

Central Valley Project (CVP) Water Transfer Program Fact Sheet Revised February 2015

- Water transfers and exchanges are an integral part of CVP water operations, particularly in drought years, as long as transfers can occur consistent with state and federal laws governing water transfers. **In 2014, Reclamation facilitated the transfer of over 257,000 acre-feet of water. Of the 257,000 acre-feet, 213,220 acre-feet was considered “new water” to the system, meaning specific actions (such as reservoir reoperation, crop idling/shifting, groundwater substitution, or Yuba Accord purchases) were taken to make the water available. The remaining quantity was considered an in-basin transfer or a reallocation of contract supply.**
- §3405(a) of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act of 1992 (CVPIA) authorizes the transfer of all or a portion of a CVP contractor's contracted water supply to any other California water user or water agency, State or Federal agency, Indian Tribe, or private non-profit organization for project purposes or any purpose recognized as beneficial under State law.
- CVP water transfers are subject to the conditions prescribed in §3405(a), 1993 Interim Guidelines for Implementation of Water Transfers, and the Department of the Interior Final CVPIA Administrative Proposal on Water Transfers (1998).
- Water transfer provisions of CVPIA do not apply to permanent contract assignments under which a CVP contractor relinquishes their contractual right to Project water; water banking and recharge actions outside of the contractor's boundaries; water for water exchanges; forbearance actions whereby CVP contractors are paid not to exercise their right to water; and transfers of base supply water under settlement contracts which are carried out in accordance with State law.
- Since 1992, the Region and the State of California Department of Water Resources, owners and operators of the two largest water projects in California, have collaborated to develop criteria to facilitate water transfers.
- The Region facilitates both short and long-term transfers of CVP water. Long-term transfer approvals are accomplished through programmatic environmental documentation, with annual approvals of physical water transfers.

Established MP Water Transfer Programs

Accelerated Water Transfer Programs (AWTP)

The AWTP allows water transfer and/or exchange agreements between CVP contractors that had historically occurred before enactment of CVPIA to be acknowledged by Reclamation. These types of transfers are often referred to as a reallocation of contract supply within a basin. AWTP actions have occurred since 1996. Reclamation currently has in place required environmental documentation for the transfer and exchange of up to 500,000 acre-feet of water covering the following areas:

- Sacramento Valley; (2) Friant Division contractors, (3) South of Delta CVP contractors, including those in the Delta Division, San Felipe Division and San Luis Unit. The SOD AWTP also allows Cross Valley contractors to transfer to SOD contractors, and the Friant AWTP allows Friant Division contractors to transfer to Cross Valley contractors.

San Joaquin River Exchange Contractor (SJREC) Transfers

In July of 2013, Reclamation signed a Record of Decision for a transfer program that may provide for the transfer and/or exchange of up to 150,000 acre-feet of substitute water from the Exchange Contractors in non-critical years to several potential users over a 25-year time frame (water service years 2014–2038). Distribution of this water depends on the CVP's annual water supply allocation, with more water going to west side SLDMWA contractors in lower allocation years. EAs are also in place for the transfer of up to 50,000 acre-feet of additional water from the SJREC to SLDMWA contractors and the wildlife refuges; however, this water would be made available through crop idling by the SJREC. Programmatic approval also exists for an annual transfer of up to 20,000 acre-feet available by groundwater pumping, water conservation and fallowing to SLDMWA contractors. EAs are also in place for individual members of the SJREC, specifically the Central California Irrigation District for 20,500 acre-feet and the Firebaugh Canal Water District for 5,000 acre-feet, to annually transfer water made available by groundwater substitution to various SLDMWA contractors.