedrich, McCurdy, White, Michael, Wehr, Varela, Kremen, Cattaneo, Tonascia, Pucheu, Birmingham, Amorelli

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

9. Agenda Item 12: Board of Directors to Consider Finance & Administration Committee Recommendation Regarding Water Year 2022 O&M Water Rates.

Chief Operating Officer Pablo Arroyave provided a brief overview of the water year 2022 O&M water rates. Arroyave discussed the various components that are influencing the rates such as delivery assumptions, use of the Intertie that was not included in the prior year, and a 25% decrease in the PUE estimate provided by Reclamation. Arroyave reported that these component changes create an overall reduction in the water year 2022 O&M rates.

281

On a motion of Director Rick Gilmore, seconded by Director Ryan Ferguson, the Board approved Water Year 2022 O&M water rates. The vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Pierce, Hansen, Gilmore, Ferguson, Bourdeau, Azhderian, Diedrich, McCurdy, White, Michael, Wehr, Varela, Kremen, Cattaneo, Tonascia, Pucheu, Birmingham, Amorelli

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

10. **Agenda Item 14: Board of Directors Consider Award of Contract, Authorizing to Execute Professional Services Agreement for DMC Subsidence Correction Project Feasibility Study, and Expenditure of up to \$2.4 Million Using Funds from Various Fiscal Years and the Financial Assistance Agreement.**

Chief Operating Officer Pablo Arroyave reported that on November 19, 2021, the Authority issued a request for proposals from qualified consulting firms to provide professional and technical services for the completion of a Feasibility Study, including Cultural Resources Support Services, Environmental Compliance through a joint National Environmental Policy Act/California Environmental Quality Act document, and the preparation of a Feasibility Report. Arroyave reported that two proposals were received on January 11, 2022. Arroyave reported that a team consisting of Authority and Reclamation staff evaluated and scored the proposals, with the result of the evaluation being that CDM Smith was the highest scored proposer. Arroyave reported that a Notice of Intent to Award was issued on January 27, 2022 notifying CDM Smith that they were the apparent successful proposer. Arroyave reported that the Final award will occur after receiving the Board's approval.

On a motion of Director Rick Gilmore, seconded by Director Tom Birmingham, the Board authorized the execution of the Professional Services Agreement for DMC Subsidence Correction Project Feasibility Study, and expenditure of up to \$2.4 million using funds from various fiscal years and the Financial Assistance Agreement. The vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Pierce, Hansen, Gilmore, Ferguson, Azhderian, Diedrich, McCurdy, Jarret Martin, Michael, Ortega, Baker, Kremen, Cattaneo, Tonascia, Pucheu, Birmingham, Amorelli

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

11. **Agenda Item 15: Board of Directors to Consider Water Resources Committee Recommendation to Adopt Staff Recommendation for Positions on Legislation and Anticipated Legislation.**

151

A. Anticipated State Legislation: Expediting State Water Resources Control Board Consideration of Applications to Appropriate Water During High-Flow Events and to Support Groundwater Recharge Projects

Water Policy Director Scott Petersen provided an overview of this item. Petersen reported that the anticipated legislation would amend Section 1206 of the California Water Code to include an additional exception that allows the State Water Board to consider a permit application to capture excess flows on fully appropriated streams, subject to certain conditions. Petersen reported that if enacted, it could help some Groundwater Sustainability Agencies throughout California implement their GSPs by allowing them to apply for a water right for excess flows on fully appropriated streams without opening the fully appropriated stream designation. Petersen reported that staff is making this recommendation at this time due to the bill introduction deadline being February 18, 2022, and there will not be another Board meeting in advance of that deadline. Staff answered questions from Board members during the presentation of this item.

On a motion of Director Tom Birmingham, seconded by Director Ryan Ferguson, the Board adopted staff recommendation for positions on legislation and anticipated legislation. The vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES:	Pierce, Hansen, Gilmore, Ferguson, Bourdeau, Azhderian, Diedrich, McCurdy, Jarrett Martin, Michael, Ortega, Cattaneo, Tonascia, Pucheu, Birmingham, Amorelli
NAYS:	None
NAYS:	None
ABSTENTIONS:	Varela, Kremen

12. Agenda Item 16: Board of Directors to Consider Adopting Resolution Authorizing Execution of 2022 Water Purchase and Sale Pursuant to the Final Long-Term Water Transfers Environmental Impact Report and Authorizing Actions Relate Thereto.

Special Projects Administrator Frances Mizuno reported that the Authority members with irrigation water service and repayment contracts anticipate an initial allocation of 0% of their CVP contractual supply for agricultural uses and 25% for municipal and industrial uses for the 2022 water year. Mizuno reported that current projections show that subsequent increases in allocations, if any, will be made later in the season and are expected to be minimal. Mizuno reported that the Authority Long Term Water Transfer Activity Agreement Members requested the Authority to purchase transfer water from the North of Delta Sacramento River Settlement Contractors to supplement their CVP supply. Mizuno reported that Authority staff, working with participating LTWT Activity Agreement Members, have been engaged for the past months negotiating with potential sellers to purchase water made

251

available for transfer through groundwater substitution and/or crop idling/shifting. Mizuno reported that pricing negotiations are still on-going. Mizuno reported that through adoption of the proposed resolution, the Board will approve the template Water Purchase and Sale Agreement in substantial form subject to a final water purchase pricing determination by participating LTWT Activity Agreement Members, and authorize execution of all other necessary agreements, including Water Transfer Approval Agreements with Reclamation and Conveyance Agreements with DWR.

On a motion of Director Bill Diedrich, seconded by Director Ryan Ferguson, the Board authorized execution of 2022 Water Purchase and Sale pursuant to the final Long-Term Water Transfers Environmental Impact Report and authorizing actions related thereto. The vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES:	Pierce, Hansen, Gilmore, Ferguson, Bourdeau, Azhderian, Diedrich, McCurdy, White, Michael, Wehr, Varela, Kremen, Cattaneo, Tonascia, Pucheu, Birmingham, Amorelli
NAYS:	None
NAYS:	None
ABSTENTIONS:	None

REPORT ITEMS

13. Agenda Item 17: Report on State and Federal Affairs.

Water Policy Director Scott Petersen reported that the Senate Budget Committee on Wednesday approved the nominations of President Joe Biden's two picks to lead the White House Office of Management and Budget, clearing the first hurdle ahead of Senate confirmation. Petersen reported that the panel voted 15-6 to endorse acting OMB Director Shalanda Young to hold the top post and Nani Coloretti to serve as deputy director. Petersen reported that lawmakers from both parties have praised Young and Coloretti during their speedy confirmation vetting, a sign the Senate is likely to easily confirm the two picks. Petersen reported that the White House released a guidebook last month on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, addressing nearly \$1 trillion in federal funds. Petersen reported that this guidebook offers insights on how to access both new and existing federal program funding included in the IIJA. Petersen reported that about 60 percent of the funds will be distributed through formula, leaving 40 percent to be distributed through competitive grant programs. Petersen reported that the 465-page report outlines what IIJA funds are available, how to apply for them, and who to contact for questions. Petersen reported that each program's funding amount and period of eligibility are listed with insight on the potential projects that would qualify.

Petersen reported that on Tuesday, the House passed a three-week government funding bill on a 272 to 162 vote, sending the measure to the Senate ahead of a Feb. 18 government shutdown deadline. Petersen reported that the Senate is expected to vote next week on the stopgap bill, which

would keep the government open through March 11 and give Democrats and Republicans time to settle on a longer-term funding deal. Petersen reported that yesterday, Congressional leaders reached an overarching agreement to boost military and non-defense budgets, paving the way for a comprehensive deal to fund the government into the fall. Petersen reported that the accord is a crucial breakthrough that's expected to lead to enactment of a sweeping 12-bill spending bundle in the next few weeks, following months of tense cross-party negotiations. Petersen reported that while specific contentious policy debates may yet upend the talks, leaders in both parties applauded the framework agreement. Petersen reported that a full-year spending package would unlock billions in transportation, energy and other funding from last year's bipartisan infrastructure bill. Petersen reported that according to the Congressional Budget Office, \$197 billion from that \$550 billion law cannot be released for use over 10 years unless annual appropriations bills are enacted.

Bill Ball provided additional federal information on the federal Budget.

Petersen reported that Governor Gavin Newsom is starting to ease his way out of the long, tortuous COVID-19 pandemic with plans to drop the state's Omicron-era policies and shift to an endemic strategy. Petersen reported that on Monday, the California Department of Public Health announced it would relax statewide restrictions on mass gatherings and indoor masking starting Feb. 16 as the Omicron coronavirus variant continues to recede. Petersen reported that this comes as the state's COVID positivity rate dropped to single digits (9.5 percent) for the first time since the surge took hold in December.

Petersen reported that on June 1, 2021, the State Water Board's Executive Director issued a TUCP Order conditionally approving the requested changes. Petersen reported that the State Water Board received five petitions for reconsideration and numerous objections to the 2021 TUCP Order, which are addressed in a draft Order. Petersen reported that the draft Order denies in part and grants in part the petitions for reconsideration. Petersen reported that the draft Order determines that approvals of the 2021 TUCP Order and the Sacramento River TMP were appropriate, based on the information available at the time, and therefore the petitions for reconsideration are primarily denied. Petersen reported that the draft order imposes additional conditions on DWR and Reclamation's water rights in response to substantial issues raised in the petitions to improve future planning for dry conditions. Petersen reported that the Authority provided a comment letter related to the draft Order highlighting the key points. Petersen reported that in response to comment letters, Board staff released a modified draft Order on February 4th, and Authority staff have been coordinating with member agencies and others to provide a response.

14. **Agenda Item 18: Executive Director's Report.**

a) **DMC Subsidence Correction Project** - Executive Director Federico Barajas reported that the

(54)

Authority has received a letter from DWR indicating that the DWR director has rendered a favorable decision that the DMC subsidence correction project does in fact qualify for up to \$23 million from state funding sources. Barajas reported that the next step is for Water Authority staff to work directly with DWR staff to formulate a detailed funding agreement that will conform with state cost share requirements.

- b) **Aging Infrastructure** – Executive Director Federico Barajas reported that staff submitted an aging infrastructure application to Reclamation for federal dollars for the DMC Subsidence Correction Project.
- c) **SLTP Update** – Special Projects Administrator Frances Mizuno reported that good progress continues to be made with WAPA and Reclamation on developing drafts of the project development agreement and MOU. Mizuno reported that there is a meeting scheduled this week to continue to address remaining issues. Mizuno reported that a draft activity agreement is expected for review in the near future.
- d) **B.F. Sisk Update** – Executive Director Federico Barajas reported that based on direction of the Water Resources Committee, staff is drafting an RFP to hire a project manager to assist with management of this project. Barajas reported that the primary goal of this RFP is to obtain a full-time project manager. Barajas also reported that the Authority continues to work closely with Reclamation with regards to their review and approval of the addendum to Feasibility Report.

15. **Agenda Item 19: Chief Operating Officer's Report.**

Chief Operating Officer Pablo Arroyave reported that all of the General Managers should have received the January 31, 2022 San Luis Reservoir rescheduling guidelines directly from Reclamation last week. Arroyave reported that the initial requests for rescheduling are due back to the Fresno office today.

16. **Agenda Item 20: Update on Water Operations and Forecasts**

Westlands Water District's Tom Boardman reported on low storage conditions and stated that DWR's latest B120 report projected that unimpaired inflow to Shasta would be low enough to trigger a Shasta Critical year. Folsom storage was reported to be below flood control limits while above minimum releases are made to meet an increased Delta outflow standard that could require the Projects to release about 383 TAF more stored water during February. Boardman explained that the additional Oroville release was being made to meet part of the CVP's share of the additional Delta outflow requirement. Delta pumping was reported to remain low while the increased Delta outflow requirement requires the release of stored water for the D1641 standard.

The CVP share of San Luis storage was reported along with an explanation of the amount of non-project and Project water currently stored in the reservoir. Boardman concluded with a discussion of

the projected refill of CVP San Luis under 90% and 50% exceedance forecasts.

