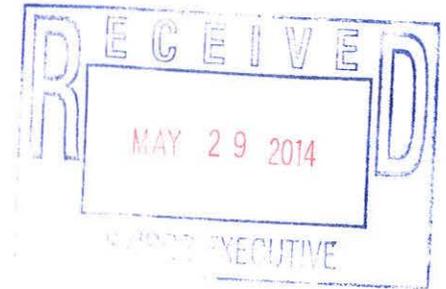




United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Washington, DC 20240

MAY 22 2014



IN REPLY REFER TO:

96-42020
ADM-1.10

Mr. Jerry O'Banion
Chairman
Merced County Board of Supervisors
Supervisor, District Five
2222 M Street
Merced, CA 95340

Dear Mr. O'Banion:

On behalf of Deputy Secretary of the Interior Michael L. Connor, I am responding to your letter of April 2, 2014, in which you request that the Department of the Interior "evaluate the operating criteria that govern the Central Valley Project (CVP) and the State Water Project (SWP) to allow local water systems to capture the greatest amount of water possible from recent and any future rainfall." I apologize for the delay to your response.

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the State of California are working collaboratively to manage water supplies under the continuing drought conditions. Since December 2013, the Federal and State agencies that supply water, regulate water quality, and protect fish and wildlife have worked together daily to develop strategies to cope with the drought, including maximizing regulatory flexibility to adjust quickly to changes in the weather and environment and bolster water supplies when possible while minimizing impacts to fish and wildlife.

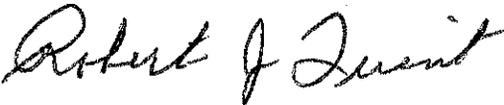
Reclamation and the California Department of Water Resources, in collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the State Water Resources Control Board, developed a Drought Operations Plan and Operational Forecast that outlines proposed actions and a likely range of coordinated operations of the CVP and SWP from April 1 through November 15, 2014. The plan and forecast are based on the conservative but prudent assumption that conditions will remain dry and that the drought may persist into 2015. This information may be viewed on Reclamation's Mid-Pacific Region website at www.usbr.gov/mp/drought/.

An example of an action taken as a result of this Federal-State collaboration is that, on April 1, 2014, the combined CVP and SWP exports were increased to 4,900 cubic feet per second to capture additional storm runoff entering the Delta. This operational change allowed an "export shift" from the SWP Banks Pumping Plant to the CVP Jones Pumping Plant, reducing the likelihood of additional salmonid take. The Department continues to collaborate with State and Federal agencies to do everything possible to ensure a balanced approach to providing for

the water needs of people, agriculture, businesses, imperiled species, power, and the environment.

Reclamation shares your concern for the significant impacts of the drought on California's communities, economy, and environment, and we continue to work cooperatively with our partner agencies to address our State's serious water supply challenges. Should you require additional information, please contact Mr. David Murillo, Regional Director, Mid-Pacific Region.

Sincerely,

Acting For 

Lowell D. Pimley
Acting Commissioner

cc: Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor of California
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Jeff Denham
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Jim Costa
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Anthony Cannella
California Senate
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Adam Gray
California Assembly
Sacramento, CA 95814

Ms. Karen Ross
Secretary
California Department of Food
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cc: Mr. Thomas Howard
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