WOMT Summary 5/22/2007

The Project Agencies (PAs; California Department of Water Resources and United States Bureau of Reclamation) will inform the Management Agencies (California Department of Fish and Game, United States Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries), by letter documenting the operational constraints and circumstances, why the PAs have not been able to maintain positive Old and Middle rivers flow.

Attachment:
LetterToFWSReInabilityToMeetZeroOrPositiveOMRFlows20070531.pdf

Please note new contact information

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA – THE RESOURCES AGENCY

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, *Governor*

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
1416 NINTH STREET, P.O. BOX 942836
SACRAMENTO, CA 94236-0001
(916) 653-5791

May 31, 2007

Mr. Roger Guinee
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
California/Nevada Operations Office
2800 Cottage Way, Suite W-2806
Sacramento, California 95825-0509

Dear Mr. Guinee:

As you know, on May 15, 2007, the Delta Smelt Working Group (DSWG) recommended increasing and maintaining Old and Middle River (OMR) flows to greater than or equal to zero to prevent further entrainment of delta smelt. The Water Operations Management Team agencies discussed the recommendation and the Project Agencies agreed to take actions within the limits of their operational flexibility to implement the recommendation. These actions were as follows:

1. The CVP and State Water Project (SWP) reduced their combined exports from 1,500 cfs, the level required under the Vernalis Adaptive Management Plan protocols, to 1,250 cfs (850 cfs at the CVP and 400 cfs at the SWP) beginning May 16, 2007.

   This reduced level of exports represents the minimum possible pumping level given the constraints on operations to provide necessary SWP supplies to South Bay Aqueduct urban customers, and for the CVP to operate one pump unit only at Jones Pumping Plan to maintain supplies to the City of Tracy and agricultural users upstream of the O'Neill pumps. (No water is being stored at this time.) Reducing exports to zero would pose health and safety issues for municipal users.

2. The Department of Water Resources opened all six of the culverts on the Head of Old River Barrier on May 16, 2007.

3. DWR initiated the removal of the HORB on May 15, 2007. (The process to fully breach the HORB takes seven days.)

4. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation sustained flows on the Stanislaus River at the higher, VAMP-level of release for a longer period than originally planned. The VAMP release of 1,500 cfs at Goodwin Dam was scheduled to end on May 19, 2007, to coincide with the end of the VAMP period on May 22, 2007, but Reclamation supplemented base flows with "difference water" to maintain 1,500 cfs releases through June 1st, two weeks beyond VAMP.

Although positive flow at OMR was achieved for one day on May 22, 2007, it is not possible to achieve the positive OMR flows as recommended by the DSWG on a sustained basis, even if the CVP and SWP were to reduce their Delta exports to zero. Factors that may preclude a consistent positive OMR flow are: decreasing San Joaquin River flows, increasing summer local diversions (most of which are unscreened), and monthly astronomical tides.

Local, non-Project, diversions in the southern Delta have a negative effect on flows in OMR. For example, Contra Costa Water District's Old River Pumping Plant just upstream of the Old River flow gauging station has been diverting approximately 100 cfs on average over the last two weeks. Also, neap and spring tidal cycles cause a net filling and draining of the Delta twice each month, which can have a significant affect on OMR flow. In order to appreciate the average OMR flow absent the influence of the monthly tidal affect, an averaging period which extends through at least half of a full lunar tidal cycle (14 days) would be necessary.

Please contact John Leahigh of my staff at (916) 574-2722 if you have any questions about this matter.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

David H. Roose, Chief
SWP Operations Control Office
Division of Operations and Maintenance

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