

Introduction

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has filed a petition with the State Water Resources Control Board (Board) to change several conditions to its existing water rights permits addressing the operation of the Central Valley Project (CVP) facilities. As part of the Board's evaluation of the petition, the Board must consider the potential consequences that the project may have on the environment pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

As lead agency, the Board has determined that the project may have an adverse effect on the environment and therefore concluded that preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is needed to comply with CEQA.

The Board distributed the *Draft Program Environmental Impact Report for the Consolidated and Conformed Place of Use* (DEIR) in December 1997. The document was made available for a 45-day review period. This document constitutes the Final EIR addressing the Proposed Project.

1.1 Background

Reclamation filed a petition in 1985 to make four changes to its water rights permits issued by the Board for the operation of nine CVP facilities. The petitioned changes were to: (1) consolidate the CVP authorized place of use (POU); (2) expand the POU; (3) conform the purposes of use; and, (4) extend the time to complete full beneficial use of water under the permits. The petition was noticed in July 1986 and a copy is presented in Appendix A of the DEIR.

In 1995, Reclamation amended its petition before the Board to: exclude the Black Butte and New Melones projects that were addressed in three of the permits and (2) reduce the requested (POU) expansion area from about 4,000,000 acres to 851,513 acres. This latter area consisted of lands located outside the authorized POU but were eligible to receive CVP water under existing contracts with Reclamation.

Based on continued evaluation of the POU boundary and development of Reclamation's Geographic Information System (GIS), corrections were made to the land area encompassed in Reclamation's petition. The corrected acreage of land was further reduced from 851,513 acres to 834,667 acres. This latter acreage was addressed in the 1997 DEIR.

The POU boundaries, as depicted in the DEIR, did not accurately depict the POU boundaries on the POU maps on file with the Board. This Final EIR depicts POU boundaries that are consistent with the permit maps on file.

The correction of the maps in this Final EIR results in a recalculation of the acreage of land outside the authorized POU, reducing it from 834,667 acres to 785,658 acres, and the number of affected CVP water contractor service areas was reduced from 26 to 19. Section 2 of this

Final EIR presents a detailed description of the POU, affected CVP water contractors, and associated environmental resources that continue to be relevant to this assessment.

1.2 Purpose and Need for the Project

The purpose of the Proposed Project is to change several terms and conditions in 16 water rights permits issued by the Board for the operation of the CVP facilities. Specifically, the Proposed Project (pending petition) would:

- Conform the purpose of use in the individual permits so that the 16 existing permits authorize use of water for the nine purposes shown in Table 1-1 (at the end of this section).
- Consolidate the authorized POU for water diverted from authorized CVP sources so that new POU maps identify all areas where water from a particular facility may be delivered consistent with the current integrated operation of the CVP.
- Increase the authorized POUs in the appropriate permits by: (1) including encroachment lands, consisting of lands that have already received CVP water within the respective CVP water contractor service areas but are presently outside the authorized POUs; and, (2) including expansion lands, consisting of lands outside the authorized POUs that have never received CVP water but are entitled to service under an existing CVP water contract.

Based on the purpose of the pending petition, the Proposed Project would:

- Allow Reclamation to use, or deliver CVP water for subsequent use, consistent with the nine beneficial uses for which water may be appropriated pursuant to State law. At present, the purposes of use assigned by the various CVP water rights permits are not consistent with the integrated operations of the existing CVP facilities.
- Allow Reclamation to deliver CVP water to all areas where water from a particular facility may be used consistent with the integrated operation of the CVP.
- Allow Reclamation to continue to deliver CVP water supplies contracted in accordance with federal reclamation law, in a manner consistent with state law. At this time, water is delivered to encroachment lands in a manner not consistent with existing state water rights permits. In addition, Reclamation has contracts to deliver CVP water supplies for possible future use on expansion lands that are currently not permitted by existing water rights permits.

1.3 Description of Alternatives

This document addresses three alternatives, in addition to the Proposed Project. These alternatives include:

Proposed Project Approving Changes, 1, 2, and 3 to the 16 CVP water rights permits, as requested by Reclamation in its CPOU petition.

Table 2-2 summarizes the existing land uses on encroachment and expansion lands in the 19 CVP water contractor service areas.

TABLE 2-2
Existing Land Use of Areas Outside the POU

	Encroachment Lands					Expansion Lands			
	Total Acreage	CVP Induced Agriculture	Non-CVP Induced Agriculture	CVP Induced M&I	Non-CVP Induced M&I	Irrigated AG	Dryland AG	M&I	Native Vegetation
Anderson Cottonwood Irrigation District	680	0	0	0	0	680	0	0	0
Arvin-Edison Water Storage District	3,334	321	0	949	0	1,460	0	0	604
City of Avenal	32,737	0	0	2,480	0	1,448 ^a	5,155	0	23,654
City of Coalinga	102,963	0	0	0	4,674	29,365 ^b	0	0	68,924
Colusa County Water District	806	384	0	0	0	0	0	0	422
Contra Costa Water District	359	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	359
Corning Water District	1,814	1,496	0	0	0	0	0	0	318
Del Puerto Water District	1,307	1,307	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Bay Municipal Utility District	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
El Dorado Irrigation District	711	0	0	711	0	0	0	0	0
Glenn Valley Water District	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Kanawha Water District	653	485	0	0	0	0	0	0	168
Orland-Artois Water District	65	0	65	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sacramento Municipal Utility District	2,590	0	0	2,590	0	0	0	0	0
San Benito County Water District	2,098	0	2,098	0	0	0	0	0	0
San Luis Water District	12,217	10,668	0	1,549	0	0	0	0	0
Santa Clara Valley Water District	582,111	0	1,200	0	19,712	0	0	0	561,199
Westlands Water District	40,382	30,607	0	111	0	0	247	0	9,417
Westside Water District	826	122	0	0	0	0	131	0	573
TOTAL	785,658	45,390	3,363	8,390	24,387	32,953	5,533	0	665,642

^a Value consists of 1,216 acres irrigated by Non-CVP sources and 232 acres irrigated by Westlands Water District CVP supplies.

^b Value consists of 23,409 acres irrigated by Non-CVP sources and 5,956 acres irrigated by Westlands Water District CVP supplies.