17. **Agenda Item 21: Committee Reports.**

- a. **Water Resources Committee** – Chair Tom Birmingham reported that the committee met, and addressed agenda items.
- b. **Finance & Administration Committee** – Chair Rick Gilmore reported that the committee met, and addressed agenda items.
- c. **O&M Committee** – No report.

18. **Agenda Item 22: Outside Agency/Organization Reports.**

- a. **State and Federal Contractors Water Agency (SFCWA)**
No report.
- b. **Family Farm Alliance (FFA)**
Report included in the packet.
- c. **Farm Water Coalition.**
Brandon Souza reported they will be going back to in-person tours again this year.
- d. **Association of California Water Agencies**
Director John Varela reported that at the Board of Directors meeting last week President Tobin, and Vice-President Green announced that they are going to move forward with the idea of creating a Diversity Inclusion Formation, and are moving forward by forming a task force.
Director Bill Diedrich reported that the leadership for the AG Committee has changed the chair is now Alexandra Biering, and the vice-chair is Anjanette Shadley.
- e. **San Joaquin Valley Water Blueprint Effort**
Water Policy Director Scott Petersen reported that the SJV Water Blueprint seated their new Board for the Education Fund during their January meeting. Petersen reported that Ian Lemay was nominated for Chair, and Eddie Ocampo as Vice-Chair, and these nominations will be considered at the next board meeting.
- f. **SJCAP**
Water Policy Director Scott Petersen reported that in phase I, the CAP produced a Framework to provide solution set elements recommended by its five CAP Work Groups to accomplish the desired outcomes and to resolve those problem areas and will look to implement phase II.
- g. **CVPWA**
Director Anthea Hansen reported that the CVPWA had their quarterly Board meeting this week, and there was nothing new to report. Hansen reported that the Financial Affairs Committee has its monthly meeting coming up Friday, February 18, 2022.

19. **Agenda Item 23: Board Member Reports.**

Chair Cannon Michael reminded that Board that the FPPC Form 700's are due April 1, 2022. Michael also reminded the Board members to report their required training.

20. **Agenda Items 24-25: Closed Session Report.**

156

Chair Cannon Michael adjourned the open session to address the items listed on the Closed Session Agenda at approximately 11:56 a.m. Upon return to open session at approximately 12:08 p.m., Chair Cannon Michael stated that no reportable actions were taken.

21. **Agenda Item 26: Reports Pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.2 (a) (3)**

No reports.

22. **Agenda Item 27: Adjournment.**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:09 p.m.

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March 10, 2022

To: Pablo Arroyave, Chief Operating Officer

From: Bob Martin, Facilities O&M Director

Subject: O&M Report for February 2022

Operations Department

The C.W. "Bill" Jones Pumping Plant (JPP) operated with 1 to 2 units throughout February. The average rate of pumping for the JPP was 1,404 cfs for the month of February.

Total pumping at the JPP for February was 77,977 acre-feet. The O'Neill Pump/Generating Plant (OPP) generated 11,810 acre-feet, and pumped 30,944 acre-feet for the month of February. Three (3) acre-feet was pumped at the Delta-Mendota Canal/California Aqueduct Intertie Plant (DCI) and 0 acre-feet was reversed from the California Aqueduct to the DMC.

The Federal share in the San Luis Reservoir at the end of February was 313,886 acre-feet as compared to 475,383 acre-feet at the end of February, 2021.

During the month of February, releases from Friant Dam ranged from 385 to 1003 cfs with 7,897 AF entering the Mendota Pool. Flows past the Mendota Dam for the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) were 8,003 AF for the month of February.

Canal Operations staff performed open channel and closed-pipe flow measurements, routine patrols, bi-weekly meter readings, water samples, well soundings, and meter maintenance during the month. Coordinated flow testing was also conducted with the Exchange Contractors for flow measurement calibration.

Control Operations switching/clearance placements performed this month:

- C-21-JP-78-B JPP Unit 1 annual maintenance/rewind
- C-22-DCI-52-A DCI Unit 4 clean suction tube
- C-22-ON-03 OU1 Internal investigation
- C-22-JP-05 JPP Unit 5 cooling water strainer rehab
- C-22-DM-06 DMC MP 66.73 Left replace T.O. gate
- C-22-DM-07 DMC MP 40.45 Left install steel plate to block T.O.
- C-22-JP-08 JPP Unit 1 brake indication troubleshoot
- C-22-JP-09 JPP Unit 1 swap motor leads
- C-22-JP-09-A JPP Unit 1 swap motor leads

158

Civil Maintenance Department

The Civil Maintenance crews worked on the following projects this month:

- Westley Wasteway crossing and gate installation
- Grading and repair of intake channel, and DMC operating roads
- Assisted Reclamation with hyacinth removal
- HECP
- OPP Unit 1 Support
- DMC erosion repair
- TFO water settling basin leak repair
- Install security gates and wing fences
- Garbage collection on DMC and Wasteways
- Chemical and mechanical weed control on DMC and SLD
- Installation of stairs and handrails to DMC turnout gates and meters
- Maintenance and repairs to float lines, signs, fences, guard rails and gates

Plant Maintenance Department

The Plant Maintenance crews worked on the following projects this month:

Electrical/C&I Staff:

- JPP Unit 1 re-assembly and testing
- OPP Unit 4 repairs and re-assembly
- OPP Unit 2 vain limit troubleshoot and adjustment
- DMC 3G to 4G communication upgrade
- OPP Unit 1 vibration inspections and repairs
- OPP Unit 1 speed head bearing replacement
- TFF trash rake repair

Mechanical Staff:

- JPP Unit 1 Rewind support
- JPP air wash pump replacement
- JPP miscellaneous parts painting
- TFF trash rake repair
- JPP Unit 5 Kinney strainer maintenance
- JPP mezzanine step fabrication
- JPP routine hazardous materials inspections
- TFO Control Room plumbing repair
- OPP Unit 4 repair and re-assembly
- OPP Unit 1 vibration inspections and repairs
- OPP Unit 1 speed head bearing replacement
- OPP Unit 1 annual maintenance
- OPP Unit 1 monitor Gen/Pump start up and operation

USBR Support Services

Water Authority crews performed the following work at USBR facilities this month:

- TFF trash rack cleaning support
- TFF trash rake repairs

Engineering Department

The Engineering staff worked on the following projects this month:

- JPP Unit 1 rewind project, including thrust bearing inspection and repairs
- JPP Unit 3 & 4 rewind projects
- JPP switchgear buildings relay settings update
- TFCF secondary channel equipment support
- TFCF Electrical PMs
- TFO canal maintenance yard storm drainage design
- TFO breaker modifications per JPP Arc Flash 2018
- OPP Unit 3 vane control calibration
- OPP cooling water system rehabilitation
- OPP concrete wall cracks monitoring.
- OPP service water pump rehabilitation
- OPP Unit 1 enclosure tube repair
- OPP Unit 4 distributor leak repair
- OPP Unit 4 rotor and stator electrical tests
- OPP oil tanks foundation removal
- TSY UZ11A bushing box replacement and repairs
- Software support for C&Is
- Power transformer oil monitoring for TFO, DCI, and OPP
- DMC seepage monitoring @ MP 20.15
- Upper DMC 3G to 4G communication upgrades
- Data management of well readings and creation of Warren Act hydrographs
- O&M PM setup and asset management in NetSuite

Land Management Activity Summary

The Engineering staff issued two (2) access permits this month:

- Emergency access permit P2202036 was issued to San Luis Water District to repair the existing irrigation valve damaged by a vehicle on the Delta-Mendota Canal right-of-way at Milepost 58.28-L.
- Access permit P2202034 was issued to Pacific Gas & Electric Company for roadway access to their facilities adjacent to the Delta-Mendota Canal right-of-way from Milepost 68.03-R to Milepost 71.31-R.

The Engineering staff were involved with the following land management projects this month:

- Coordination meeting with the City of Tracy on development
- Development of Land Management requirements for adjacent developments
- Orestimba Creek Recharge Project
- Santa Nella WD Sewer and Water Crossing
- Tracy HOM Project, Tracy CA
- Costco Annexation Project, Tracy, CA
- Tracy Hills Commerce Center, Tracy, CA
- Tracy Hills Phase 5 Development Review
- Schulte Warehouse Annexation, Tracy, CA
- City of Patterson – Sperry Road developments & Baldwin Ranch comments
- International Parkway Bridge Replacement, PROLOGIS -Tracy, CA
- Corral Hollow Road Bridge Replacement
- PGE pipeline relocation @ MP92.73

Safety Department

The Safety Department worked on the following items this month:

- Provided Job Hazard Analysis support for the crews.
- Conduct Weekly Safety Tailgate talks with maintenance and operations crews.
- Sent out Weekly Safety Tailgate Topics – 2-1 Heavy Equipment Safety, 2-2 Compressed Air Safety, 2-3 First Aid for Chemical Burns, 2-4 Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
- Provided Safety Message for February 2022 Monthly Newsletter – 2/2022 Space Heater Safety
- Conduct site safety inspections
- Provide Permit Required Confined Space – Safety Standby at DCI
- Provide safety orientation for new hires: Carlos Renteria, James Evans, Victor Avila, Kaleb Escobar
- Submitted annual hazardous materials business plans resubmittal to the California Environmental Reporting System
- Arrange hazardous waste pickups for TFO paint shop and OPP

Procurement and Work & Asset Management Department

The Work & Asset Management Department worked on the following items this month:

- Annual physical inventory cycle count
- FY22 open purchase order review and close out including processing FY22 invoices
- Employee annual performance appraisals and probationary appraisals
- Warehouse cleaning/organizing including E-waste and hazardous waste pickups
- Contracts/PO Agreements/LOA's status update:
 - F22-OPP-059 - OPP Main Transformer Rehabilitation solicitation document development in progress. Estimated release date is planned for March 2022. As of February, edits still in progress.
 - F22-DMC-065- Feasibility Study Board approved on 2/10 and contract executed. Project underway. 1st kick off meeting completed.
 - F22-DMC-069 Cellular Gateway Migration- Final parts delivered, final closing being done, and scheduling to be done in March/April.
 - F22-JPP-071- Board approved single source on 2/10. Contract negotiations/modifications in place and pending contract execution.
 - F22-JPP-070 - RFP prepared for Investment Advisory Services. Executives/Procurement have been finalizing RFP. Anticipated release date March/April.
 - F22-DMC-073 RFP for Risk Dam Raise and Reservoir Expansion Project Released 2/23
 - F22-OPP-072- Actuator Rod Repair RFQ. Vendor declined to quote. Resolicited and received a quote from Unico Mechanical for \$6500 and issued on a PO
 - F22-LBAO-075 – AAP Consultant contract executed

Ongoing:

- Purchasing in support of the O&M crews, and maintaining/replenishing warehouse stock
- Warehouse receiving, stocking, and distribution
- Invoicing/vendor bills/vendor credits processing
- Janitorial cleaning & disinfecting per COVID-19 guidelines

167

- Contract Management/Administration Activities, including bi-weekly contract update meetings with Engineering Staff
- Developing/implementing purchasing/procurement and asset/inventory procedures/boilerplate templates
- Bi-weekly WAM staff meetings to discuss updates/issues
- Contract invoice payment reviews, invoice disputes as needed, invoice payments
- Continuous testing for improvements to procedures in NetSuite, as well as ongoing issues related to NetSuite constraints
- Development of blanket contracts and blanket purchase orders/agreements
- Reviewing/closing out old/open PO's in NetSuite

Information Technology Department

The Information Technology Department worked on the following items this month:

- NetSuite
 - User and Administration
 - Bi-Weekly Implementation Team meetings
- Continuing support for our "Work at Home" users
- Assisted with monthly FAC, WRC and BOD meetings with Zoom
- Desktop support calls.
- Planning server refresh
- Planning laptop refresh
- Planning upgrading/replacing copiers
- Monitor Symantec anti-virus management console
- Completed 3G to 4G cell migration for DMC check structures
- Security updates on servers
- Update firmware on firewall
- Update additional AV security settings
- Cybersecurity insurance survey
- Evaluated and met with multi-factor authentication vendors
- Evaluated and met with Active Directory threat defense vendor
- Research of erroneous emails to and from members and associated vendors

Human Resources Department

The Human Resources Department worked on the following items this month:

General Administrative Activities:

