

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Central Valley Project Interim Renewal Contracts for Cities of Avenal, Coalinga, Huron and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2017-2019

FONSI-16-015



Mission Statements

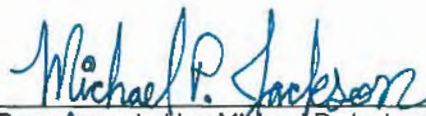
The Department of the Interior protects and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated island communities.

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
South-Central California Area Office, Fresno, California

FONSI-16-015

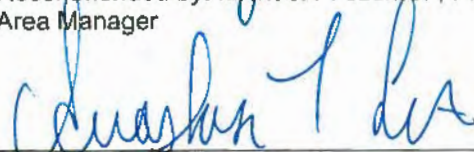
**Central Valley Project Interim Renewal
Contracts for Cities of Avenal, Coalinga,
Huron and the California Department of
Fish and Wildlife 2017-2019**



Recommended by: Michael P. Jackson, P.E.
Area Manager



Date



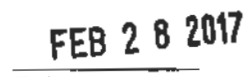
Concurred by: Anastasia Leigh
Regional Environmental Officer



Date



Approved by: Pablo Arroyave
Acting Regional Director



Date

Introduction

In accordance with section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the South-Central California Area Office of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), has determined that the proposed execution of two-year Central Valley Project (CVP) San Luis Unit interim renewal contracts with the Cities of Avenal, Coalinga, Huron, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is not a major federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment and an environmental impact statement is not required. This draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is supported by Reclamation's Environmental Assessment (EA)-16-015, *Central Valley Project Interim Renewal Contracts for Cities of Avenal, Coalinga, Huron and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2017-2019*, and is hereby incorporated by reference.

Reclamation provided the public with an opportunity to comment on the Draft FONSI and Draft EA between January 31, 2017 and February 17, 2017. No comments were received.

Background

Section 3404(c)(1) of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) authorizes and directs Reclamation to prepare appropriate environmental review before renewing an existing water service contract for a period of twenty-five years. Section 3404(c) of the CVPIA further provides for the execution of interim renewal contracts for contracts which expired prior to completion of the CVPIA Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS). Interim renewal contracts have been and continue to be undertaken under the authority of the CVPIA to provide a bridge between the expiration of the original long-term water service contracts and the execution of new long-term water service contracts as required by the CVPIA. The interim renewal contracts reflect current Reclamation law, including modifications resulting from the Reclamation Reform Act and applicable CVPIA requirements. The initial interim renewal contracts were negotiated beginning in 1994 for contractors whose long-term renewal contracts were expiring then with subsequent renewals for periods of two years or less to provide continued water service. Many of the provisions from the interim renewal contracts were assumed to be part of the contract renewal provisions in the description of the PEIS Preferred Alternative.

Proposed Action

In accordance with and as required by Section 3404(c) of the CVPIA, Reclamation proposes to execute interim renewal contracts with the Cities of Avenal, Coalinga, Huron and CDFW for contract period March 1, 2017 through February 28, 2019 as described in Section 2.2 of EA-16-015.

Environmental Commitments

Reclamation, the Cities and CDFW shall implement the environmental protection measures included in Table 2 and Appendix E of EA-16-015 to reduce environmental consequences associated with the Proposed Action. Environmental consequences for resource areas assume the measures specified would be fully implemented.

Findings

Reclamation's finding that implementation of the Proposed Action will result in no significant impact to the quality of the human environment is supported by the following findings:

Resources Eliminated from Detailed Analysis

As described in Table 3 of EA-16-021, Reclamation analyzed the affected environment and determined that the Proposed Action does not have the potential to cause direct, indirect, or cumulative adverse effects to the following resources: air quality, cultural resources, global climate change, Indian Sacred Sites, Indian Trust Assets, or Land Use.

Biological Resources

Continued delivery of CVP water under the municipal and industrial (M&I) contracts listed in Table 1 of EA-16-015 sustains the residential, commercial, and industrial activities that occur within the contract service areas of these M&I contractors. Urban, industrial, or municipal development proposed within areas of natural habitat remaining in the water service area of any of these contractors could destroy, modify, fragment, or degrade habitat of San Joaquin kit fox, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, California jewelflower, or San Joaquin woolly-threads. All of these cities are small and are not currently experiencing, nor are they anticipated to experience, significant growth over the next two years based on the current economic situation in California. In addition, the Cities have confirmed that they will not deliver water to development or converted habitat without confirmation from Reclamation or other evidence of compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Therefore, Reclamation does not anticipate a change in the type and extent of development during the two-year duration of the interim renewal contracts and any potential effects of the Proposed Action on Federally listed species are expected to be very minor. Reclamation consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the Proposed Action and received concurrence on January 4, 2017 (see Appendix E in EA-16-015).

Environmental Justice

As the Proposed Action would be a continuation of current conditions, it would not cause dislocation, changes in employment, or increase flood, drought, or disease. The Proposed Action would not disproportionately impact economically disadvantaged or minority populations as there would be no changes to existing conditions.

Socioeconomic Resources

The proposed execution of interim renewal contracts would not result in a change in contract water quantities or a change in water use and would continue water deliveries within the contractors' respective service areas. As a result, the municipal viability for the Cities would be maintained and there would be beneficial impacts to socioeconomics under the Proposed Action compared to the No Action alternative.

Water Resources

Under the Proposed Action, Reclamation would execute a two-year interim renewal contract with the Cities and CDFW in order to continue to provide CVP water. There would be no change from conditions under the existing interim renewal contract as CVP water would be placed to beneficial use within the authorized CVP place of use as it has in the past. Water delivery during the interim renewal contract period would be up to the respective contract total and would not exceed historic quantities. As the delivery of CVP water would be done through existing infrastructure for existing uses, the Proposed Action would not result in impacts to water resources.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts result from incremental impacts of the Proposed Action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment.

Biological Resources

The Proposed Action represents a continuation of existing conditions which are unlikely to result in cumulative impacts on biological resources in the Action area. The Proposed Action would continue the delivery of the same contractual amount of water to the same lands without the need for additional facility modifications or construction. In addition, the Proposed Action would be subject to regulatory constraints imposed pursuant to the ESA, regardless of whether those constraints exist today. As such, there would be no cumulative adverse impacts as a result of the Proposed Action.

Environmental Justice

The Proposed Action would not differ from current or historical conditions, and would not disproportionately affect minority or low income populations in the future; therefore, there would be no cumulative impacts as a result of the Proposed Action.

Socioeconomic Resources

The Proposed Action would maintain the status quo of delivering the same contractual amount of CVP water for existing purposes for each contractor without the need for additional facility modification or construction. As such, there would be no cumulative adverse impacts to socioeconomics.

Water Resources

The CVPIA PEIS included full contract deliveries in the assumptions regarding future use. By including full deliveries, the impact assessments were able to adequately address the hydrologic, operational, and system-wide cumulative conditions expected under future conditions. In addition, Reclamation's Proposed Action is the execution of interim renewal water service contracts between the United States and the Cities of Avenal, Coaling, Huron and CDFW. These contractors have existing interim renewal contracts, and therefore, the Proposed Action would be a continuation of existing conditions. As such, the Proposed Action, when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, would not result in cumulative effects to water resources beyond those already addressed in the CVPIA PEIS.