

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FOR THE FREEPORT REGIONAL WATER PROJECT

The United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation has prepared this Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) for the Freeport Regional Water Project to fulfill the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Under separate cover, the state lead agency, the Freeport Regional Water Authority, published a Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Draft EIS/EIR was published on August 8, 2003 as a joint document. The Final documents were published separately for individual use by Reclamation for NEPA compliance and by FRWA for CEQA compliance.

The purposes of the project include: (1) to support acquisition of additional Sacramento County Water Agency (SCWA) surface water entitlements to promote efficient conjunctive use of groundwater in its Zone 40 area, consistent with the Sacramento Area Water Forum Agreement and County of Sacramento General Plan policies; (2) provide facilities through which SCWA can deliver existing and anticipated surface water entitlements to Zone 40 area; (3) provide facilities through which East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) can take delivery of a supplemental supply of water that would substantially meet its need for water and reduce existing and future customer deficiencies during droughts; and (4) improve EBMUD system reliability and operational flexibility during droughts, catastrophic events, and scheduled major maintenance at Pardee Dam or Reservoir.

The Draft EIS/EIR addressed facilities-related impacts including the effects of project construction and operation on hydrology, water quality, fish resources, recreation, vegetation and wildlife, visual resources, cultural resources, land use, geology, soils, seismicity, and groundwater, traffic and circulation, air quality, noise, and public health and safety. Diversion-related impacts include the effects of increased diversions from the Sacramento River and associated changes in Reclamation's operation of Central Valley Project (CVP) facilities. Project diversions therefore may directly or indirectly affect the Sacramento River, its tributaries, and Delta resources including water supply, fish and aquatic habitat, riparian vegetation and habitat, water quality, recreation, visual and cultural resources, and power supply. The Draft EIS/EIR also evaluated potential growth-inducing impacts for the SCWA and EBMUD water service areas. An evaluation of cumulative hydrologic and water service area impacts associated with reasonably foreseeable actions was also included.

Public hearings were held on the following dates and locations: Thursday, September 4, 2003, in Sacramento, CA; Tuesday, September 9, 2003, in Herald, CA; Wednesday, September 10, 2003, in Oakland, CA; Thursday, September 11, 2003, in Sacramento, CA; and Monday, September 29, 2003, in Sacramento, CA. The written comment period ended December 15, 2003. The Final EIS/EIR contains responses to all comments received and changes made to the text of the Draft EIS/EIR as a result of those comments.

Reclamation will not make a decision on the proposed action until 30 days after release of the

Final EIS. Sometime after the 30-day waiting period, Reclamation will complete a Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD will state the action that will be implemented and will discuss all factors leading to the decision.

For further information on this Final EIS, contact Mr. Rob Schroeder, Bureau of Reclamation, at 916-989-7274, or by e-mail at rschroeder@mp.usbr.gov; or Mr. Kurt Kroner, FRWA, at 916-326-5489, or by e-mail at k.kroner@frwa.com.