- Recruitments:
 - Heavy Equipment Operator, Tracy (continued recruitment)
 - Hydro Electric Electrician, Tracy (continued recruitment)
 - Mechanical (Plant) Engineer, Tracy (continued recruitment)
 - Hydro Electric Maintenance Planner (internal candidate selected)
 - Inventory Control Clerk (interviewing/skills testing)
 - Hydro Electric Plant Mechanic, Tracy
 - Equipment Mechanic, Tracy
 - Secretary, Tracy
 - Director of Finance
- Background checks for PIV cards (continuing)
- New Hire Orientations

102

Trainings/ Conferences:

- Remain up to date with webinars to ensure compliance with new legislation as it pertains to COVID-19
- Cyber Security Training (all staff being scheduled for training)
- Sexual Harassment Prevention Training (all staff being scheduled for bi-annual training)

Government Reporting:

- Merced County Public Health COVID Reporting (as needed)
- Alameda County Public Health COVID Reporting (as needed)
- Affirmative Action report (submitted, waiting for review)
- Federal Contractors Portal (OFCCP)

Ongoing:

- COVID Protocols
- FMLA notices/follow ups
- COBRA notices/follow ups
- Worker's Comp/follow ups
- Monthly safety points distribution
- Health benefits eligibility/employee assistance
- Maintain OSHA logs for calendar year
- Wellness program

EXTRAORDINARY O&M & CAPITAL PROJECTS

DELTA-MENDOTA CANAL (DMC)

Bridge Abutment Repair at MP 92.73

Status: The abutment repair is on hold until PG&E relocates the pipeline. The 6-inch pipe owned by PG&E that crosses under the bridge, adjacent to the abutment, is the main transmission line for the City of Dos Palos. All parties have agreed that it would be a safety hazard to conduct work with the gas line in place, and PG&E is currently planning to remove the existing pipeline from the bridge and HDD install a new pipeline under the canal. PG&E has Provided 60% design review Plans for USBR and SLDMWA review. Final plans are anticipated to be ready in summer with construction planned in the late summer to fall timeframe. PG&E, SLDMWA, and Reclamation are meeting monthly to keep the project moving forward.

DMC Subsidence Correction Project

Status: SLDMWA is working closely with Reclamation to complete the tasks identified in the Financial Assistance Agreement (FA Agreement) that was executed on 9/24/2021 after acquiring Board approval. Phase 1 Geotechnical work has been completed and funding will be reimbursed as a pre-incurred task identified in the FA Agreement. CDM Smith was awarded the \$2.4M contract to complete the Feasibilit Study, with the Notice to Proceed issued on February 10, 2022. The Feasibility Report is expected to be completed in approximately one year, with certain environmental permitting extending longer if needed. A Project Kick-off was initiated with all technical team members fully engaged including USBR staff.

SLDMWA continued working with DWR to provide adequate information regarding the DMC Subsidence Project to be eligible to receive state funding. The work plan, budget, and cash flow exhibits were revised and resubmitted.

The SLDMWA continues to provide support to Reclamation as they manage the construction contract with Unico Services to install the two additional pumps at the DMC/CA Intertie Pumping Plant (DCI). Mobilization occurred on February 7th, with construction scheduled to be completed the first week of April.

DMC Turnout Flowmeter Upgrade Program – Phase 2

Status: Phase 2 is underway, SLDMWA is in contract with McCrometer for the purchase of 62 Water Specialty flowmeters equipped with telemetry through the SLDMWA single-source procedure. The contract was executed after the January 2022 board meeting. The first batch of flowmeters have been delivered and are currenty being installed. Final delivery of meters is expected by Fall 2022

164

EXTRAORDINARY O&M & CAPITAL PROJECTS

C.W. "BILL" JONES PUMPING PLANT (JPP)

JPP Excitation Cabinet & Control Panel Refurbishment (FY2018 Project)

Status: Site visit was completed in March 2021 by USBR Denver Office staff to evaluate the installation plans for the project. The SLDMWA processed additional funds to the USBR for engineering on this project to continue in November and are awaiting an updated schedule.

JPP Wear Ring Purchase

Status: No activity this month.

JPP Unit No. 5 Rewind

Status: Project is complete. The final invoice has been approved by Reclamation and partial payment was received in July. Currently awaiting final payment of \$584,337.95.

JPP Unit No. 1 Rewind

Status: NEC completed their work on 12/19/2021. Reassembly of the unit by the SLDMWA is completed. Upon reassembly, the static runout was found to still be excessive, originating at the thrust bearing. A shim was placed between the thrust block and runner, reducing static runout to less than 25% of that allowed by FIST 2-1. Performance testing on Jones Unit 1 commenced on 02/28/2022 and is expected to be returned to service the first week of March.

JPP Unit No. 4 Rewind

Status: The schedule for Unit 4 has been adjusted accordingly due to the Unit 1 delay. Disassembly by SLDMWA staff is scheduled to begin March 07, 2022, previously December 9, 2021. Laminations for Unit 4 were manufactured in November, shipped from Poland on December 6, and received by NEC in their Brownsville, TX warehouse. Preliminary vibration readings were taken by Bentley Nevada on January 18, to provide a comparison baseline for performance testing after the rewind is complete.

TSY Switchgear Building UZ11A Modification and Repairs

Status: A ground fault incident that damaged the main feeder switchgear and bushing box in switchgear building UZ11A in October 2021. SLDMWA electricians have made partial repairs and investigations have been performed by Reclamation TSC and Powell (Powell is the company that designed and built the switchgear building). UZ11A is currently energized via tie-breaker with another switchgear building UZ8A. SLDMWA worked closely with Reclamation and Powell to develop a detailed scope of work for the replacement parts and services and are finalizing terms and conditions agreeable to both SLDMWA and Powell.

165

EXTRAORDINARY O&M & CAPITAL PROJECTS

O'NEILL PUMPING/GENERATING PLANT (OPP)

Main Transformers Rehabilitation/Replacement Project

Status: Oil monitoring was completed in January and the results were acceptable. The RFP is nearing completion and is planned to be released at the end of March 2022. The construction is tentatively scheduled to start March 2023, and the outage to start in April 2023. The oil tanks has been removed from the switchyard, and a copy of the manifest has been sent to Reclamation. The oil tank foundation is planned to be removed in June 2022. TSC staff will provide construction management support through a new Letter of Agreement.

Arc Flash Hazard Analysis, Facility Rating, & Protective Relays Reviews (Electrical Equipment Periodic Reviews)

Status: The Facility Rating Review has been received. The personal protective grounds were upgraded per recommendations from the Facility Rating Review. Performed an inspection of the unit busses. A report of the findings will be provided to TSC per recommendation. The Arc Flash Hazard Analysis draft has been reviewed and acknowledged with no comments. The protective relays review is still pending.

OPP Pump Bowl Modification (Design and USBR Approval)

Status: Project is on hold while scope is being re-evaluated to ensure the continued reliability of the OPP units. SLDMWA will be requesting a value engineering study to be conducted by Reclamation in the summer. SLDMWA will be an active participant in the study.

Penstock Cathodic Protection System Replacement

Status: Construction materials are on order and a site visit was completed by Farwest on February 23, 2022 to survey the drill site. Construction is scheduled to be complete by Fall 2022.

UPS Battery Charging System Replacement

Status: No activity this month. Installation will be timed concurrent with the outage for the transformer rehabilitation at OPP (April/May 2023). Equipment purchase for this job will occur 6 months prior to the transformer project starting.

TRACY FACILITIES (TFO)

TFO Domestic Water Treatment Plant Replacement

Status: Water quality test results were provided to package plant vendors for quotes. Vendor quotes received will be evaluated for completeness for future selection. Treatment Plant Drainage: SLDMWA Engineers proposed modifications to the drainage design. Final design and review has been completed and is awaiting construction by SLDMWA staff.

1166

EXTRAORDINARY O&M & CAPITAL PROJECTS

MULTIPLE FACILITIES: TFO/ LBFO/ DCI

Arc Flash Hazard Analysis

Status: No activity this month. Received the project management plan from TSC and the draft letter of agreement from Reclamation Tracy Office. Site work is tentatively scheduled for June/July 2022.

1167

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MEMORANDUM

TO: SLDMWA Water Resources Committee Members and Alternates

FROM: Scott Petersen, Water Policy Director

DATE: March 7, 2022

RE: Update on Water Policy/Resources Activities

BACKGROUND

This memorandum is provided to briefly summarize the current status of various agency processes regarding water policy activities, including but not limited to the (1) Reinitiation of Consultation on Long-Term Operations of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project, including environmental compliance; (2) State Water Resources Control Board action; (3) San Joaquin River Restoration Program; (4) Delta conveyance; (5) Reclamation action; (6) Delta Stewardship Council action; (7) San Joaquin Valley Water Blueprint and San Joaquin Valley Water Collaborative Action Plan.

POLICY ITEMS

Reinitiation of Consultation on Long-Term Operations of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project

In August 2016, the Bureau of Reclamation and California Department of Water Resources (DWR) requested reinitiation of consultation with NOAA Fisheries, also known as National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) due to multiple years of drought, low populations of listed species, and new information developed as a result of ongoing collaborative science efforts over the last 10 years.

On Jan. 31, 2019, Reclamation transmitted its Biological Assessment to the Services. The purpose of this action is to continue the coordinated long-term operation of the CVP and SWP to optimize water supply delivery and power generation consistent with applicable laws, contractual obligations, and agreements; and to increase operational flexibility by focusing on nonoperational measures to avoid significant adverse effects to species.

The biological opinions carefully evaluated the impact of the proposed CVP and SWP water operations on imperiled species such as salmon, steelhead and Delta smelt. FWS and NMFS documented impacts and worked closely with Reclamation to modify its proposed operations to

148

minimize and offset those impacts, with the goals of providing water supply for project users and protecting the environment.

Both FWS and NMFS concluded that Reclamation's proposed operations will not jeopardize threatened or endangered species or adversely modify their critical habitat. These conclusions were reached for several reasons – most notably because of significant investments by many partners in science, habitat restoration, conservation facilities including hatcheries, as well as protective measures built into Reclamation's and DWR's proposed operations.

On Oct. 21, 2019, FWS and NMFS released their biological opinions on Reclamation's and DWR's new proposed coordinated operations of the CVP and SWP.

On Dec. 19, 2019, Reclamation released the final Environmental Impact Statement analyzing potential effects associated with long-term water operations for the CVP and SWP.

On Feb. 18, 2020, Reclamation approved a Record of Decision that completes its environmental review for the long-term water operations for the CVP and SWP, which incorporates new science to optimize water deliveries and power production while protecting endangered species and their critical habitats.

On January 20, 2021, President Biden signed an Executive Order: "Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis", with a fact sheet¹ attached that included a non-exclusive list of agency actions that heads of the relevant agencies will review in accordance with the Executive Order. Importantly, the NOAA Fisheries and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinions on the Long-Term Operation of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project were both included in the list of agency actions for review. It's unclear what this agency review will analyze, but staff will be engaged.

On September 30, 2021, Reclamation Regional Director Ernest Conant sent a letter to U.S. FWS Regional Director Paul Souza and NMFS Regional Administrator Barry Thom requesting reinitiation of consultation on the Long-Term Operation of the CVP and SWP. Pursuant to 50 CFR § 402.16, Reclamation indicated that reinitiation is warranted based on anticipated modifications to the Proposed Action that may cause effects to listed species or designated critical habitats not analyzed in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Biological Opinions, dated October 21, 2019. To address the review of agency actions required by Executive Order 13990 and to voluntarily reconcile CVP operating criteria with operational requirements of the SWP under the California Endangered Species Act, Reclamation and DWR indicated that they anticipate a modified Proposed Action and associated biological effects analysis that would result in new Biological Opinions for the CVP and SWP.

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/01/20/fact-sheet-list-of-agency-actions-for-review/>

Following this action, on October 20, 2021, the SLDMWA sent a letter to Reclamation Regional Director Ernest Conant requesting participation in the reinitiation of consultation pursuant to Section 4004 of the WIIN Act and in the NEPA process as either a Cooperating Agency or Participating Agency.

