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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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## ES.1 INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Section 3404(c) of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA), the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) proposes to renew the long-term water service contract with the Feather Water District (District) in Sutter County, California for a period of 25 years. The District currently receives water under an interim contract that will expire on February 28, 2006. By renewing the long-term contract in 2004, Reclamation would continue delivering Central Valley Project (CVP) water to the District for 25 years, from March 01, 2005, through February 28, 2029. Two alternatives that would accomplish the purpose and need of the proposed action, as well as a no action alternative, are evaluated in this environmental assessment (EA).

The Feather Water District is in the Sacramento Valley, approximately 25 miles north of Sacramento and eight miles south of Yuba City (Figure 1-1). The District is between the Feather River and the Sutter Bypass of the Sacramento River and encompasses approximately 9,300 acres, including roads, ditches, levees, and farm buildings. An annual average of approximately 7,550 acres is in agricultural production. The majority of the land is in permanent crops, primarily orchards and alfalfa/pasture, with relatively few acres planted to annual crops or fallowed in any given year. The District currently contracts for delivery of 20,000 acre-feet (a-f) per year of CVP water for agricultural purposes. No water has historically been delivered to the District for municipal or industrial use; however the District may receive deliveries from the CVP of “other water” (water made available from the CVP other than irrigation water used primarily for agriculture and livestock) at prices identical to those established for municipal and industrial uses.

## ES.2 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

The CVPIA, Title XXXIV of the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-575), amended the previous authorizations of the CVP to include fish and wildlife protection, restoration, and mitigation as project purposes having equal priority with irrigation and domestic uses and fish and wildlife

enhancement as a project purpose equal to power generation. Section 3404(c) of the CVPIA directs the Secretary to:

“ . . . upon request, renew any existing long-term repayment or water service contract for the delivery of water for a period of 25 years and may renew such contracts for successive periods of up to 25 years each . . . (after) appropriate environmental review, including preparation of the environmental impact statement required in section 3409 . . . .”

Section 3409 of the CVPIA required the Secretary to prepare a programmatic environmental impact statement (PEIS) to evaluate the direct and indirect impacts and benefits of implementing CVPIA. Reclamation and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), the co-leads for the PEIS, released the final PEIS in October 1999 (Reclamation 1999a). This EA tiers off the PEIS to evaluate potential site-specific environmental impacts of renewing the Feather Water District’s long-term water service contract.

The purpose of this project is to renew the Feather Water District water service contract, consistent with the provisions of CVPIA. The proposed contract provides for the continued delivery of the same quantities of CVP water as were delivered under the prior long-term and interim contracts. The most significant changes in the alternatives include the terms and conditions of the contracts and tiered water pricing.

Long-term contract renewal (LTCR) is needed to:

- Continue beneficial use of water, developed and managed as part of the CVP, with a reasonable balance among competing demands, including the needs of irrigation and domestic uses; fish and wildlife protection, restoration, and mitigation; fish and wildlife enhancement; power generation; recreation; and other water uses consistent with requirements imposed by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and the CVPIA;
- Incorporate certain administrative conditions into the renewed contract to ensure CVP continued compliance with current federal reclamation law and other applicable statutes; and
- Allow the continued reimbursement to the federal government for costs related to CVP construction and operation.

The area of analysis for this EA is the Feather Water District (Figure 1-2) and land in the vicinity of the District that may be affected by the proposed action. The analysis for this EA was conducted for projected conditions in 2026, the initially proposed 25-year contract renewal period. Because the process was delayed and the current proposed 25-year contract renewal period now ends in 2029, the analysis was revisited to review the economic effects resulting from the extension of the renewal period. Such basic assumptions as land use and cropping patterns were determined not to have changed,

because the future conditions were assumed at full delivery, so the results have also not changed. The analysis that was originally completed applies to the current proposed contract period of 2029.

### **ES.3 DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES**

Three alternatives were identified for the renewal of the long-term contract between Reclamation and the Feather Water District. The alternatives present a range of water service agreement provisions that could be implemented for long-term contract renewals. The No Action Alternative consists of renewing the existing water service contract as described by the Preferred Alternative of the PEIS. In November 1999, Reclamation published a proposed long-term water service contract which is the basis of this EA's Alternative 2. In April 2000, the CVP Contractors presented an alternative long-term water service contract which is the basis of this EA's Alternative 1. Reclamation and the CVP Contractors continued to negotiate the CVP-wide terms and conditions with these proposals serving as "bookends." This EA considers these proposals with the No Action Alternative as bookends to be considered for the environmental documentation to evaluate the impacts and benefits of the renewing long-term water service contracts.

### **ES.4 SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS**

Potential impacts associated with implementing the No Action Alternative, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2 are listed in Table ES-1 and described in detail in Chapter 3 of this EA. As shown in Table ES-1, no significant impacts would occur with implementation of these alternatives.

