

Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration for One-Year Extension of the San Joaquin River Agreement in 2011

The San Joaquin River Group Authority (SJRGGA) proposes to continue providing water supply for the Vernalis Adaptive Management Program (VAMP) by extending the San Joaquin River Agreement (SJRA) one year through 2011 for the purpose of completing the VAMP as authorized under State Water Resources Control Board Water Rights Decision 1641 (D-1641). Specifically, the water would be used for:

- A pulse flow for a 31-day period at Vernalis during April and May, with the exact timing determined annually by the San Joaquin River Technical Committee (SJRTC); and
- Other flows identified by the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) water acquisition plan, with concurrence by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), to facilitate migration and attraction of anadromous fish, including fall attraction flows and other flows as needed by the adaptive management study, with concurrence by the Service, to support anadromous fish and provide environmental benefits in the project area.

The immediate Project Area is comprised of portions of the Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and Merced rivers and the San Joaquin River from the Mendota Pool to Vernalis in the counties of Fresno, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Tuolumne.

An Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) was prepared for the 1999-2010 SJRA. The SJRGGA has determined that the analysis in the EIS/EIR is adequate to support VAMP flows through 2011. Changes from the flows originally analyzed in the EIS/EIR would not occur. Any impacts would be within the range of impacts already analyzed in the EIS/EIR and no additional impacts would occur as a result of implementing the SJRA for one additional year. Therefore, the previous decision for CEQA compliance and associated documentation relied on for that decision adequately described the impacts of continuing the VAMP flows for one additional year.

This proposed Negative Declaration was prepared by the SJRGGA. Copies may be reviewed/obtained at the Modesto Irrigation District, at 1231 11th Street, Modesto, CA 95354 during the following hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, excluding holidays. For questions, please contact Dennis Westcot at (530) 758-8633, email westcot-sjrga@sbcglobal.net, or Ken Petruzzelli, email kpetruzzelli@olaughlinparis.com, at (530) 899-9755.

The public review period is from February 14, 2011 to March 16, 2011. Final adoption of the Negative Declaration will be considered a SJRGGA Commission meeting on March 17, 2011 at the Turlock Irrigation District Board Room. Written comments may be mailed, faxed, or e-mailed to Dennis Westcot, Project Administrator for the SJRGGA, at 716 Valencia Ave., in Davis, CA 95616-0153, fax (530) 297-2603, or e-mail westcot-sjrga@sbcglobal.net.