

DICO 14

Memorandum

Date: February 14, 2013

To: Barbara Evoy, Chief
State Water Resources Control Board
Division of Water Rights
P.O. Box 2000
Sacramento, California 95812

STATE WATER RESOURCES
CONTROL BOARD

2013 FEB 20 AM 10:30

DIV OF WATER RIGHTS
SACRAMENTO

COPY

From: Department of Water Resources

Subject: Request for Consistency Determination of Altered Project Description for Proposed Sacramento Valley Water Management Project with Proposition 204

In November 1996, California voters approved the Safe, Clean, Reliable, Water Supply Act (Proposition 204), which included funding provisions for projects under the "Sacramento Valley Water Management and Protection Subaccount" (Water Code, Ch. 6, Art. 5, Section 78681 et seq.). As required by Proposition 204, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) requests that the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) determine whether the proposed project is consistent with the requirements of Section 78681.4 of the California Water Code (CWC) through the resolution process.

In January 2013, DWR received a request from the Northern California Water Association (NCWA) to substantially alter a project previously approved for funding. DWR has determined that the updated project meets the intent of the CWC. Now, a SWRCB resolution is needed to redirect the previously awarded funding.

The updated project would continue to assist in the implementation of the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary. The project would better define opportunities and constraints associated with protecting beneficial uses of groundwater and producing additional groundwater supply during dry and critical water years, thereby decreasing reliance on surface water supplies.

Specifically, this updated project would replace the previously approved project, "Sacramento Valley Groundwater Monitoring and Modeling/Assessment and Data Gap Evaluation," for which DWR approved \$2,100,000 in Proposition 204 funding in 2009, and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) passed a resolution (2009-0079) supporting the project.

In the years since funding approval, the passage of SB X7 6 and other factors have led to increased groundwater monitoring and reporting in the Sacramento Valley.

The updated project is organized into two initiatives. The activities to be performed (documented in a summary description attached) include:

- NCWA, working with a consultant, will prepare a groundwater quality assessment report to evaluate the sources of salt and nitrate loads and the potential long-term effects of those loads on surface and groundwater resources throughout the Sacramento Valley. The estimated cost for this work is approximately \$525,000.
- NCWA, working with a consultant, will develop an Agricultural Water Management Plan (AWMP) for the irrigation water suppliers along the Feather River. This regional AWMP will include an inventory of surface water and groundwater supplies and uses and, through water balance analyses, will characterize the interaction between irrigated lands, managed wetlands and underlying groundwater systems. The estimated cost for this work is approximately \$536,000.

We are asking for a resolution from the SWRCB that will allow DWR to redirect \$1,061,000 of the \$2,100,000 previously awarded to NCWA to the revised project. The remaining \$1,039,000 will be held in the Sacramento Valley Water Management and Habitat Protection Subaccount for future projects that will help meet the flow objectives necessary to maintain water quality in the Bay-Delta.

Please contact Trevor Joseph at (916) 651-9218 or tjoseph@water.ca.gov for additional information or assistance with the preparation and presentation of the SWRCB resolution.