**Table ES-1  
Summary of Potential Impacts**

<b>Resource</b>	<b>No Action Alternative</b>	<b>Alternative 1</b>	<b>Alternative 2</b>
<b>Agricultural Economics</b>	<p>CVP water use would range from 17,860 to 19,940 acre-feet and CVP water rates would range from \$4.53 per acre-foot (tier 1) to \$9.40 per acre-foot (tier 3).</p> <p>There would no substantial change in irrigated acres from existing conditions.</p> <p>Gross revenues would be approximately \$16.7 million.</p>	Same as under No Action Alternative.	<p>Compared to the No Action Alternative, there would be increases in CVP water rates but water use quantities would be similar.</p> <p>Changes in irrigated acres would be minor in all types of water years.</p> <p>Gross and net revenues would decline minimally.</p> <p>There would be losses in jobs, economic output, and place-of-work income.</p>
<b>Water Resources</b>	<p>Tiered pricing might reduce the amount of water the District decides to purchase in years where more than 80 percent of the contract amount of water is made available. However, preliminary CVPM model results suggest that cropping patterns are not likely to change because of increased water pricing.</p> <p>Regional groundwater levels would continue to decline.</p>	Same as under No Action Alternative.	<p>Tiered pricing under Alternative 2 would be the same as under No Action only when the District receives 100 percent of its contract amount in each of the preceding five years; if it received less than the full contract amount, then the cost under Alternative 2 would be higher than under No Action. However, CVPM modeling results indicate there would be a negligible change in cropping patterns and little change in water use in the District.</p> <p>If the District opts to purchase all project water available to it each year, there should be no change in groundwater use.</p>

**Table ES-1**  
**Summary of Potential Impacts** *(continued)*

<b>Resource</b>	<b>No Action Alternative</b>	<b>Alternative 1</b>	<b>Alternative 2</b>
<b>Land Use Resources</b>	There would be minimal anticipated changes to agricultural land use under the No Action Alternative.	Same as under No Action Alternative.	The overall change on the amount of irrigated acreage would be small, less than two percent, under all water year scenarios. General cultivated and fallowed acreage patterns would be similar to historical patterns, and agricultural land use would be similar to existing conditions. Renewing the long-term water contracts therefore would not result in large adverse land use effects.
<b>Biological Resources</b>	<p>No major adverse impacts to sensitive plant or animal species are expected to occur. Some impacts could occur to anadromous fish species as the pumps at both stations are not screened.</p> <p>There would be no impact to wetland or riparian habitat.</p> <p>There would be no adverse changes to plant or animal diversity/distribution and no fish or wildlife habitat degradation.</p>	Same as under No Action Alternative.	<p>Alternative 2 is expected to have minimal impacts to special status species including anadromous fish.</p> <p>Alternative 2 would not adversely affect wetlands, riparian habitats, or other special habitats.</p> <p>There would be no adverse changes to plant or animal diversity/distribution and no fish or wildlife habitat degradation.</p>
<b>Social Conditions and Environmental Justice</b>	<p>There would be no appreciable impact on Sutter County population, income, or employment rates.</p> <p>Minority or low-income populations would not be disproportionately affected.</p>	Same as under No Action Alternative.	<p>Overall employment impacts to Sutter County are likely to be minimal.</p> <p>Potential for a large impact to minority or low-income populations such as the migrant farmworker community is small due to the small size of the District and minimal anticipated changes in employment.</p>

**Table ES-1**  
**Summary of Potential Impacts** *(continued)*

<b>Resource</b>	<b>No Action Alternative</b>	<b>Alternative 1</b>	<b>Alternative 2</b>
<b>Recreational Resources</b>	No impacts to the use or enjoyment of the Feather River or other recreational opportunities in the project vicinity are expected under the No Action Alternative.	Same as under No Action Alternative.	No large impacts to the use or enjoyment of the Feather River or other recreational opportunities in the project vicinity are expected under the No Action Alternative.
<b>Indian Trust Assets</b>	No impacts to Indian Trust Assets would occur.	Same as under No Action Alternative.	Same as under No Action Alternative.
<b>Cultural Resources</b>	No direct impacts to cultural resources would be expected.  Indirect impacts could result if it were to lead to changes in agricultural practices or land use. However, the No Action Alternative would be expected to have a small potential for influencing decisions on future agricultural practices and land use.	Same as under No Action Alternative.	No direct impacts to cultural resources would be expected.  Indirect impacts could result if it were to lead to changes in agricultural practices or land use. However, the potential for change in irrigated acreage is minimal and may result in additional pasturelands, which requires minimal disturbance and would have no effect on cultural resources.
<b>Geology and Soils</b>	No adverse impacts on soils are expected.	Same as under No Action Alternative.	No adverse impacts on soils are expected.
<b>Air Quality</b>	There would be no net increase in emissions and therefore No Action would not be subject to the Clean Air Act conformity rule.	Same as under No Action Alternative.	Same as under No Action Alternative.
<b>Visual Resources</b>	Anticipated changes to agricultural viewsheds under the No Action Alternative would be minimal.	Same as under No Action Alternative.	Agricultural viewsheds under Alternative 2 would be similar to existing conditions and the impact would be minimal.