On February 26, 2022, the Department of the Interior released a Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and Hold Public Scoping Meetings on the 2021 Endangered Species Act Reinitiation of Section 7 Consultation on the Long-Term Operation of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project².

Submit written comments on the scope of the EIS on or before March 30, 2022.

Reclamation will hold virtual public scoping meetings at the following dates and times. The virtual public scoping meetings are identified geographically; however, virtual attendance is open at all meetings. Comments during the scoping meetings will be recorded. If you do not wish to be recorded, you may submit written comments.

- Tuesday, March 8, 2022, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Sacramento, CA, virtual meeting.
- Wednesday, March 9, 2022, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., Red Bluff, CA, virtual meeting.
- Thursday, March 10, 2022, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Fresno, CA, virtual meeting.
- Tuesday, March 15, 2022, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., Los Banos, CA, virtual meeting.
- Wednesday, March 16, 2022, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Tracy, CA, virtual meeting.
- Thursday, March 17, 2022, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Chico, CA, virtual meeting.

Information on participation will be posted at www.usbr.gov/mp/bdo by the day prior to the meeting.

Reclamation will review and consider comments received during scoping and will prepare a scoping report. After the draft EIS is completed, anticipated in 2023, Reclamation will publish a notice of availability (NOA) and request public comments on the draft EIS. After the public comment period ends, Reclamation will then develop the final EIS and anticipates making the final EIS available to the public in 2024. In accordance with 40 CFR 1506.11, Reclamation will not make a decision or issue a Record of Decision (ROD) sooner than 30 days after the final EIS is released. Reclamation anticipates the issuance of a ROD by October 2024.

Reclamation Manual

Documents out for Comment

Draft Policy

- There are currently no Policies out for review.

Draft Directives and Standards

- There are currently no Directives and Standards out for review.

² <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2022-02-28/pdf/2022-04160.pdf>

- There are currently no Facilities Instructions, Standards, and Techniques out for review.

Draft Publication on Safety and Health on Scenarios (RSHS)

- [RSHS 7 Health Hazard Assessments \(comments by 3/18/2022\)](#)
- [RSHS 17 Hand and Power Tools, Pressure Vessels, Compressors, Chainsaws, and Welding \(comments by 3/18/2022\)](#)

Draft Reclamation Design Standards

- There are currently no Design Standards out for review.

State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) Activity

Documents out for Comment

- No documents of note out for comment at this time.

Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan Update

The State Water Board is currently considering updates to its 2006 Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary ("Bay Delta Plan") in two phases (Plan amendments). The first Plan amendment is focused on San Joaquin River flows and southern Delta salinity ("Phase I" or "San Joaquin River Flows and Southern Delta Salinity Plan Amendment"). The second Plan amendment is focused on the Sacramento River and its tributaries, Delta eastside tributaries (including the Calaveras, Cosumnes, and Mokelumne rivers), Delta outflows, and interior Delta flows ("Phase II" or "Sacramento/Delta Plan Amendment").

During the December 12, 2018 Water Board Meeting, the Department of Water Resources ("DWR") and Department of Fish and Wildlife presented proposed "Voluntary Settlement Agreements" ("VSAs") on behalf of Reclamation, DWR, and the public water agencies they serve to resolve conflicts over proposed amendments to the Bay-Delta Plan update.³ The State Water Board did not adopt the proposed VSAs in lieu of the proposed Phase 1 amendments, but as explained below, directed staff to consider the proposals as part of a future Delta-wide proposal.

Phase 1 Status: The State Water Board adopted a resolution⁴ to adopt amendments to the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary and adopt the Final Substitute Environmental Document during its December 12, 2018 public meeting.

Phase 2 Status: In the State Water Board's resolution adopting the Phase 1 amendments, the Water Board directed staff to assist the Natural Resources Agency in completing a Delta

³ Available at <https://water.ca.gov/-/media/DWR-Website/Web-Pages/Blogs/Voluntary-Settlement-Agreement-Meeting-Materials-Dec-12-2018-DWR-CDFW-CNRA.pdf>.

⁴Available at

[https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board decisions/adopted orders/resolutions/2018/rs2018_0059.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board%20decisions/adopted%20orders/resolutions/2018/rs2018_0059.pdf).

121

watershed-wide agreement, including potential flow and non-flow measures for the Tuolumne River, and associated analyses no later than March 1, 2019. Staff were directed to incorporate the Delta watershed-wide agreement as an alternative for a future, comprehensive Bay-Delta Plan update that addresses the reasonable protection of beneficial uses across the Delta watershed, with the goal that comprehensive amendments may be presented to the State Water Board for consideration as early as possible after December 1, 2019. As the State Water Board further refines this update, there will be opportunity for public comment.

The effort has made progress since an initial framework was presented to the State Water Board on December 12, 2018.

On March 1, 2019, the California Department of Water Resources and the Department of Fish and Wildlife submitted documents⁵ to the State Water Board that reflect progress since December to flesh-out the previously submitted framework to improve conditions for fish through targeted river flows and a suite of habitat-enhancing projects including floodplain inundation and physical improvement of spawning and rearing areas.

Since the March 1 submittal, work has taken place to develop the package into a form that is able to be analyzed by State Water Board staff for legal and technical adequacy. On June 30, 2019, a status update with additional details was submitted to the Board for review. Additionally, on February 4, 2020, the State team released a framework for the Voluntary Agreements to reach "adequacy", as defined by the State team.

Further work and analysis is needed to determine whether the agreements can meet environmental objectives required by law and identified in the State Water Board's update to the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan.

On December 8, the State Water Resources Control Board will hear an information item on upcoming actions to update and implement the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay Sacramento San Joaquin Delta. During this presentation, State Water Board staff provided the following updates on various activities:

Biological Goals

Past Activities

- January 2019 – Independent Science Advisory Panel: Concepts and Ideas for Developing Biological Goals for the Bay-Delta Plan
- September 2019 – Draft Initial Biological Goals for the LSJR for public comment

Current Activities

⁵ Available at http://resources.ca.gov/docs/voluntary-agreements-2019/Complete_March_1_VA_Submission_to_SWRCB.pdf

- Completion of revisions based on public comment to produce a draft Final Biological Goals Report

Final Biological Goals Report

- Winter/Spring 2022 – Release draft Final Biological Goals Report
- Winter/Spring 2022 – Public Workshop & comment
- Summer 2022 – Board consideration of adoption

LSJR Flow/SD Salinity Implementation Next Steps Assuming Regulation Path (Phase 1)

Spring 2022 – Spring 2023

- Initiate CEQA process
- Draft environmental document and public comment
- Notice of draft regulation
- Final environmental document

Summer 2023

- State Water Board consideration of approval
- Notice of final regulation
- Submission to Office of Administrative Law

Sac/Delta Update: Key Milestones

- Early 2022: expected submittal of proposed voluntary agreement
- Winter – Summer 2022: development of Scientific Basis Report for any voluntary agreement, including public review and comment
- Fall 2022: Draft Staff Report public review and comment
- Winter 2023: Public workshop on Draft Staff Report
- Early Fall 2023: Response to comments and development of proposed final changes to the Bay-Delta Plan
- Late Fall 2023: Board consideration of adoption

Delta Conveyance

2022 Public Engagement Outlook

The upcoming year will mark an important milestone in the proposed Delta Conveyance Project planning process with the anticipated release of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for public review and comment in mid-2022. To outline the public outreach and engagement activities planned for 2022, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) has put together [a plan](#) that details these actions intended to improve public access to information and participation in the public review process. Read more about the plan [here](#).

NEW Informational Webinars Materials Now Available

As follow-up to the four informational webinars held between July and September 2021 to provide background information related to preparation of the Draft EIR for the proposed Delta Conveyance Project, DWR has prepared and published digital articles highlighting the information provided during each webinar:

173

- NEW: Operations of the State Water Project and Delta Conveyance
- NEW: Climate Change
- NEW: Environmental Justice
- Fisheries (*published in November 2021*)

As a reminder, all other information and resources from the webinars, including the presentations (in English and Spanish), videos (in English and Spanish) and a comprehensive Frequently Asked Questions document can be found on the project website.

Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley Activity

Background

The Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley (Blueprint) is a non-profit with a broad and evolving group of stakeholders, working to better understand shared goals for water solutions that support environmental stewardship with the needs of communities and industries throughout the San Joaquin Valley. The Blueprint has engaged with stakeholders to try and ensure that everyone has safe, reliable, and affordable access to water for drinking, supporting their farms and communities and a thriving ecology.

The SJV faces significant impacts to its long-term economic, social, and environmental health if nothing is done to address water scarcity, as highlighted in Phase I of Dr. David Sunding's Economic Impact Assessment (EIA) <https://www.waterblueprintca.com>.

The board, large group and committees continue to meet and pursue the mission of Blueprint, including outreach, technical support and working in collaboration with other stakeholders.

Governance: The Blueprint's new board of 20 directors met for the second time and elected Ian Lemay (Ag Caucus – CA Fresh Fruit Assoc.) as Chairman and Eddie Ocampo (At-large Caucus – Self Help Ent.) as Vice Chairman; they will serve a one-year term. Austin Ewell will remain as the volunteer executive director. The Blueprint Board is made up of the following caucus who will each look to select a caucus chair to represent their participants. The caucuses are: Local Government, Water Agency, At-Large, White Area & Agriculture. The Board has 3 seats vacant for additional broad representation. Board meetings are open to all Blueprint participants.

Outreach & Engagement: Blueprint board has scheduled a Strategic Planning session for March 21st to review its mission, identify the goals and objectives as well as prioritize outreach to Blueprint participants, valley communities then to policy makers and elected and lastly to the greater public. The Citizens Advisory Committee will look to gather additional community participants, schedule ongoing meetings/briefings and look for opportunities to express the water issues facing the SJV communities.

Technical Committee: Committee is drafting criteria for naming and implementing high priority projects. This effort is being discussed to dovetail with the CAP process underway. The Board

agreed to engage MBK for additional evaluation of the Delta flood flows and evaluate the priority allocation of such flows.

Blueprint continues to engage with Central Valley stakeholders regarding opportunities to construct infrastructure, balanced approach to water resources, low interest loans for farmers unable to farm and focus on inter-regional conveyance and habitat restoration

San Joaquin Valley Water Collaborative Action Program (SJVV CAP)

CAP produced a Phase I Framework with solution set elements recommended, the five CAP Work Groups and working to finalize the necessary language and understanding for evaluating Delta water supplies and land fallowing. Once agreed upon the CAP will look to implement phase II.

By September 2022 Complete the following:

- An initial list of projects that are consistent with the CAP criteria that can improve water supplies. These projects will be supported by the CAP participants.
- Review and analysis of updated Delta study by the PPIC.
- Workplan for activities necessary to finish the 2023 comprehensive plan to reach sustainability by 2040.

By September 2023:

- The in-Valley and Delta opportunities assessments.
- Regional action plan for strategic land repurposing
- List of actions and projects that will achieve a water balance by 2040.

DAC Drinking Water Feasibility Study – FKC: Participants, including FWA, FSU, Self Help, Sustainable Conservation and Leadership Council, are looking to study Tulare and Fresno County related to surface water supply, recharge and drinking water supplies. Fresno State, in coordination with the other participants, will be creating a more specific scope tailored to Tulare to provide to DWR to review and fund.

175

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STAFF MEMORANDUM

TO: Board Members and Alternates

FROM: Scott Petersen, Water Policy Director

DATE: March 10, 2022

RE: Update on Science Program

SUMMARY

The San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority's ("Water Authority") current science commitments for Fiscal Year 23 (March 1, 2022 – February 28, 2023) may be considered in three categories. First, the Water Authority re-budgeted \$282,652 in the current budget to fund five activities and/or studies previously authorized to be funded. Second, the Water Authority began the year with approximately \$2,000 in funds remaining from the State and Federal Contractors Water Agency ("SFCWA") to fund one study initially authorized by SFCWA and transferred to the Water Authority for funding and management. Third, the Water Authority has budgeted \$392,500 in the current budget for science studies. More detail regarding the various science commitments is provided below. In total, the Water Authority started the current fiscal year with approximately \$677,152 available to fund science, of which \$284,652 has been obligated.

