

# Del Puerto Water District

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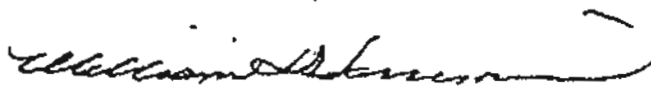
## FAX TRANSMISSION COVER SHEET

Date: December 15, 2004  
To: Mr. Joe Thompson - USBR  
FAX: 1-559-487-5397  
Sender: Bill Harrison, General Manager

Subject: Comments on Delta-Mendota Canal Unit Environmental  
Assessment - Long-Term Contract Renewal

Remarks: Mr. Thompson,

The District would like to comment that it (along with other Delta-Mendota Canal contractors) is part of the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition providing District lands compliance with the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board's Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from Irrigated Lands within the Central Valley Region (Resolution No. R5-2002-0201).



William D. Harrison  
General Manager  
DEL PUERTO WATER DISTRICT

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accelerating the rate at which these trace elements have been dissolved from the soil to accumulate in groundwater, streams, and the San Joaquin River.

Water quality in the San Joaquin River varies considerably along the river's length. Above Millerton Lake and downstream toward the Mendota Pool, water quality is generally excellent. The reach from Gravelly Ford to the Mendota Pool (about 17 miles) is frequently dry except during flood control releases, because all water released from Millerton Lake is diverted upstream to satisfy water rights agreements or percolated to groundwater. During the irrigation season, most of the water released from the Mendota Pool to the San Joaquin River is imported from the Delta via the Delta-Mendota Canal and generally has a higher concentration of total dissolved solids than that of the water in the upper reaches of the San Joaquin River. Most of the water released from the Mendota Pool to the San Joaquin River is diverted at or above Sack Dam for agricultural uses. Between Sack Dam and the confluence with Salt Slough, the San Joaquin River is often dry. From Salt Slough to Fremont Ford, most of the flow in the river is derived from irrigation returns carried by Salt and Mud Sloughs. This reach typically has the poorest water quality of any reach of the river.

As the San Joaquin River progresses downstream from Fremont Ford, water quality generally improves at successive confluences, specifically at those with the Merced, Tuolumne, and Stanislaus Rivers. In the relatively long reach between the Merced and Tuolumne Rivers, however, mineral concentrations tend to increase as a result of agricultural drainage water, other wastewaters, and effluent groundwater (DWR 1965). Total dissolved solids in the San Joaquin River near Vernalis have historically ranged from 52 mg/L (at high stages) to 1,220 mg/L from 1951 to 1962 (DWR 1965). During the mid- to late 1960s, San Joaquin River water quality continued to decline. In 1972, the State Board included a provision in Decision 1422 that Reclamation maintain average monthly total dissolved solid concentrations in the San Joaquin River at Vernalis of 500 mg/L as a condition of the operating permit for New Melones Reservoir on the Stanislaus River. The State Board's Decision 1641 implementing the 1995 Bay-Delta Plan requires both the CVP and SWP to meet Delta water quality standards. The Regional Board <sup>has</sup> ~~is~~ developing a proposed Basin Plan Amendment dealing with salinity and boron on the San Joaquin River, which is currently pending before the State Board. In addition, extensive water quality monitoring and implementation of best management practices to address water quality is being implemented through the Regional Board's Irrigation Conditional Waiver Program. The Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition has obtained an approved waiver, with most contractors in the Delta-Mendota Canal Unit DMC unit <sup>participating</sup> ~~participating~~.  
In drier years, CVP water quality and reliability decreases. First, the salinity and the concentration of organic materials from upstream soils and return flows increase in the Delta in drier years because the flow volumes from the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers decrease and salt water intrudes further upstream in the Delta.

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