

DELTA-MENDOTA CANAL UNIT

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
LONG-TERM CONTRACT RENEWAL

Executive Summary

February 2005

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This environmental assessment evaluates the consequences of implementing provisions associated with the renewal of long-term water service contracts to contractors in the Delta-Mendota Canal Unit of the Delta Division of the Central Valley Project. These provisions are embodied in four alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2, and the Preferred Alternative. The No-Action Alternative is the same as the Preferred Alternative identified in the Central Valley Project Improvement Act Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. Alternative 1 is based upon, but differs slightly from the counterproposal prepared by the contractors in April 2000. Alternative 2 is based upon, but differs slightly from the proposal initially submitted by the government in November 1999, to which the contractors responded with their counterproposal. The Preferred Alternative is the final negotiated contract that falls between Alternative 1 and Alternative 2.

This environmental assessment contains five chapters. Chapter 1 discusses the purpose and need for the action of renewing the long-term water service contracts. It discusses the basis for such renewals across the entire Central Valley Project and within the Delta-Mendota Canal Unit. It also discusses the relationship between contract renewals and the Central Valley Project Improvement Act Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and reviews several related actions and programs that affect water supply reliability south of the Delta.

Chapter 2 describes the four alternatives and includes reviews of the long-term contract renewal process and relevant issues, including water needs analyses, water transfers, tiered water pricing, the definition of municipal and industrial users, and water measurement within the context of each alternative. The table at the end of Chapter 2 compares the provisions of the four alternatives.

Chapter 3 reviews the affected environment and environmental consequences that could result from implementation of either Alternative 1 or Alternative 2 when compared to the No-Action Alternative. The Preferred Alternative is not addressed in this chapter because its provisions lie between the range of alternatives analyzed in this EA with respect to potential impacts.

The No-Action Alternative is the Preferred Alternative identified in the Central Valley Project Improvement Act Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. Chapter 3 begins with descriptions of the 20 contractors in the Delta-Mendota Canal Unit. The affected environment and environmental consequences of Alternatives 1 and 2 are then

evaluated for agriculture; socioeconomics; land use; air quality; soils and geology; groundwater; surface water resources; biological, cultural, recreational, and visual resources; and public health. Table ES-1 summarizes the environmental consequences that could result from implementation of Alternative 1, Alternative 2, or the Preferred Alternative when compared to the No-Action Alternative. Cumulative impacts on a Central Valley Project-wide basis are addressed in the Central Valley Project Improvement Act Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. Beyond those cumulative impacts, there are no additional cumulative impacts attributable from Alternative 1, Alternative 2, or the Preferred Alternative that would contribute to cumulative impacts.

Chapter 4 reviews other considerations, including environmental justice and Indian trust assets.

Chapter 5 reviews consultation and coordination activities conducted as part of the long-term contract renewal process.