1. Previous Commitments - \$282,652 in FY 23 Budget

Subject	Description of Work / Objective(s)	FY 23 Budget
Joint Funding of Delta Smelt Structured Decision Making Phase 3	This funding would support management and technical analyses required to conduct Phase 3 for the CSAMP Delta Smelt Structure Decision Making (SDM) project. Technical analyses would include modeling and the application of other analytical tools to evaluate the consequences of proposed management actions for Delta Smelt as well as the evaluation of potential consequences to other resource values including water supply and agriculture. Phase 3 was scheduled to occur from September 2020 to September 2021, but has been delayed.	\$45,400
Joint Funding for CAMT Technical Support	This funding would match State Water Contractor funding obligated for CAMT studies. The Water Authority is currently researching two potential uses for this funding – 1. Continuation of Delta	\$105,000

174

	Smelt SDM funding for Phase 3, or 2. Execution of a contract for Salmon Structured Decision Making.	
Development of eDNA monitoring tool for detection of Delta Smelt	Goal to develop an accepted eDNA monitoring tool for species detection in tidally mixed aquatic ecosystems in the Delta, and to advance eDNA aquatic monitoring towards a state-of-science that can be applied in the context of scientific, policy, and regulatory decision-making	\$63,000
Delta Smelt Incidental Take Limit Research	Funds support the evaluation of differences in salvage between pre- and post-BiOp conditions and the determination of how much variance in salvage can be explained by each of the predictor variables. Support provided to ICF Jones & Stokes, Inc., through a cost share with SWC.	\$14,252
CAMT Facilitation and Technical Support	Funds support facilitation and assistance with CAMT and CSAMP meetings. Main contracts with Essex Partnership (Bruce DiGennaro) and Hansen Environmental (Chuck Hansen) held by SWC.	\$55,000

2. SFCWA-Funded Studies Being Managed by the Water Authority - \$2,000 Remaining

Subject	Description of Work / Objective(s)	SFCWA Funds Remaining
Measuring Impact of Control of yellow Starthistle in the Northern Sac. Valley and Superior California on Watershed Runoff and Groundwater Levels	Study of the water benefits of yellow Starthistle (YST) control. If there appears to be replicable water supply benefit from YST removal, will prepare plan of recommended YST removal in California that results in increased runoff and/or improved groundwater levels.	\$2,000

3. New Science - \$392,500 in FY 23 Budget

Subject	Description of Work / Objective(s)	FY 23 Budget
Science Studies/Efforts		\$392,500
Joint Funding for CAMT Technical Support	This funding would match State Water Contractor funding obligated for CAMT studies. The Water Authority and State Water Contractors are currently jointly researching two potential uses for this funding – 1. Continuation of Delta Smelt SDM funding for Phase 3, or 2. Execution of a contract for Salmon Structured Decision Making.	\$150,000

177

CAMT Technical Support	Funds support technical engagement by Hansen Environmental (Chuck Hansen) in CAMT and CSAMP meetings. Contract held by SWC.	\$30,000
Delta Coordination Group Summer Fall Habitat Action Structured Decision Making Facilitation Support	Funds support facilitation and assistance with Delta Coordination Group Structured Decision Making for Delta Coordination Group recommendations to Reclamation and DWR related to Summer Fall Habitat Actions in the Biological Opinions and State Incidental Take Permit. Project jointly funded with State Water Contractors.	\$12,500
SLDMWA Technical, Science and Regulatory Support	Funds will be used for engagement in Science Program, technical or regulatory efforts that arise in FY 2023. Anticipated use includes technical support for the reconsultation on long-term operations of the CVP and SWP, anticipated ESA listing decisions for longfin smelt, yellow-legged frog (and others), and engagement in efforts associated with the Bay-Delta Plan Update.	\$200,000

SCIENCE PROGRAM DIRECTION

The recently released federal Biological Opinions require annual scientific review of the Reasonable and Prudent Measures scientific panel review in years 4 and 8 of the implementation of the Biological Opinions.

It is anticipated that increased engagement on scientific studies to prepare sufficient scientific bodies of knowledge on the adaptive management provisions of the new biological opinions will be necessary from public water agencies in order to adequately prepare for the 4- and 8-year scientific review of the implementation of the new Biological Opinions. Staff is coordinating with CSAMP/CAMT, as well as Reclamation, NOAA Fisheries and U.S. FWS to determine anticipated annual scientific investments necessary to prepare for the scientific panels.

Authority staff is planning to focus on key areas for the 2021 and future budgets, in order to assist in the development of a more coordinated science strategy between public water agencies and state and federal agencies who fund the scientific enterprise. Specifically, these recommended areas are:

- Technical Support for Authority Engagement in Regulatory Processes
- Delta Smelt Structured Decision Making Scientific Expertise
- Salmon Structured Decision Making Scientific Expertise
- CSAMP/CAMT Support
- Delta Coordination Group Support

178

Technical Support for Authority Engagement in Regulatory Processes

The Authority has need of additional biological expertise to provide comments and a higher level of engagement with regulatory entities, including the State Water Resources Control Board, NOAA Fisheries, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife and others. Authority staff has executed master service agreements with 9 consultants for scientific and biological support services for on-demand services centered on the areas of expertise of the respective consultant and staffing availability. Specifically, staff anticipates need for additional technical and science expertise related to engagement in the reconsultation of the long-term biological opinions for the operations of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project, the anticipated listing determination for longfin smelt by the US FWS, the anticipated listing determination and rulemaking process for the foothill yellow legged frog, and others.

Delta Smelt Structured Decision Making Scientific Expertise

Compass Resources, who manages the Delta Smelt Structured Decision Making process, has identified a need for a biologist for biological resource support, including literature searches that would better inform the SDM process. The Authority and the State Water Contractors are jointly funding this expertise.

CSAMP/CAMT Support

The Authority has remained engaged in CSAMP/CAMT and has jointly funded facilitation support, technical support and scientific studies related to management actions associated with project operations.

Delta Coordination Group Support

Authority staff is a member of the Delta Coordination Group (DCG), a group formed this year pursuant to Reclamation's Proposed Action and the Incidental Take Permit for the Coordinated Operations of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project. The DCG is charged with providing recommendations to Reclamation/DWR pertaining to Summer-Fall Habitat Actions for delta smelt.

179

Monthly Briefing

A Summary of the Alliance's Recent and Upcoming Activities and Important Water News

2022 Annual Conference Draws Big Crowd to Reno Conference Participants Concerned About "Demonization" of Agriculture

The 2022 Family Farm Alliance Annual Conference was conducted February 24-25 at the Silver Legacy Resort in Reno (NEVADA), drawing 200 attendees to the organization's first in-person annual conference in two years.

The conference's theme was "Those in the Arena," a tip of the hat to the famous passage by Theodore Roosevelt's "The Man in the Arena," which creates a clear distinction between those who are actively working, and the observers offering only critiques.

America has been a successful society because of its commitment to farmers and ranchers and a predictable food supply. Sadly, that great reality is being challenged at fundamental levels.

"We are witnessing the demonization of agriculture from urban journalists, extreme environmental activists, and academia," said Alliance President Patrick O'Toole, whose family owns and operates a ranch in Wyoming. "We need to start fighting back."

Production agriculture is being blamed for many of the world's problems based on ill-informed descriptions of food production matters, a common observation that was shared by attendees throughout the duration of the conference.

"It was clear that the high-level appointees from the Biden Administration who participated in the various panel discussions

were receptive to the pleas made by our producers throughout our two-day general session," said President O'Toole.



The "Reclamation Roundtable", featuring Interior Assistant Secretary Tanya Trujillo, Acting Reclamation Commissioner David Palumbo, Reclamation regional directors and policy representatives. Moderated by Family Farm Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen. Photo courtesy of Dave Meurer.

Continued on Page 2

STORIES INSIDE.....

	<u>Page #</u>
2022 Drought Could be Worse Than "Unprecedented" 2021 Disaster	3
President Biden Delivers First State of the Union Address	5
Clean Water Act "WOTUS" in the Spotlight	7
Interior Releases Blueprints to Implement Bipartisan Infrastructure Law	8
Bipartisan Bill Would Extend Protections for Upper Colorado River Fish Species & Water Users	9
USDA to Invest \$1 Billion in "Climate Smart" Commodities	10

120

2022 Annual Conference (Cont'd from Pg. 1)

"We appreciate their public vows of support for our Western farmers and ranchers."

Interior Department Water and Science and Bureau of Reclamation senior leadership showcased how the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) will benefit family farmers, ranchers, irrigation districts and allied industries in 17 western states during the conference.

This year's agenda featured keynote addresses by the Department of the Interior's Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Tanya Trujillo and the Department of Agriculture's Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation Robert Bonnie.

"It is not the 'what' but the 'how' that important when implementing federal environmental initiatives," Mr. Bonnie said. "It's how policies are invented, and how people are invited to the table."

Mr. Bonnie emphasized that the work that needs to be done on the Administration's "America the Beautiful" conservation initiative will be implemented voluntarily, incentive-based, and locally led.

In her remarks, Assistant Secretary Trujillo highlighted how the Department is marshaling new and existing resources and working in partnership with state, local, and Tribal governments to address the needs of communities suffering from drought-related impacts. Key to this effort will be the historical funding available from the \$1.2 trillion BIL.

"We have a historic opportunity to make investments that will help local, state, and Tribal communities respond to drought," said Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Trujillo. "I am grateful for this opportunity to continue to hear from and receive input from our partners to make the best use of this opportunity."

The Reclamation Roundtable featured the assistant secretary and five regional directors discussing the bureau's BIL implementation and readiness for the work on the ground to manage western water. Pre-recorded remarks by Reclamation

Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton were also shown at the conference.

"We welcome the opportunity to have conversations on topics of critical concern to our western agriculture partners," said Commissioner Touton. "We are reinforcing how the Administration is managing western water in a drier and warmer environment and how the BIL enables Reclamation to meet the need for long-term drought adaptation by building a more resilient western infrastructure."

Following the "Reclamation Roundtable," professional staffers from the Senate and House committees on energy and natural resources provided details about infrastructure law funding and ongoing efforts to schedule a detailed congressional hearing about its implementation.

The first day of the conference also included a discussion with the architects of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law – the "Western Water Infrastructure Coalition" comprised of representative from the

Alliance, Association of California Water Agencies, California Farm Bureau, National Water Resources Association and Western Growers Association - that focused on lessons learned in the 2021 grassroots effort.

The final day of the conference included the participation of senior officials from the U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Army, Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the "Federal Leaders Panel" to showcase the Administration's whole-of-government approach to implementing the BIL.

"I can't tell you how much the commitment of Tanya Trujillo to our farmers and ranchers means to me

and the Family Farm Alliance," said President O'Toole. "Our members reacted so favorably to her presence and the participation of Army Assistant Secretary Mike Connor and other senior officials from Interior, EPA, USDA and Reclamation officials at our conference. I'm looking forward to further opportunities in the future."

Additional annual conference highlights can be found on the Alliance website: www.familyfarmalliance.org.



Dan and Susan Errotabere (CALIFORNIA) accept the Family Farm Alliance "John Keys III" award for Dan's decades of leadership as a founding board member and long-time Treasurer for the Alliance, and for Susan's years of service as the Alliance's fundraising coordinator. "You were there from the beginning of the Family Farm Alliance," said President Pat O' Toole (Left).



2022 Drought Could Be Worse Than “Unprecedented” ‘21 Disaster

Following a wet December 2021 that had many Western water users breathing a sigh of relief for the drought relief those winter storms delivered, persistent dry patterns in 2022 have farmers, ranchers and water managers now wringing their hands in anticipation of a repeat of the “unprecedented” 2021 drought.

Following two weeks of worsening hydrology across the central Great Plains, drought conditions further deteriorated in parts of Kansas and southern Nebraska. Drought conditions expanded slightly in northern Wyoming and worsened across the Upper Snake River Basin of Idaho due to deteriorating headwater conditions.

Recent snowfall has improved drought conditions north of Denver, Colorado. Drought conditions also improved across parts of south-central Montana and across the Clearwater and Salmon basins of central Idaho due to favorable snowpack conditions. Periods of above-normal temperatures coupled with enhanced surface winds have expanded severe to extreme drought across southern and eastern New Mexico and western Texas.

