

Memorandum

Date : April 20, 1999

To : Lester A. Snow
Executive Director
CALFED Bay-Delta Program

From : Department of Water Resources

Subject : 1999 San Joaquin River Pulse Flow Implementation

This letter summarizes the discussion in the CALFED Ops Group meeting on March 23, 1999, regarding implementation of the pulse flow on the San Joaquin River this spring and reports the status of the process for assessing impacts associated with implementing the pulse flow for a period of 12 years. I apologize for the delay in sending this summary to you.

The implementation of the spring San Joaquin River pulse flow was the main topic of discussion at the Ops Group meeting. In addition to representatives from related State and federal agencies, representatives from Stockton East Water District, South Delta Water Agency, Central Delta Water Agency, Bay Institute, Environmental Defense Fund, and the San Joaquin River Authority attended.

A few days prior to the Ops Group meeting, the NoName Group received an analysis of the potential for this year's pulse flow to impact flows and reservoir storage next year. This analysis was discussed in the Ops Group meeting. Participants generally concluded implementation of the pulse flow this year would not significantly impact flows or reservoir storage next year.

Although conceding that this year's pulse flow would not produce significant impacts next year, Alex Hildebrand, SDWA, was adamantly against its implementation. His concern regards the cumulative impact resulting from implementing the pulse flow for the 12-year period. He is convinced flows on the San Joaquin River will eventually be lower during the summer and early fall, producing degraded water quality in the river.

The participants acknowledged Mr. Hildebrand's concerns. They observed that a determination by the Ops Group regarding the lack of negative impacts for this spring's pulse flow did not imply approval by the Ops Group of the 12-year program. It also was acknowledged that if the VAMP pulse flow were not to occur, the Bureau of Reclamation would seek purchases to support a similar pulse flow as required by their biological opinion for Delta smelt.

Karna Herrigfeld, representing SEWD, did not have an opportunity to review the analysis distributed to the NoName Group earlier in the week. Her concern related to the potential of the pulse flow to reduce storage in New Melones Reservoir and,

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therefore, reduce the amount of water to be delivered to SEWD. Lowell Ploss of the Bureau assured her that implementation of the pulse flow did not increase this potential. Ms. Herrigfeld said she would rely upon Mr. Ploss' statement but requested a copy of the analysis and said she would follow up with Mr. Ploss regarding her concerns. (On March 30, Ms. Herrigfeld was briefed on the 1999/2000 operations plan for New Melones Reservoir by Bureau staff. This analysis distributed by the NoName Group shows, under the worse case, the allocation of CVP water to New Melones contractors has the potential of being reduced by 3000 acre-feet next year. The most current operation forecast by the Bureau, however, indicates no impact to New Melones contractors.)

Members of the Ops Group decided to report to the CALFED Policy Group that the implementation of the spring pulse flow would proceed with no significant impact to next year's flows or reservoir storage.

Monthly updates of the operation forecasts both with and without the spring pulse flow will be discussed at future Ops Group meetings. These comparisons will help identify where the water for the pulse flow originated and if any impacts resulting from the pulse flow materialized. Through these discussions, we hope participants will gain an understanding of the operational requirements of the individual reservoirs on the San Joaquin River and the specific concerns of third parties. We encourage representatives of SDWA, CDWA, SEWD, and the San Joaquin River Authority to continue participating in the Ops Group meetings.

Finally, during the Ops Group meeting, it became apparent the nature and extent of the commitment to mitigate impacts associated with the annual implementation of the pulse flow are not sufficiently defined. These issues have been brought to the attention of Allen Short, coordinator for the San Joaquin River Authority, and will be discussed at a future meeting of the management committee.

If you wish further information regarding the status of the San Joaquin River Agreement or the process of incorporating third parties into the agreement's technical group, please call Katherine Kelly at (916) 653-1099.

**ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
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cc: (See attached list.)

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