



- Bay-Delta Management Report

Summary

This report provides a summary of activities related to the Bay-Delta for February 2015.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Long-Term Delta Actions

Bay Delta Conservation Plan

Discussions continued this month with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and other state agencies, on the nexus between the Governor's adopted California Water Action Plan (CWAP) and the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). Many of the BDCP elements are complementary to the CWAP and are envisioned to be implemented by the State as part of the public benefit components. DWR continues to work on addressing the comments received during the public comment period on the Draft BDCP and Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement, and work continues on the supplemental information to be provided as part of recirculated draft documents. No formal decision on the scope or timing of the recirculation has been announced yet.

Near-Term Delta Actions

State Water Resources Control Board

On January 23, DWR and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) submitted a Temporary Urgency Change Petition (TUCP) to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to request temporary changes to the terms of the water rights permits for operation of the State Water Project and Central Valley Project. The TUCP requested temporary modification of water rights requirements to meet the objectives for Delta outflow, San Joaquin River flow, Delta Cross Channel (DCC) gate closure, and export limits. These changes would allow management of reservoir releases in a manner that conserves upstream storage for fish and wildlife protection and Delta salinity control while providing critical water supply needs. On February 3, the SWRCB Executive Director issued the Order Approving In Part And Denying In Part A Petition For Temporary Urgency Changes To License And Permit Terms And Conditions Requiring Compliance With Delta Water Quality Objectives In Response To Drought Conditions (Order) approving some elements and denying some elements of the TUCP. In particular, the Order approved elements of the TUCP to adjust flow and water quality requirements that govern inflows and outflows in the Delta and operation of the DCC gates for the next two months. However, the Order did not approve the request for an intermediate level of export pumping under certain conditions to provide needed flexibility to increase exports above minimum levels only when water is moving through the system while maintaining protections for listed fish species. The Order denied this request due to stated potential additional risk of entrainment to listed species.

Staff reviewed the Order and worked with state and federal water contractors to submit comments on the Order on February 13. The water contractors objected to the Order because it denied the request for an intermediate level of pumping, and in that denial did not adequately consider impacts on agricultural and urban communities, or give proper consideration of the additional protections for Endangered Species Act listed species provided under the biological opinions. The comment letter requests that the SWRCB reconsider the Order. Metropolitan also submitted separate comments on the Order addressing the water supply needs of Metropolitan's service area.

Board Report (Bay-Delta Management Report)

The SWRCB held an informational workshop on February 18 to receive public comment on the TUCP and the Order. Staff coordinated with the State Water Contractors to provide oral comments at the workshop. It is unclear when the SWRCB may provide input or make any decisions concerning the Order.

Delta Emergency Preparedness

Delta Flood Emergency Management Plan

This month Metropolitan held briefings for the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and DWR executive management, and separately for State Water Contractors' members, to review the status of emergency preparedness and response activities to date. The briefings focused on the seismic threat, major materials stockpiling activities by both DWR and USACE for potential development of an emergency freshwater pathway, and research activities highlighting potential seismic concerns for Old and Middle River levees and remedial measures to better prepare for emergency response in the event of a major earthquake. The briefings were generally well received, acknowledging the comprehensive preparedness activities to date.

AECOM (previously URS) seismic studies commissioned by Metropolitan have compared modeled ground motions of the South Napa earthquake to the actual ground motions of this earthquake recorded in the Delta. It was found that the actual measurements of ground motions generally confirm the model predictions and the earthquake threat posed to Delta levees.