Parts of the Pacific Northwest benefited from a recent wet storm system that pummeled the mountains of northern Oregon and Western Washington, according to the National Weather Service in Seattle. Several inches of rain were flooding some of the rivers that flow off the mountain ranges.

However, further south, a second year of severe drought looms. California’s severe drought is now all but certain to continue into a third year after the driest January and February in recorded history.

“Without a major pattern change during March, additional degradations may be needed for California and the Great Basin in the weeks ahead,” the U.S. Drought Monitor recently reported.

CVP: “We’ve got our work cut out for us this year.”

Due to the persistently dry pattern since early January, drought conditions worsened in parts of northern California and southwest Oregon, including the Klamath River Basin and the headwaters of the Sacramento River drainage, a key catchment for Shasta Lake, the cornerstone of the Central Valley Project (CVP).

For the fourth time in the last decade, south-of-Delta irrigation contractors served by California’s Central Valley Project (CVP) have received a 0% allocation. The Bureau of Reclamation last month announced initial 2022 water supply allocations for CVP contractors, based on an estimate of water available for delivery to CVP water users and reflect current reservoir storages, precipitation, and snowpack in the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada.

Hydrologic conditions, including low CVP reservoir storage conditions at the beginning of the water year and record low precipitation in January and February are partially responsible for the grim CVP outlook. Further, Reclamation’s obligation to meet Delta water quality and outflow standards imposed by the State Water Resources Control Board, prevent Reclamation from making water available under contracts like the one held by Westlands Water District.

“Losing over a million acre-feet of projected inflow in two weeks’ time is concerning,” said Reclamation Regional Director Ernest Conant. “We’ve got our work cut

out for us this year; strengthened collaboration and coordination among agency partners, water and power users, and stakeholders will be instrumental.”

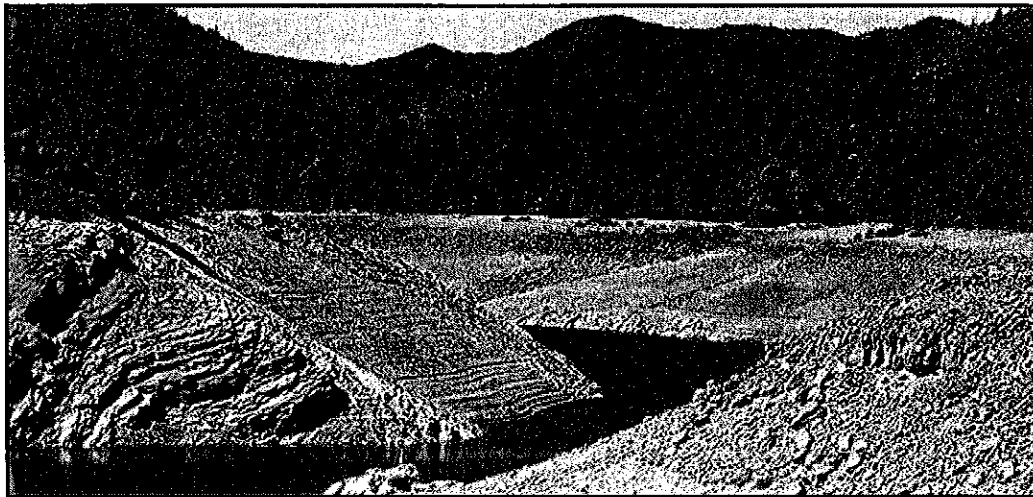
Despite significant participation in the fall and early winter, the 2021-22 water year is likely to be classified as dry. January and February were exceptionally dry.

“We began the 2022 water year with low CVP reservoir storage and some weather whiplash, starting with a record day of Sacramento rainfall in October and snow-packed December storms to a very dry January and February, which are on pace to be the driest on record,” said Mr. Conant. “Further, the December storms disproportionately played out this year in the headwaters—heavy in the American River Basin and unfortunately light in the upper Sacramento River Basin, which feeds into Shasta Reservoir, the cornerstone of the CVP.”

Currently, CVP reservoir storage is below the historic average for this time of year and runoff forecasts predict that overall storage will be limited if substantial spring precipitation does not materialize.

Reclamation’s announcement includes a 15% allocation (120,000 acre-feet) for Friant Division Class 1 contractors.

Reclamation’s announcement includes a 15% allocation (120,000 acre-feet) for Friant Division Class 1 contractors.



The expanding shoreline of Shasta Lake, the largest reservoir in California. Photo source: Public Policy Institute of California.

Continued on Page 4

2022 Western Drought (Continued from Page 3)

Friant Division Class 2 contractors did not receive an allocation.

The Friant Water Authority (FWA) issued a public statement voicing its appreciation for Reclamation’s work to issue this initial allocation early in the year, recognizing the desire to err on the side of caution this early in the season.

“However, based on the current snowpack and reservoir conditions in and above Millerton Lake, FWA believes there is ample justification for an allocation higher than 15%,” FWA stated.

Even if the remainder of the year is extremely dry, FWA estimates that approximately 240,000 acre-feet of additional unallocated water supply exists in the upper San Joaquin watershed.

“Not allocating water that is clearly available will only exacerbate an unnecessary rush to pump groundwater, causing additional overdraft,” FWA stated.

Impacts on California Agriculture

The drought is having a severe economic toll on California agriculture. A new study from the University of California, Merced, said exceptionally dry conditions in 2021 resulted in a \$1.1 billion loss for farm businesses in the state. An estimated 8,750 full- or part-time agricultural workers lost their jobs.

The report also said 395,000 acres of farmland were idled. Crops most affected by fallowing were rice in the Sacramento Valley, cotton in the San Joaquin Valley and grain and field crops statewide.

Within Westlands, the continued drought conditions in 2021 resulted in over 200,000 acres fallowed, countless lost jobs, and thousands of acres of food unharvested.

“The circumstances in 2021 and those facing us in 2022 demonstrate the need invest in infrastructure to better manage the State’s water resources, which includes increased capacity to capture water when its available for transport and use in times of drought,” Westlands said in statement. “California needs new storage, both surface and groundwater, and improved conveyance facilities.”

Fish Before Farmers in the Klamath Basin

Farming and ranching families in the Scott River and Shasta River watersheds of far northern California say drought emergency curtailment regulations adopted by the state last August will threaten their livelihoods if water sup-

plies run out as the state prioritizes minimum flows to protect threatened coho and other fish.

“Guys that are usually positive are pretty down right now. It is going to be really tough,” Jim Morris, who raises livestock and field crops in Etna in the Scott Valley, told *Ag Alert*.

Last month, the Western Environmental Law Center notified the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) of activist groups’ intent to challenge its Shasta River safe harbor program in

federal court. The NMFS safe harbor program provides legal immunity for harming protected species in exchange for stewardship practices on private land.

The groups allege NMFS violated the Endangered Species Act by allowing water diverters to “kill” threatened coho salmon under “enhancement of survival permits” based on unlawful and scientifically incorrect biological opinions.

“The Shasta River safe harbor agreements represent a fundamental misuse of the Endangered Species Act and its permit provisions,” said Sangye Ince-

Johannsen, attorney at the Western Environmental Law Center. “We intend to challenge a number of legal deficiencies underlying NMFS’s decision to enter the agreements and grant the permits to the landowners. At bottom, it just doesn’t pass the straight-face test to say that permits that allow landowners to continue to harm and kill threatened salmon somehow ‘enhance the survival’ of the species or provide a ‘net conservation benefit.’”

Elsewhere in the Klamath River watershed, Reclamation on March 1 informed irrigation districts and individual farmers that hydrologic conditions are such that it is physically impossible to meet the simultaneous environmental requirements for the lake and river under the Interim Operations Plan (IOP).

Klamath Water Users Association (KWUA) has prepared a comprehensive description of the shortcomings of the IOP that currently drives Klamath Project operations. Adopted in April of 2020, the IOP has resulted in dramatic harm to agriculture and wildlife in both 2020 and 2021, with no corresponding benefit to fish populations that have been allocated almost all the water in the Basin.

“That scenario appears likely in 2022 as well,” said Paul Simmons, KWUA Executive Director.

KWUA has, over the past five years, urged federal agencies to step back and gain an understanding of what has gone wrong.



“Last year was a very bad year. This year could turn out to be worse.”
Ernest Conant
California-Great Basin Regional Director
Bureau of Reclamation
Photo source: Capital Press

189

President Biden Delivers First State of the Union

On March 1, President Joe Biden delivered his State of the Union (SOTU) address. President Biden's address marked his first SOTU speech and his second address to a joint session of Congress since taking office on January 20, 2021.

The President's speech primarily focused on America's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. He also highlighted COVID-19 progress, the nomination of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court, implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and the fight against inflation.

President Biden also briefly touched on issues important to agriculture, such as competition, export problems and infrastructure

Ukraine Invasion

A central theme of President Biden's address was the global response to the aggression of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"Six days ago, Russia's Vladimir Putin sought to shake the very foundations of the free world, thinking he could make it bend to his menacing ways," Biden said. "But he badly miscalculated."

As Russian and Ukrainian forces enter a second week of bloody, destructive warfare, United Nations and international condemnations aimed at the Kremlin continue to pile up. The White House initially asked Congress for \$6.4 billion in assistance to the Ukrainian government. This aid would allocate \$3.5 billion in funding for troop deployment and support to NATO allies and \$2.9 billion in foreign security and humanitarian assistance.

The White House has deployed 12,000 troops to Europe, with an additional deployment of 7,000 to Germany on February 24. The U.S has joined other countries condemning the actions of Russian President Vladimir Putin and has levied heavy sanctions.

As Congress negotiates an FY22 spending package ahead of the March 11 funding deadline, aid to Ukraine will be a likely addition to the bill. House Appropriations Committee Chair Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) shared her support for the Ukrainian aid package.

"My colleagues and I are carefully monitoring the situation and stand ready to provide assistance both to our Ukrainian partners and to our allies in Central and Eastern Europe as they confront this crisis," Rep. DeLauro said.

Republicans appear to be more interested than Democrats in quickly providing new weapons to Ukraine and in imposing punishing new sanctions on Russia, according to *Roll Call*.

"We should do everything we can to tighten the noose on the Putin economy," said Senator Rob Portman (R-Ohio).

Food and Competition

The President briefly mentioned issues involving agricul-

ture in his speech, including supply chain challenges in port cities that have disrupted ocean-carrying transportation of exported items, and competition.

"I'm a capitalist, but capitalism without competition isn't capitalism. It's exploitation -- and it drives up prices," the president said.

"When corporations don't have to compete, their profits go up, your prices go up, and small businesses and family farmers and ranchers go under."

Ukraine Invasion Impacts to American Agriculture

Highlighting the president's emphasis on the Ukraine invasion in his speech, Chandler Goule, CEO of the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG), told DTN that the conflict has caused volatility in the grain markets and increases in prices for key inputs such as fuel and fertilizer.

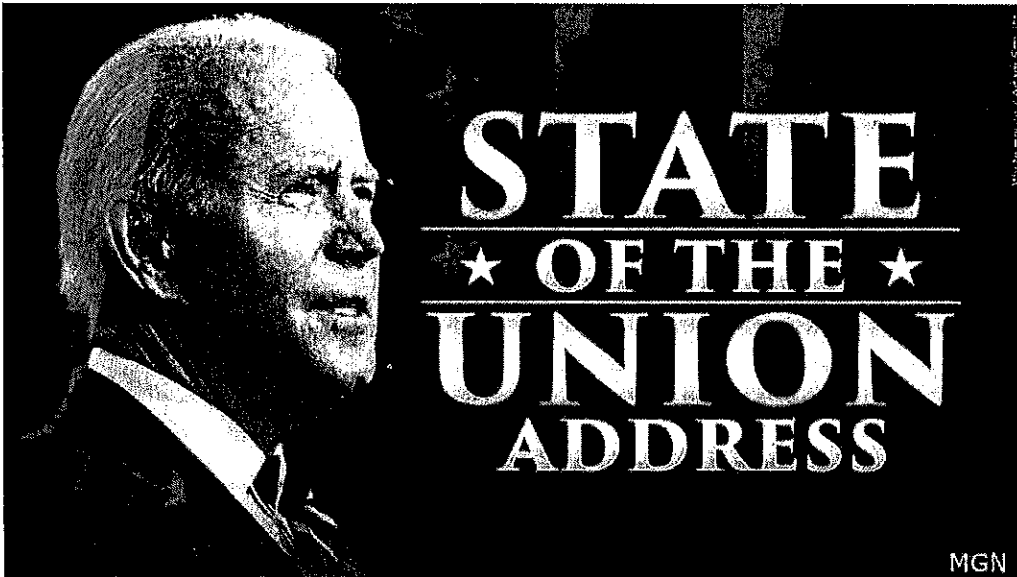
"With Russia and Ukraine among the top wheat-producing and exporting countries, we have seen large market fluctuations as the conflict continues," Goule told DTN. "While we have concerns about volatility, we are deeply concerned about geopolitical stability and the needless suffering happening in Ukraine."

