



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Southwest Region  
501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200  
Long Beach, California 90802-4213

January 11, 2007

In response refer to:  
2006/03464

Alan R. Candlish  
Regional Planning Officer  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Mid-Pacific Regional Office  
2800 Cottage Way  
Sacramento, California 95825-1898

Dear Mr. Candlish:

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) intends to suspend formal consultation for the South Delta Improvements Program (SDIP). During the course of the project effects analysis, several areas of significant concern arose. These concerns were:

1. The interrelated aspects of the SDIP barrier construction actions with the long term operations of the Central Valley Project (CVP) and State Water Project (SWP) under the operations and criteria plan (OCAP). Analysis of the SDIP as a separate project without consideration of how it will be used under OCAP would be seen as piecemealing under the Endangered Species Act. The stated objectives and purposes of the SDIP confirm the interdependence and interrelatedness of the two projects.
  - ◆ Increase water supply to the SWP and the CVP water contractors south of the Delta by increasing diversions at the existing Clifton Court Forebay radial gates and maximizing the frequency of 8,500 cubic feet per second (cfs) pumping at the Harvey O. Banks Pumping Plant (Banks).
  - ◆ Ensure water of adequate quantity and quality for agricultural diverters within the south Delta.
  - ◆ Reduce entrainment of Central Valley fall/late fall-run Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) from the San Joaquin River.
2. The CalSim-II (SWP and CVP Operating Model) modeling analysis done for the SDIP is no longer in harmony with the current modeling being done for the reinitiated OCAP consultation. NMFS staff is aware of the changes being considered for the baseline programming assumptions in the reinitiated OCAP consultation, and has previously indicated that both SDIP and OCAP computer



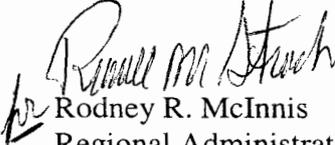
simulations must be based on the same common modeling assumptions to be valid and comparable.

3. The modeling conducted for the SDIP actions neglected to assess the use of the permanent barriers with the current level of water diversion (6,680 cfs). This modeling run is important to know since the future increase in the SWP diversion rate to 8,500 cfs is not a guaranteed action. The “baseline” modeling done with the permanent barriers under the 2004 OCAP modeling runs assumed that the diversion rate was 8,500 cfs. The “interim” period of barrier operations between completion of construction and the increase to water diversions of 8,500 cfs has not been presented to NMFS staff in the Action Specific Implementation Plan.
4. The true baseline conditions in the South Delta occur during the period between November 30 and April 7 of each year when the barriers are absent from the channels of the South Delta. The alterations in hydrology of the barrier installations from the true baseline have not been presented in a coherent fashion within the modeling run outputs.

NMFS recommends that the SDIP Stage 1 (and stage 2) actions be incorporated into the overarching OCAP action. This will avoid inconsistencies with the modeling assumptions between the two actions. In addition, by combining the two actions into one, all of the interacting effects of the two proposed actions are addressed at the same time in one consultation rather than breaking the effects into two consultations. This avoids the appearance of piecemealing the projects. Although other activities linked to OCAP have been proposed (*e.g.*, Yuba Accord water transfers, Red Bluff Diversion Dam Fish Passage Improvement Program, *etc.*), their potential effects to water operations are less clear. These activities will be evaluated for inclusion in the OCAP consultation on a case-by-case basis.

Please contact Mr. Jeffrey Stuart at 916-930-3607, or via e-mail at [J.Stuart@noaa.gov](mailto:J.Stuart@noaa.gov) if you have any questions concerning this response or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

  
Rodney R. McInnis  
Regional Administrator

cc: Copy to file – ARN 151422SWA1999SA5950  
NMFS-PRD, Long Beach, CA  
Katherine F. Kelly, Chief, Bay-Delta Office, California Department of Water  
Resources, 1416 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Sacramento, CA 95814