

**MWD**

METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

August 4, 1992

To: Board of Directors (Water Problems Committee--Information)
From: General Manager
Subject: Programmatic Environmental Impact Report for Delta Water Transfers

Report

The ability to transfer water supplies will become an important management tool for Metropolitan. While environmental groups support water transfers in concept, they continue to oppose Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) water transfers based on allegedly insufficient data and the belief that any new change to Delta hydrodynamics represents a significant adverse environmental impact.

In February 1991, your Board authorized funding of \$200,000 for the preparation of a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) regarding the impacts of water transfers on the Delta. In addition, your Board authorized the General Manager to execute a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) Agreement for the purpose of conducting activities related to the preparation of the PEIR. This letter provides an update on the need for the PEIR and JPA activities.

The PEIR will address likely transfer scenarios and serve as a data base to determine Delta impacts of proposed water transfers. The PEIR will be useful for preparation of subsequent EIRs dealing with specific transfers. Subsequent transfers would be examined in conformance with transfers disclosed in the PEIR to determine whether additional documentation will be required. To the extent that future transfers are consistent with transfers and impacts disclosed in the PEIR, the need for additional environmental documentation should be minimized.

Currently, the JPA Members include: Yuba County Water Agency, Westlands Water District, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Kern County Water Agency, and Metropolitan. Solano County Water Authority, and City of Napa are participating as Associate Members. The City and County of San Francisco, and Pacific Gas and Electric Properties have each contributed \$5,000. Staff's estimation of Metropolitan's participation costs was based on ten participants. Depressed water sales have limited other agencies' ability statewide to participate.

August 4, 1992

Despite less-than-anticipated membership, the PEIR continues to receive strong support from resource agency staff at high levels. Especially important is the support of the State Water Resources Control Board, Department of Water Resources and Department of Fish and Game. The PEIR is viewed by such agencies as a "consensus document," which staff believes is imperative to the PEIR's success. The JPA has held Advisory Committee meetings (comprised of resource agency staff, and environmental organizations) and several agency-specific meetings to determine the scope of the PEIR. A Scoping Report and a Work Plan for preparing the PEIR have been finalized. Total costs for preparing the PEIR have not changed substantially from the \$1.5 million stated in the February 1991 Board letter. The Work Plan provides for circulation of the Draft PEIR by late 1993 and completion of a Final PEIR by early 1994.

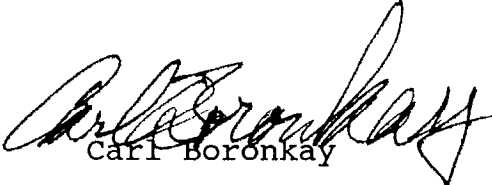
Staff continues to view the PEIR as being an important document as evidenced by the strong support described above. The increasing number of issues further complicating the transfer of water through the Delta increases the need to disclose "best available data" regarding environmental impacts of transfers. Such issues include the winter-run chinook salmon and Governor Wilson's request for interim Bay/Delta standards by the end of 1992. Because of the above issues and less-than-anticipated participation, the cost shares of remaining JPA Members are expected to be higher than anticipated. Staff will notify your Board once the detailed costs required to complete this important environmental document are known.

Board Committee Assignment

This letter was referred for information to the Water Problems Committee because of its authority to study, advise, and make recommendations with regard to policies, sources, and means of importing water required by the District, pursuant to Administrative Code Section 2481(a).

Recommendation

For information only.



Carl Boronkay

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