Worries about how U.S. agriculture will fare from the Ukrainian crisis were also voiced at a House Agriculture Committee hearing late last month, where lawmakers warned about rising energy costs for farmers, spikes in grain prices and possible demands on U.S. farms to help fill the needs of a struggling Eastern Europe (*E&E News*).

"I definitely see this as a huge volatility issue for our industry in regard to price," Nicole Berg, NAWG vice president told the committee.

Continued on Page 6

Page 5



184

President Biden's State of the Union Speech (Con't from Pg. 5)

While U.S. wheat growers might ultimately be able to sell more to allies who need the help, American farmers are more likely to be hurt in the short term by volatile prices and increased fuel costs tied to the conflict, said Mr. Goule.

"This is definitely going to have an effect on world supplies," Mr. Goule said.

Prior to the Russian invasion, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack told The Associated Press that a conflict in Ukraine would present an "opportunity, obviously, for us to step in and help our partners, help them through a difficult time and situation."

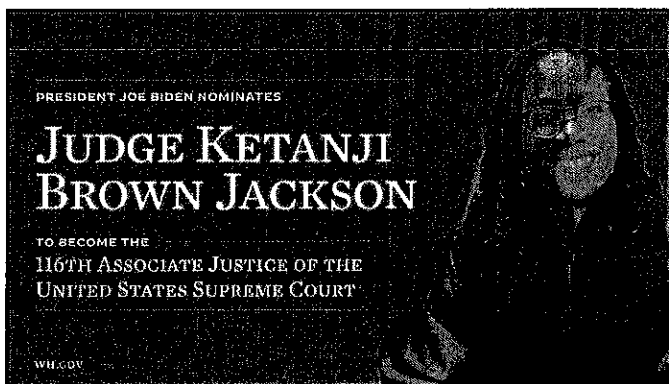
"We'll obviously continue to look for opportunities to expand those (export) markets," Secretary Vilsack said. "That's the beauty of our system now."

The American agricultural industry posted its highest annual export levels ever recorded in 2021, Secretary Vilsack announced nearly one month ago. The final 2021 trade data published by the Department of Commerce on February 8 showed that exports of U.S. farm and food products to the world totaled \$177 billion, topping the 2020 total by 18 percent and eclipsing the previous record, set in 2014, by 14.6 percent.

"This is a major boost for the economy as a whole, and particularly for our rural communities, with agricultural exports stimulating local economic activity, helping maintain our competitive edge globally, supporting producers' bottom lines, and supporting more than 1.3 million jobs on the farm and in related industries such as food processing and transportation," said Secretary Vilsack.

SCOTUS Nominee

President Biden used portions of his address to shine line on his nomination last month of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to serve a lifetime appointment as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Dick Durbin (D-IL) hopes to begin Judge Jackson's confirmation hearing beginning March 21.



"We will begin immediately to move forward on her nomination with the careful, fair, and professional approach she and America are entitled to," Senator Durbin said.

Senate Democrats have set a goal to confirm Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson by April 8, ahead of the chamber's two-week Spring recess. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) congratulated Judge Jackson on her nomination and called for a "rigorous, exhaustive review of Judge Jackson's nomination as befits a lifetime appointment to our highest Court."

Judge Jackson is expected to be confirmed in time to hear *Sackett v. EPA*, related to the federal government's jurisdiction over the Nation's waters and wetlands (see story on Page 7).

Hey! What about Climate Change?

Notably absent in the president's address was any serious discussion of the climate crisis, despite the vast press coverage the day before his speech about the latest "doom and gloom" report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warning of the deadly effects of climate change both now and in the future.

"The extent and magnitude of climate change impacts are larger than estimated in previous assessments," the latest IPCC report summary said, particularly highlighting "substantial damages" and "increasingly irreversible losses" to ecosystems and "shifts in seasonal timing."

President Biden's short shrift paid to climate change in his address did not go unnoticed by some on the far left.

"Fossil fuels have driven conflict, human rights abuses and ecological catastrophes around the world for decades," intoned Kieran Suckling, executive director of the Center for Biological Diversity, a group that uses climate change arguments to push its vast array of litigation aimed at federal agencies. "It's time for President Biden to stop equivocating and fully embrace every tool at his disposal to end the fossil fuel era."

GOP Reaction

Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds delivered the GOP response to President Biden's speech, hammering the president and Democrats on issues like inflation and parental control of education.

"Americans are tired of a political class trying to remake this country into a place where an elite few tell everyone else what they can and cannot say," said Governor Reynolds. "What they can and cannot believe."

Rep. Glenn Thompson (R-Pa), Ranking Member of the House Committee on Agriculture, criticized the president for ignoring the challenges facing American producers.

"Between surging input costs, skyrocketing fertilizer prices, the highest inflation in 40 years, and endless regulatory uncertainty, the Biden administration's failing policies remain out-of-touch with the challenges and everyday needs of farmers, ranchers, foresters, and consumers," said Rep. Thompson. "Rather than tackling these issues, President Biden continues to bend to the will of the most vocal progressives, demanding policies that yield no relief and contribute to substantial burdens on American taxpayers."

1851

Clean Water Act “WOTUS” in the Spotlight

In the weeks following last month’s announcement by the U.S. Supreme Court that it would revisit the scope of Clean Water Act (CWA) precedent in *Sackett v. EPA*, there has been plenty of other breaking news regarding “Waters of the U.S.” (WOTUS).

The CWA prohibits the discharge of pollutants from a point source to navigable waters unless otherwise authorized under the Act. Navigable waters are defined in the Act as “the waters of the United States, including the territorial seas.” Thus, WOTUS is a threshold term establishing the geographic scope of federal jurisdiction under the CWA.

The term “waters of the United States” is not defined by the Act but has been defined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) in regulations since the 1970s and jointly implemented in the agencies’ respective programmatic activities.

The case to be taken up by the Supreme Court centers on a conflict between an Idaho couple, Chantell and Michael Sackett, and EPA. The Sacketts attempted to build a home on land the EPA claims to be federally protected wetlands under the CWA. The Supreme Court in 2012 sided with the Sacketts in their battle for judicial review of an EPA order that stopped them from building a house on their northern Idaho land and threatened heavy fines. The justices in January agreed to consider whether the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals erred when it affirmed that the federal government has permitting authority over the couple’s property.

Senate Republicans Demand the Biden Administration Stop WOTUS Rulemaking

Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Republicans are pushing the Biden Administration’s EPA and Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to hold off on redefining WOTUS until the Supreme Court weighs in on the matter in *Sackett v. EPA*.

“For the duration of the *Sackett* litigation, the Administration should refocus its resources on supporting and advancing critical permitting and infrastructure development, such as expeditiously processing Clean Water Act permits,” the letter stated. “The Administration should also use this time to continue to engage with farmers, landowners, states, businesses, and other affected stakeholders to understand how changes to the definition of WOTUS impact property and important economic activities.”

Signing the letter were EPW Ranking Republican Shelley Moore Capito (West Virginia), and Western Republican Sens. Kevin Cramer (NORTH DAKOTA), Cynthia Lummis (WYOMING), Jim Inhofe (OKLAHOMA), and Dan Sullivan (ALASKA), as well as five other Republicans from southern and Midwestern states.

In a recent proposed rulemaking, the Biden Administration is currently moving to formally scrap the Trump Administration’s *Navigable Waters Protection Rule (NWPR)* regulation, arguing it pulled back protections for streams and wet-

lands across the nation, and put in its place pre-2015 regulations informed by court precedent while preparing for a future rulemaking that would craft a new “durable” definition of WOTUS under the CWA.

EPA, Corps Announce Regional WOTUS Roundtables

EPA and the Corps have announced the participants of 10 regional roundtables aimed at facilitating discussion on a future rulemaking redefining WOTUS while highlighting regional differences, moving forward even as the pending Supreme Court case could affect the definition.

“The Department of the Army, together with the EPA, is committed to gaining a better understanding of the various regional perspectives through these roundtables to develop an implementation approach that accounts for these diverse voices and regional variations,” said Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Michael L. Connor. “In addition, the Army hopes to identify implementation considerations and tools that could assist in effective, consistent, and efficient implementation across the nation.”

The agencies said the roundtables have been selected to highlight geographic differences and a range of perspectives, including agriculture, conservation groups, developers, drinking water and wastewater managers, environmental organizations, communities with environmental justice concerns, industry, tribal nations, and state and local governments.

The ten selected roundtables are: Amigos Bravos (Southwest); Arizona Farm Bureau (Southwest); Cahaba Brewing (Southeast); California Farm Bureau (West); Kansas Livestock Association (Midwest); Natural Resources Defense Council (Northeast); National Parks Conservation Association (Midwest); North Carolina Farm Bureau (Southeast); Regenerative Agriculture Foundation (Midwest); and Wyoming County Commissioners Association/Montana Association of Counties/Idaho Association of Counties (West).

Family Farm Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen and Alliance Advisory Committee Member Paul Arrington (Idaho Water Users Association) were included on the nomination form developed by the California Farm Bureau for the Western region. Other allies will engage in the Southwest forum.

“We appreciate the leadership from our friends with the Arizona and California state Farm Bureaus to help us fill those slots on the Southwestern and Western regional roundtable proposals,” said Mr. Keppen.

While EPA and Corps have not announced dates for the roundtables, they say they anticipate hosting them virtually over the spring and summer.

“It remains unclear whether the agencies will finalize what they are describing as a more “durable” definition of WOTUS before the Supreme Court rules in *Sackett v. EPA* sometime next year,” said Mark Limbaugh, the Alliance’s representative in Washington, D.C.. “A new Supreme Court decision could result in a completely new definition of WOTUS under the CWA for many years to come.”

186

Interior Releases Blueprints to Implement Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

Several bureaus across the Department of the Interior submitted to Congress their fiscal year 2022 blueprints for implementing President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law ("BIL, also referred to as the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*, or "IIJA") last month, marking a significant step in the Department's efforts to help communities tackle the climate crisis and address legacy pollution while creating good-paying union jobs, advancing environmental justice, boosting local economies and upholding the federal trust responsibility to Tribes.

"The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is an opportunity for us to meet the moment and make critical investments in our climate and physical infrastructure. It will help ensure a healthy planet for current and future generations while creating jobs and advancing environmental justice," said Interior Secretary Deb Haaland. "From cleaning toxic pollution and conserving habitats to protecting from drought and wildfires, the Department's roadmap to implementing this historic law underscores how communities across the nation will directly benefit from these investments."

As required by the Infrastructure Law, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Wildland Fire, and the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement have submitted their official spend plans to the U.S. Congress. The Department also submitted spend plans outlining efforts to plug and reclaim orphaned oil and gas wells, as well as a spend plan outlining efforts to restore ecosystems and protect habitats.

The spend plans outline how the Interior Department and bureaus will stand up new programs and expand existing work to deliver results. Additional information about each bureau's spend plans can be accessed on the Department's infrastructure webpage.

Programs outlined in the Bureau of Reclamation's spend plan includes a \$8.3 Billion Investment in Water and Drought Resilience. Interior and Reclamation intend to fund water efficiency and recycling programs, rural water projects, WaterSMART grants, and dam safety to ensure that irrigators, Tribes, and adjoining communities receive adequate assistance and support.

