

Chapter 2

1 Purpose and Need for the Action

2 2.1 Introduction

3 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations require a statement of
4 “the underlying purpose and need to which the agency is responding in
5 proposing the alternatives, including the proposed action” (40 Code of Federal
6 Regulations 1502.13).

7 2.2 Purpose of the Action

8 The purpose of the action considered in this Environmental Impact Statement
9 (EIS) is to continue the operation of the Central Valley Project (CVP), in
10 coordination with operation of the State Water Project (SWP), for the authorized
11 purposes, in a manner that:

- 12 • Is similar to historical operational parameters with certain modifications
- 13 • Is consistent with Federal Reclamation law; other Federal laws and
14 regulations; Federal permits and licenses; and State of California water rights,
15 permits, and licenses
- 16 • Enables the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the California
17 Department of Water Resources (DWR) to satisfy their contractual obligations
18 to the fullest extent possible

19 2.3 Need for the Action

20 Continued operation of the CVP is needed to provide river regulation;
21 improvement of navigation; flood control; water supply for irrigation and
22 domestic uses; fish and wildlife mitigation, protection, and restoration; fish and
23 wildlife enhancement; and power generation. The CVP and the SWP facilities
24 also are operated to provide recreation benefits and in accordance with the water
25 rights and water quality requirements adopted by the State Water Resources
26 Control Board.

27 As described in Chapter 1, Introduction, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
28 (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) concluded in their
29 2008 and 2009 Biological Opinions (BOs), respectively, that coordinated long-
30 term operation of the CVP and SWP, as described in the 2008 Reclamation
31 Biological Assessment, jeopardizes the continued existences of listed species and
32 adversely modifies critical habitat. To remedy this, USFWS and NMFS provided
33 Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives (RPAs) in their BOs.

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1 The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit confirmed the U.S. District Court
2 for the Eastern District of California ruling that Reclamation must conduct a
3 NEPA review to determine whether the RPA actions cause a significant impact on
4 the human environment. Potential modifications to the coordinated operation of
5 the CVP and SWP analyzed in the EIS process should be consistent with the
6 intended purpose of the action, be within the scope of Reclamation's legal
7 authority and jurisdiction, be economically and technologically feasible, and
8 avoid the likelihood of jeopardizing listed species or resulting in the destruction or
9 adverse modification of critical habitat in compliance with the requirements of
10 Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act.