Sincerely,

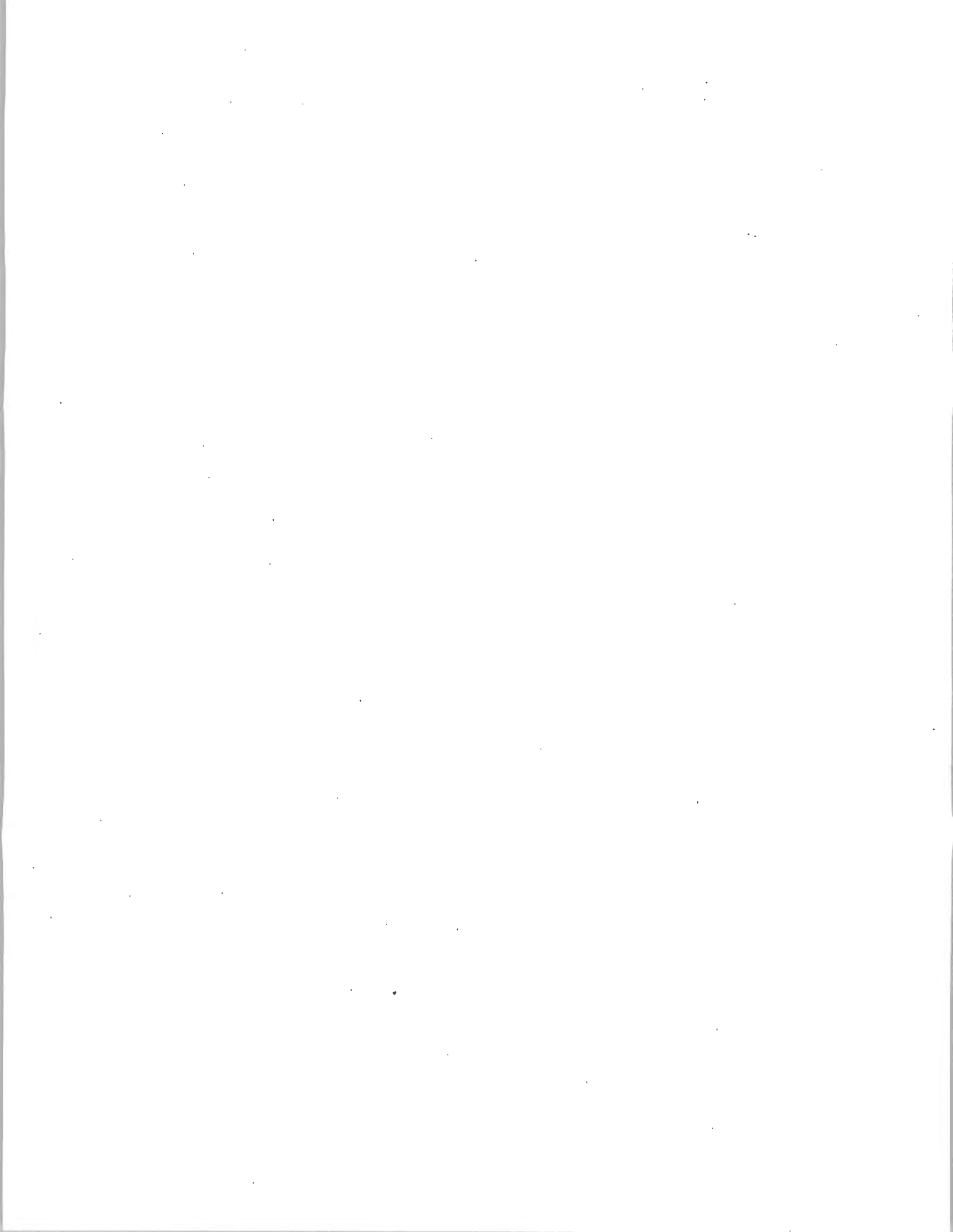


Paula J. Landis, Chief
Division of Integrated Regional Water Management

Enclosures

cc: David J. Guy, President
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Diane Riddle
State Water Resources Control Board
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Sacramento Valley Groundwater Quality Assessment Report and Feather River Regional Agricultural Water Management Plan

I. Project Description

The Sacramento Valley Groundwater Quality Assessment Report and the Feather River Regional Agricultural Water Management Plan (FRRAWMP) will assist in the implementation of the Water Quality Control Plan for the Bay-Delta by better defining certain opportunities and constraints associated with protecting beneficial uses of groundwater and producing additional groundwater supply during dry and critical water years, thereby “decreasing reliance on surface water supplies and increasing water supply for Bay-Delta estuary needs.”

Two proposed initiatives are described in the following sections.

II. Sacramento Valley Groundwater Quality Assessment Report, Communications and Outreach

The Northern California Water Association (NCWA), working with a consultant, will prepare a groundwater quality assessment report in support of efforts to evaluate the sources of salt and nitrate loads and the potential long-term effects of those loads on surface and groundwater resources throughout the Sacramento Valley. This information is essential to define sustainable management of Sacramento Valley surface water and groundwater supplies, including conjunctive management of reservoirs and aquifers for regional and statewide water supply reliability and Bay-Delta estuary needs, as well as establishing a foundation for monitoring and protecting water quality in the Sacramento Valley and the Bay-Delta.