GOP Push Back on Implementation Directives

As funding from the BIL is begins to move towards states, the Biden administration is directing state officials to invest in projects that ensure climate resilience, address inequality and use unionized labor. But GOP Senators and governors are pushing back on federal directives, arguing they go beyond the intent of the law.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) last December issued a memorandum entitled "Policy on Using Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Resources to Build a Better America". Republican Senators recently took issue with the FHWA memorandum, saying it seeks to implement a wish list of policies not reflected in the BIL.

"These policies, such as discouraging projects that increase highway capacity and prioritizing projects that advance

non-motorized transportation options, differ from the provisions negotiated and agreed to in the law," Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Environment and Public Works ranking member Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) wrote in a recent letter.

Sixteen GOP governors sent a letter to President Biden last month, demanding that the administration defer to states' priorities.

"To truly drive economic growth through the IIJA, your administration should remove any and all burdensome regulations and immediately implement the codification of "One Federal Decision"," the letter stated. "Wherever possible, eliminate duplicative regulatory reviews and ensure more efficient coordination of reviews at the federal, state, and local levels of government. Meaningful reform to the Army Corps of Engineers, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other permitting rules would drastically improve our ability to coordinate successful programs."

Alliance Actions

The Family Farm Alliance board of directors last month at its annual meeting in Reno (NEVADA) identified federal implementation of the BIL as a top priority for the Alliance to engage in for 2022. Senior leaders from the Department of the Interior's Office of Water and Science and the Bureau of Reclamation were also present at the Alliance's annual conference, to highlight the implementation of the BIL and reinforce the importance of partnerships.

WaterSMART Drought Contingency Planning Grants

Reclamation last month began rolling out opportunities for some of its WaterSMART programs, including the Drought Response Program's Drought Contingency Planning grants, which support the development and update of drought contingency plans.

"These small, community-led projects can help western communities address some of their water management issues," said Reclamation Acting Commissioner David Palumbo. "The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is allowing us to reach many Western communities where they have identified a need but not necessarily the funding to complete the work."

Through this funding opportunity, Reclamation provides financial assistance for planning that, when implemented, will increase water reliability and improve water management through the use of expanded technologies and improved modeling capabilities. Applicants may request up to \$200,000 for plans to be completed within two years. Generally, a 50 percent minimum recipient cost-share is required.

The funding opportunity is available on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) by [searching for opportunity number R22AS00178](https://www.grants.gov). Applications are due by April 14, 2022, at 4 pm MDT. Find out more information at [Reclamation's WaterSMART program webpage](https://www.reclamation.gov).

Continued on Page 9

Bipartisan Bill Would Extend Protections for Upper Colorado River Fish Species and Provide Regulatory Assurances for Water Users

U.S. Senators John Hickenlooper (D-COLORADO) and Mitt Romney (R-UTAH) last month introduced the *Upper Colorado and San Juan River Basins Recovery Act* (S.3693) to continue protecting four threatened and endangered native fish species in the Upper Colorado and San Juan River Basins. The legislation would extend current conservation programs by one year and allow Upper Basin communities the time to develop a long-term management plan.

“We must protect native fish in the Upper Colorado and San Juan River. This bill shows how states, tribes, federal entities, and water users can come together to get things done,” said Senator Hickenlooper.

The Upper Colorado and San Juan River Basin Endangered Fish Recovery Programs work to recover four threatened and endangered fish species: the humpback chub, bonytail, Colorado pikeminnow, and razorback sucker.

“Partners of the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program are recovering four species of endangered fish in the Colorado River and its tributaries in Colorado,

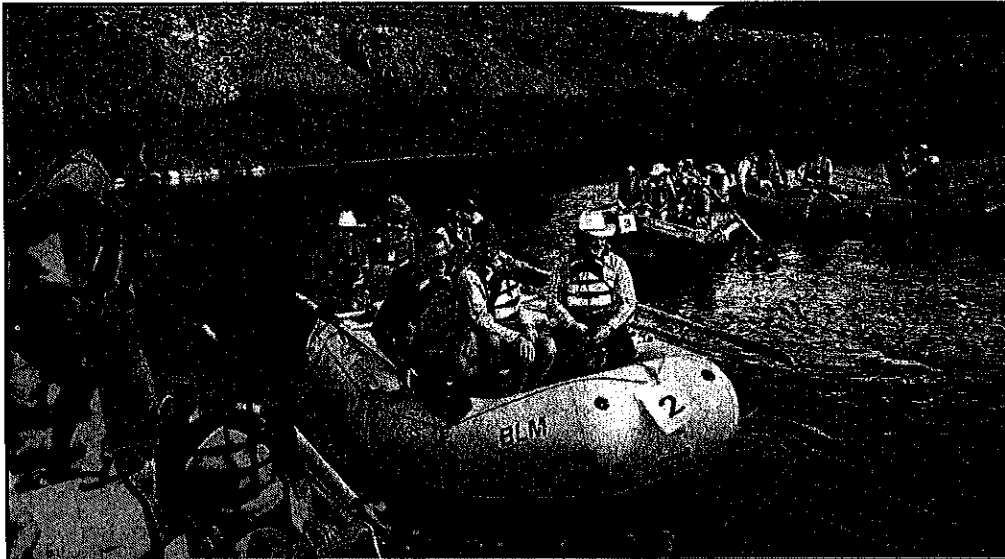
Utah, and Wyoming,” said Family Farm Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen. “Importantly, through this program, water use and development continue to meet human needs in compliance with interstate compacts and applicable federal and state laws.”

Congressman Joe Neguse (D-COLORADO) introduced companion legislation in the House of Representatives in August 2021, which passed out of the House Natural Resource Committee in November 2021.

The Alliance and other Upper Basin interests worked with the Hickenlooper and Romney offices and encouraged the Romney camp to join and co-lead this effort, with the intent of putting a bipartisan stamp on this legislation.

“I’m proud to team up with my colleague from Colorado to support Utah’s efforts to continue the recovery of the threatened and endangered fish species in the Upper Colorado

and San Juan Rivers,” said Senator Romney. “This program has broad buy in from stakeholders in the eastern part of our state and represents an example of what successfully recovering endangered species looks like.”



Senator Michael Bennet (D-COLORADO) last September organized a float trip down the Colorado River, from Hittle Bottom Campground to the Sandy Beach River Access, with the goal to talk about climate change and drought in the West. He was joined by nearly two dozen others, including Senator Mitt Romney (R-UTAH) and Family Farm Alliance President Pat O’Toole. Photo source: Deseret News.

WaterSMART Grant Opportunities (Continued from Page 8)

WaterSMART Applied Science Grants

The WaterSMART Applied Science Grants funding opportunity is also now available from Reclamation. These grants support projects to develop hydrologic information, decision support tools, and tools to improve modeling and forecasting capabilities to increase water supply reliability. Applicants may request up to \$200,000 for projects to be completed within two years. A 50% non-federal cost share is required.

The funding opportunity is available on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) by searching for opportunity number [R22AS00165](https://www.grants.gov). Applications

are due on Thursday, April 14, 2022, at 4:00 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time (MDT).

The Bureau of Reclamation will host a webinar on Wednesday, March 2, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. MST to discuss eligible applicants and project types, program requirements, and the evaluation criteria for the Applied Science Grants funding opportunity. Join the [live event](#) or use the same link to watch a recording after the completion of the live event. Find out more about the Applied Science Grants program on Reclamation’s website at www.usbr.gov/watersmart/appliedscience.

128

USDA to Invest \$1 Billion in Climate Smart Commodities

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced last month that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is delivering on its promise to expand markets by investing \$1 billion in partnerships to support America’s climate-smart farmers, ranchers and forest landowners.

The new Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities opportunity will finance pilot projects that create market opportunities for U.S. agricultural and forestry products that use climate-smart practices and include innovative, cost-effective ways to measure and verify greenhouse gas benefits. USDA is now accepting project applications for fiscal year 2022.

“America’s farmers, ranchers, and forest owners are leading the way in implementing climate-smart solutions across their operations,” said Secretary Vilsack. “Through Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities, USDA will provide targeted funding to meet national and global demand and expand market opportunities for climate-smart commodities to increase the competitive advantage of American producers. We want a broad array of agriculture and forestry to see themselves in this effort, including small and historically underserved producers as well as early adopters.”

For the purposes of this funding opportunity, a climate-smart commodity is defined as an agricultural commodity that is produced using agricultural (farming, ranching or forestry) practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions or sequester carbon.

“It’s critical that we make sure that climate-friendly practices are profitable and practical for farmers – no matter what crop they produce, what region they’re in, or the size of their operation,” said Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), the Chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. “The urgency of the climate crisis demands action, and I look forward to reviewing the feedback and data from these pilot projects, which will help inform the writing of the next farm bill.”

Funding will be provided to partners through the USDA’s Commodity Credit Corporation for pilot projects to provide

incentives to producers and landowners to:

- implement climate-smart production practices, activities, and systems on working lands,
- measure/quantify, monitor and verify the carbon and greenhouse gas (GHG) benefits associated with those practices, and
- develop markets and promote the resulting climate-smart commodities.

A range of public and private entities may apply, but the primary applicant must be an entity, not an individual. Funding will be provided in two funding pools, and applicants must submit their applications via [Grants.gov](https://www.usda.gov/grants) on: 1) April 8, 2022 (for proposals from \$5 million to \$100 million); and 2) May 27, 2022 (for proposals from \$250,000 to \$4,999,999).

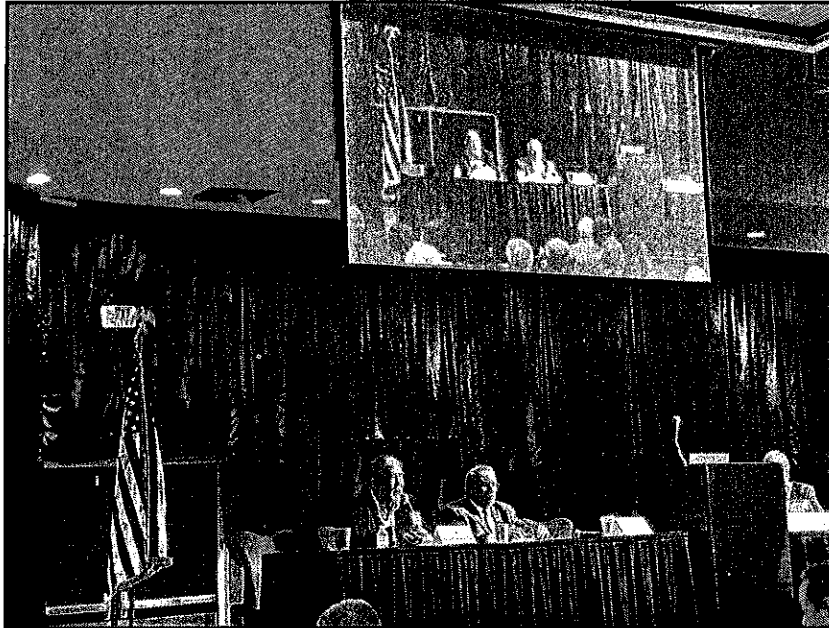
Solutions from the Land (SfL) – an organization that the Family Farm Alliance works closely on climate smart agricultural issues - endorses the new USDA program.

“This exciting new program provides another opportunity and pathway to enable farmers, ranchers, forest landowners and other producers to implement climate smart systems and practices that sustainably intensify production, improve resilience and reduce and/or sequester greenhouse gas reductions” said SfL President Ernie Shea, who moderated a climate change panel at the recent Family Farm Alliance annual conference.

The program announced last month closely aligns with the framework SfL has been advocating nationally and globally to unleash high value climate change solutions from the ag and forestry sectors.

“We are especially pleased to see that the program will utilize market approaches to reward producers for the climate smart practices they deploy and the benefits they verify,” said Mr. Shea. “We are also pleased to learn that the new pilot demonstration program will encourage large, landscape scale projects and will be open to all types of producers, including early adopters as well as small and historically underserved producers”.

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Solutions from the Land (SfL) President Ernie Shea (partially hidden by the podium) moderated a panel discussion at the recent Family Farm Alliance Annual Conference in Reno (NEVADA) about SfL members' recent trip to Glasgow, Scotland for the COP26 Climate Forum. A.G. Kawamura (L), a producer and SfL leader from Southern California, shared his views, urging more "do tanks" and less "think tanks".