

Delta-Mendota Canal Recirculation Feasibility Study

Stakeholder Alternatives Development Workshop Summary

December 12, 2006, 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Modesto Centre Plaza, Modesto, CA

Workshop Purpose

- Engage stakeholders in the development of alternatives to be considered as part of the Feasibility Study

Background and Workshop Objectives

Sam Cervantes, Outreach Coordinator, provided background and process for stakeholder involvement and described workshop purpose and anticipated outcome.

Goals and Objectives Discussion and Comments

Maury Kruth, Reclamation Project Manager, reviewed the Goals and Objectives for the DMC Recirculation Feasibility Study based on legislative and regulatory requirements (PL 108-361, D-1641, and CALFED ROD requirements). They include:

Primary Objectives

- Provide flow for meeting water quality and fishery flow objectives (PL 108-361)
- Reduce salinity concentrations in the San Joaquin River for meeting water quality and fishery flow objectives (PL 108-361)
- Reduce the reliance on the New Melones Reservoir for meeting water quality and fishery flow objectives (PL 108-361)
- Meet and/or augment the Vernalis objectives and San Joaquin River water quality objectives (D-1641)
- Reduce salinity and improve dissolved oxygen in the San Joaquin River (CALFED ROD and PL 108-361)

Secondary Objectives

- Assist in meeting south Delta water quality objectives.
- Assist in improving south Delta water levels for agricultural purposes.

Comment: It was asked that the primary objectives portion of the project include “meeting all water export requirements” and questioned why meeting south Delta water quality objectives is not a primary objective. It was noted that the State Board considers the Brandt Bridge standard to be a San Joaquin River standard, but the other two south Delta locations are not. Based on that comment, some commentors suggested that the primary objectives as described should include Brandt Bridge.

Comment: List all Reclamation responsibilities and ensure that they are accomplished.

Elements of Scenario Formulation Comments

Dan Steiner, consulting engineer, presented and led the discussion on the Elements of Scenario Formulation.

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- Why “no net loss” considered if this is a feasibility study?
- The goals and objectives should include “Use re-circulation as a tool to help to achieve ...”, otherwise San Luis Drain Features Re-Evaluation project could be deemed an alternative. Tie recirculation to the purposes and objectives.
- What is “excess capacity?” Described as an “augmentation” of flows from the west side via pumping.
- Will VAMP be around in the future? Likely some version will be in place in the future.
- New Melones Reservoir—Stanislaus River vs. VAMP objectives? Where should it be layered?
- Dissolved oxygen requirements pertain to the whole system, not just the Deep Water Ship Channel.
- There are two dissolved oxygen standards: one for the Deep Water Ship Channel and another for the South Delta sloughs.
- Vernalis flow below 1000 cfs means you cannot irrigate due to low water levels in the south Delta.
- “Interior Stations” (Elements of Scenario Formulation handout) are misnamed and will change with SDIP.
- Need to limit measuring points for “water levels” geographically because tidal flows are the predominant factor. Effects of San Joaquin River flows are minimal on south Delta water levels.
- SDIP requires certain water levels.
- Increased exports will likely degrade water levels.
- Should the DMC-CA Intertie be considered in determining “excess capacity?” Should add Intertie under “CVP Exports” column.

Alternative Formulation Framework Comments

Dan Steiner and Terry Cooke, URS consultant, presented the Alternative Formulation Framework matrix and led discussion regarding potential alternatives

- “Excess capacity?” Classifications are needed.
- There are differences within the Federal law relative to “excess capacity.” Is there a limit to CVP capacity? When and under what circumstances? There are different ways to define it relative to each alternative.
- The alternatives will put “excess” in context for each option and will indicate results. Similarly, this will be done with the concept of “no net loss.”
- What are the “cost” considerations?”
- Strive for “no net loss” but the priority consideration should go to the permits.
- Suggest sidebar analysis of water quality
- The operational hierarchy is more important than conveyance.
- There is less loss of water with “internal” recirculation.
- Will losses be attributed to b(2) water? Needs Reclamation interpretation.

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Preliminary Evaluation Metrics Comments

Terry Cooke, presented and led the discussion on the Preliminary Evaluation Metrics.

- Comments included a recommendation to add the use of b(2) with various changes in water supply.
- Incorporate New Melones as it changes.

Additional Stakeholder Topics

- Baseline
- Common assumptions
- Evaluation metrics

Follow-Up and Supplemental Information

- Additional workshop comments should be submitted by January 9, 2007.
- An electronic version of the Alternatives Formulation Framework will be distributed via e-mail to the stakeholder mailing list.
- The California Department of Water Resources has indicated an interest in becoming the CEQA lead.
- A Cooperating Agency letter will be distributed.

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Supplemental Comments (received to date)

The recirculation study up to this point has failed to consider let alone model the effects that flows from Friant Dam could have on meeting downstream water quality objectives. While there were probably a host of largely political reasons why this was never done, now that there is a settlement with fairly specific flow requirements available, it is time to model their effect. We would like to request that this be done as a first priority since it has been absent thus far and could very likely obviate the need for a recirculation plan all together. It would be a waste of time and taxpayer dollars to spend the next year modeling scenarios that do not include the significant increase in flows from the upper San Joaquin which are scheduled to begin as early as 2009. I am sorry that I cannot attend in person, but intend to be an active participant in the future. Thank you for receiving and including these comments along with those you will get in tomorrow's meeting. – Natural Resources Defense Council