This work will also include a communications and outreach component to assist in the dissemination of information generated by the assessment, as well as other groundwater and water management efforts in the Sacramento Valley, including the DWR CASGEM program and groundwater modeling.

Specific Tasks

1. **Groundwater Quality Assessment Report** – The three main objectives of the assessment are:
 - a. Identify where known groundwater quality impacts exist for which irrigated agricultural operations are a potential contributor or where conditions make groundwater more vulnerable to impacts from irrigated agricultural activities.
 - b. Prioritize high vulnerability areas based on those impacts
 - c. Evaluate the merit and feasibility of incorporating existing groundwater data collection efforts and their corresponding monitoring well systems to promote the objectives of other on going programs (including CASGEM and groundwater modeling) and support groundwater monitoring requirements.

2. Communications and Outreach – NCWA will also develop a communications and outreach program to improve the dissemination of information developed by grant funded activities, as well as a more complete update on the state of groundwater management in the Sacramento Valley.

III. Feather River Regional Agricultural Water Management Plan

The Feather River Regional Agricultural Water Management Plan (FRRAWMP) is the second initiative to be funded through the Sacramento Valley Groundwater Monitoring and Modeling/Assessment and Data Gap Evaluation project. NCWA, working with a consultant, will develop an Agricultural Water Management Plan (AWMP) for the irrigation water suppliers along the Feather River. The entities participating in the AWMP will include those receiving water from the Thermalito Afterbay – Western Canal Water District, Richvale Irrigation District, Biggs-West Gridley Water District, Butte Water District and Sutter Extension Water District, as well as additional water suppliers diverting water from the lower Feather River. This regional AWMP will include an inventory of surface water and groundwater supplies and uses and, through water balance analyses, will characterize the interaction between irrigated lands, managed wetlands and underlying groundwater systems. It will also include analysis of opportunities to enhance regional water management and monitoring among the participatory water suppliers.

Specific Tasks

1. Compile Data and Design Water Balances – Collect and compile historical information and design a regional water balance and individual water balances for the entities participating in the regional AWMP. The focus of this effort is to learn and understand the water monitoring activities currently occurring in the region and use this information to assess the adequacy of these activities and determine if data gaps exist.

2. Develop and Document Supplier and Regional Water Balances – Compile and analyze data to prepare historical water balances for the participating suppliers and the region to serve as a basis for assessing water management practices and identifying opportunities for improvement. The focus of this effort is to determine the participating entities' ability to assist in programs to enhance water supply reliability in the Sacramento Valley and potentially in other areas of the state.

3. Develop Regional Targeted Benefits (TBs) and Quantifiable Objectives (QOs) – In consultation with regional water managers, establish regional TBs and QOs with the purpose of establishing common and comprehensive water management goals for the entities participating in the regional AWMP.

4. Prepare Water Supplier Descriptions (by Supplier) – Develop descriptions of the individual water suppliers according to DWR's Guidelines for Preparing Agricultural Water Management Plans.

- 5. Assess and Screen Efficient Water Management Practices (by supplier)** – Evaluate the 14 conditional efficient water management practices cited in the water code for each individual supplier participating in the regional AWMP to identify those EWMPs already being implemented and those that are not being implemented but are technically feasible.
- 6. Prepare Water Measurement and Volumetric Billing Plans (by qualifying or interested supplier)** – Develop the measurement and billing program for the water suppliers participating in the AWMP to assist their efforts to comply with state requirements.
- 7. Conduct Benefit-Cost Analyses for Selected Efficient Water Management Practices (by supplier)** – Develop benefit-cost analyses for selected EWMPs for the purpose of making customized recommendation for inclusion in the EWMPs which EWMPs should be implemented by the individual water suppliers.
- 8. Prepare Draft and Final Regional Agricultural Water Management Plan** – Develop a draft and final Agricultural Water Management Plan for the purpose of facilitating efficient regional water management and complying with state requirements.

IV. Project Funding

It is estimated that the cost to implement the proposed initiatives is \$1,061,000. Of this total cost, approximately \$525,000 will be used for the Sacramento Valley Groundwater Quality Assessment Report, Communications and Outreach and \$536,000 for the development of the Feather River Regional Agricultural Water Management Plan.

