SUPPLEMENTAL FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

2009 Drought Water Bank

For a Water Transfer from
Participating Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority Member Contractors
to Participating San Luis Delta-Mendota Canal Authority Member Contractors

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Mid-Pacific Region
Sacramento, California

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BACKGROUND

To help facilitate the transfer of water throughout the State, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) initiated a 2009 Drought Water Bank (DWB). The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Final Environmental Assessment (EA) for the 2009 DWB dated April 15, 2009 are available at http://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa_projdetails.cfm?Project_ID=3591. The 2009 DWB Final EA analyzed a total of up to 199,885 acre-feet (af) of water that could be made available from Central Valley Project (CVP) contractors for transfer through a combination of crop idling, crop substitution, groundwater substitution, and reservoir reoperation. The 2009 DWB Final EA analyzed a maximum of 140,528 af of water made available for transfer by crop idling/substitution transfers and 56,600 af by groundwater substitution by CVP contractors. To date DWR has purchased only a total of 36,307 af through the 2009 DWB. 7,817 af of this water was made available by crop idling and 28,490 af was made available by groundwater substitution.

The Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority (TCCA) member contractors were identified as potential buyers in the 2009 DWB EA. However, due to unanticipated increases to their CVP allocation from what was initially forecast, participating TCCA member contractors have determined they have a quantity of CVP available for transfer. Accordingly, on behalf of its member contractors, the TCCA has requested Reclamation approval of transfer of this water to San Luis Delta-Mendota Water Authority (SLDMWA) for use by their member agencies. SLDMWA was identified in the 2009 DWB EA as a potential buyer.

The proposed action involves the transfer of a total of up to 30,000 af (up to 7,000 af by crop shifting and up to 28,000 af by groundwater substitution). These transfer quantities, when added to DWB transfer quantities, are below the maximum quantities analyzed in the 2009 DWB Final EA, and the impacts associated with proposed action were analyzed and disclosed in the 2009 DWB Final EA. Additional NEPA analyses would be required if additional transfers are identified that would result in the total transfer quantities analyzed in the 2009 DWB Final EA being exceeded. Accordingly, this supplemental FONSI is intended to disclose this change from what was described in the 2009 DWB EA.

Reclamation proposes to approve the proposed transfer of up to 30,000 af of CVP water from participating TCCA member contractors to participating SLDMWA member contractors in accordance with the Interim Guidelines for the Implementation of Water Transfers under the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) and within the transfer quantities analyzed in the 2009 DWB Final EA.

The transfer water will be made available through a combination of groundwater substitution and voluntary crop shifting actions implemented by the participating TCCA member contractors during the 2009 water year. These actions were taken in the beginning of the 2009 water year when initial CVP water allocations were announced at 10%. In response, the water districts and farmers in those districts increased groundwater pumping, altered cropping and purchased additional water from water suppliers in the basin. Because of the increased precipitation in the February through May period of 2009, Reclamation increased the water supply allocation for each transferor to 40% of contract supply in May 2009. However, because of the cropping and water use decisions that water users within each transferor's service area had already made, the additional allocation from Reclamation will be the source of the surplus that each transferor is offering to be a part of the proposed water transfer. Crop shifting actions under the proposed action will not include rice fields.

All transfer water will be conveyed and diverted through the Delta by September 30, 2009 and delivered to the Participating SLDMWA Member Contractors by February 29, 2010 (or rescheduled into storage at San Luis Reservoir by February 29, 2010). The total quantity of transferred water to be delivered to the participating SLDMWA member contractors will be reduced by an estimated 15-25 percent to account for Delta carriage losses.

The transferred water will be used within the service areas of the San Luis and Delta-Mendota canals to irrigate only lands that were under irrigation during the last 3-year period (2006-2008) and the delivery of the transfer water to such lands, in addition to Reclamation's allocation of CVP water to those lands, will not exceed the total CVP contract quantity for the respective CVP contractors receiving the transfer water.

FINDINGS

A supplemental EA was prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed action and the no action alternative. The supplemental EA is attached for reference.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the Mid-Pacific Regional Office of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has found that the proposed water transfer of up to 30,000 acre feet of water from participating Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority member contractors to participating San Luis Delta-Mendota Water Authority member contractors is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required.

This finding of no significant impact is based on the following:

- The proposed action would not affect the following resources beyond what was analyzed and disclosed in the 2009 DWB EA: water quality, geology and soils, air quality, power, cultural resources, socioeconomics, environmental justice, climate change, aesthetics, recreation, noise, hazardous and toxic waste, Indian trust assets and transportation and traffic. The proposed action would not have any cumulative effects beyond what was analyzed in the 2009 DWB EA.

- While this amount of water would be coming from different entities than those listed in the 2009 DWB EA, it would still be coming from within the Sacramento Valley Groundwater Basin, as analyzed in the 2009 DWB EA and the total quantity of water transferred under the 2009 DWB and the proposed action would be less than the maximum quantity analyzed in the 2009 DWB EA. Therefore the impacts of the proposed action would be within those analyzed in the 2009 DWB EA.

- No conversion of habitat for fish and wildlife species will occur as a result of application of the water made available under the proposed action. The conditions that have made the transfer water available, as previously described, would have existed notwithstanding the proposed transfer. No additional change in crop patterns, surface or groundwater use, fish and wildlife habitat or other conditions in the service areas of the transferors would occur as a result of the transfer. Reclamation is coordinating with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to amend the 2009 DWB Biological Opinion to include the participating TCCA districts as sellers. Reclamation has determined that the proposed action would not affect special status species beyond what was analyzed and disclosed for the 2009 DWB.