

Chapter 7

Coordination, Consultation, and Public Involvement

The public, stakeholders, public agencies, landowners, and other interested parties have been engaged throughout the Investigation and will continue throughout subsequent implementation phases if a project is authorized by Congress. Since the initiation in 2001 of feasibility studies to enlarge Los Vaqueros Reservoir, Reclamation and CCWD have conducted formal scoping and consultation with permitting agencies, as well as informal agency communications, interagency meetings, and public meetings. This chapter summarizes public involvement and engagement, stakeholder outreach, environmental review, and agency coordination activities undertaken by Reclamation and CCWD.

Public Involvement and Engagement and Stakeholder Outreach

In Phase 1 of the Investigation, an extensive public and stakeholder involvement process was implemented that included a Customer and Stakeholder Feedback Group, an Agency Coordination Work Group, public workshops, stakeholder and agency meetings, newsletters, and a project website. Between 2001 and the public scoping process initiated in early 2006, Reclamation and CCWD conducted more than 170 meetings with regional water task forces, city and county governments and local water agencies (approximately 100), elected officials (approximately 15), media (approximately 10), other Delta-related projects, environmental and stakeholder groups, homeowners associations in the project area, and potentially-affected landowners (approximately 45).

During the period of study in which CALFED was still active, CCWD and Reclamation presented at various CALFED-related public meetings, including environmental justice workshops, and tribal forums. Meetings were held with agency staff working as part of multi-agency CALFED workgroups, as well as staff working only for their respective agencies on non-CALFED-related activities. Reclamation, DWR, and CCWD were also regular participants in the CALFED Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee, Water Supply Subcommittee.

Public and stakeholder involvement has continued throughout Phase 2 of the Investigation. The Agency Coordination Work Group formed in 2003 was discontinued after Phase 1 expansion was completed and replaced by one-on-one coordination meetings between the Local Agency Partners and CCWD; multi-agency meetings among Reclamation, CCWD, and Local Agency Partners; and meetings among CCWD, Reclamation, Refuge managers, non-governmental organizations, and other Refuge stakeholders. Public meetings to present the Phase 2 expansion project and receive input were also held after the Supplement to the Final EIS/EIR was released to the public in July 2017 (see below under Environmental Review).

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In addition, presentations and discussions of the Phase 2 expansion occurred regularly in venues such as East Bay Leadership Council Water Task Force meetings, Bay Area Regional Reliability Drought Task Force meetings, Association of California Water Agency meetings and conferences, and Water Education Foundation activities.

Environmental Review

This section summarizes activities conducted to satisfy NEPA and CEQA requirements for public scoping, agency consultation, and coordination associated with preparation of the Draft and Final EIS/EIR and the Supplement. Additional detail can be found in the 2009 Draft EIS/EIR and 2010 Final EIS/EIR.

Draft and Final EIS/EIR

Reclamation is the lead agency pursuant to NEPA, and CCWD is the lead agency pursuant to CEQA. Reclamation published a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register on December 20, 2005 to advise interested agencies and the public that an EIS would be prepared. On January 10, 2006, CCWD published and distributed a Notice of Preparation to advise interested agencies and the public that an EIR would be prepared. CCWD distributed the Notice of Preparation to approximately 80 agencies, elected officials, and interested parties. In addition to the Notice of Preparation, Notice of Intent, and Scoping Report, numerous informational materials were publicly distributed to inform stakeholders about the Investigation and to solicit their input. These materials included press releases, newspaper notices, Reclamation new releases, web site postings, and general notification flyers.

A 70-day scoping comment period extended from December 20, 2005 through February 28, 2006. The public was invited to submit written comments on the scope, content, and format of the environmental document by mail, fax, or email to representatives at CCWD and Reclamation. Four formal scoping meetings were held to gather input and comments prior to the development of the EIS/EIR. Approximately 55 people attended the four meetings.

The Draft EIS/EIR was released for public review in February 2009. In accordance with CEQA and NEPA requirements, the 2009 Draft EIS/EIR was circulated for public and agency review and comment for a 60-day period following the publishing of the Notice of Availability of the EIS by the EPA, and filing of the Notice of Completion with the California State Clearinghouse. Five public hearings were held during the public comment period.

A Scoping Report was prepared and was included in Appendix A, Notices and Public Involvement, of the 2009 Draft EIS/EIR. The report outlines the process and outcome of the scoping meetings and other activities; outlines scoping requirements; lists all documents/products generated for project outreach; summarizes comments made during the scoping process; describes issues anticipated to be addressed in the 2010 Final EIS/EIR; and provides copies of all written comments, summaries of the scoping meetings, and other project-related print materials used to inform interested parties about the project alternatives and the 2010 Final EIS/EIR.

Supplement to the Final EIS/EIR

Public scoping for the EIS/EIR in compliance with NEPA and CEQA was completed in 2008. No additional public scoping was required for the Supplement. The draft Supplement was circulated for a 60-day public comment period following release of the Notice of Availability on July 3, 2017. Six public meetings were held in August 2017 to hear public comment. The meetings consisted of both open house and formal hearing components, and were held in Sacramento, San Jose, Concord, Oakland, Brentwood, and Los Banos. Comments received at the hearings and submitted in writing during the public comment period will be considered by Reclamation and CCWD in preparing the feasibility report and the Final Supplement.

Agency Consultation and Coordination

Agency consultation and involvement occurred throughout the Investigation, both informally and formally. Outreach activities included coordination with and input from public agencies such as DWR, USFWS, Department of Fish and Game, NMFS, and local water agencies. In Phase 1 coordination was conducted through regularly-held Agency Coordination Work Group meetings and briefings, and in Phase 2 coordination was conducted with individual agencies and with the agencies' Refuge water managers. The study management structure included the active participation of numerous cooperating agencies pursuant to NEPA, representatives from resources agencies, and other stakeholders. The NEPA Cooperating Agencies included the DWR, NMFS, USACE, USFWS, and Western Area Power Administration.

Following release of the 2010 Final EIS/EIR, Reclamation and CCWD engage interested agencies and stakeholders to support permitting and implementation efforts for the selected action (160 TAF dam raise). In particular, CCWD and Reclamation held meetings with NMFS, USFWS, and Department of Fish and Game. CCWD also engaged with agencies with permitting authority over the approved project, including USACE, Regional Water Quality Control Board, State Water Resources Control Board, Reclamation Districts 2040 and 800, California State Office of Historic Preservation, Bay Area Air Quality Management District, and others.

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