



NEWS RELEASE

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Extensive Environmental Review Determines WaterFix is Best for Delta

Fountain Valley (December 27, 2016) – An extensive environmental review shows the proposed California WaterFix is the best project to protect the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and provide a reliable water supply to Southern California, according to documents released by the California Department of Water Resources and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

The California WaterFix is the single most cost-effective project to ensure Orange County's long-term water reliability, according to an extensive study by the Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC) and retail agencies. MWDOC directors earlier this month passed a resolution of support for the WaterFix.

The California WaterFix and accompanying EcoRestore have been planned and analyzed for more than a decade, so the release of the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a major milestone. WaterFix is the preferred project among 18 alternatives – including keeping the status quo – that were studied by state and federal officials as options for increasing water supply reliability and addressing ecosystem concerns in the Delta, while minimizing environmental impact.

“The release of the final studies mark a significant step toward ensuring water reliability for not just Orange County, but all of Southern California,” said MWDOC General Manager Rob Hunter. “No single project means as much to our continued water reliability as the California WaterFix, and no other project protects the investment we’ve already made in the State Water Project.”

Delivering water to Southern California since 1973, the State Water Project (SWP) carries water from Northern California through the Delta to more than two-thirds of the state through 701 miles of pipelines and canals. But a planned conveyance system around the environmentally sensitive Delta was never built, and water deliveries are limited by fish and wildlife issues in the Delta.

About half the water used in Orange County comes through the SWP. Water from the SWP also fills Diamond Valley Lake outside of Hemet, which holds enough water to meet the area's emergency and drought needs for six months.

The WaterFix would construct two 30-foot tunnels to carry water beneath the Delta, while the EcoRestore would stabilize the Delta and restore habitat. Governor Brown endorses both initiatives. State agencies held 600 public meetings and received more than 30,000 public and stakeholder comments for the environmental studies.

The public will now have the opportunity to review the Final EIR/EIS for at least 30 days before state and federal agencies issue their final decisions. See the documents at <http://baydeltaconservationplan.com/FinalEIREIS.aspx>.