

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

## Finding of No Significant Impact

### Five-Year Warren Act Contracts for Conveyance of Groundwater in the Tehama-Colusa Canal – Contract Years 2018 – 2022 (March 1, 2018 through February 28, 2023)

NCAO-18-01

Prepared by:

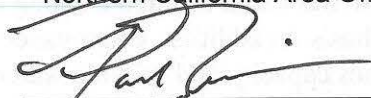


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2/27/18

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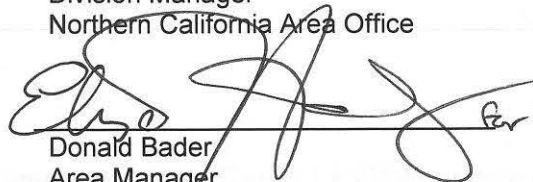


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# Background

In accordance with Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze potential impacts of executing five-year Warren Act Contracts (WACs) with requesting Central Valley Project (CVP or Project) water service contractors within the Sacramento Canals Unit (SCU) to convey groundwater in Federal facilities.

The EA was posted to Reclamation's Northern California Area Office's webpage for a 10-day public comment period ending on February 26, 2018. Comments received were limited to those from Tehama County's Flood Control and Water Resources Manager. Comments prompting revisions to the EA were largely clerical in nature (e.g. transposed and outdated figures, language clarification) and did not alter the conclusions of the assessment. To further improve the transparency of the documentation, in addition to making the corrections, Reclamation added figures depicting the locations of the Canal pools sampled under the water quality monitoring program to Appendix B of the EA.

# Proposed Action

Reclamation's Proposed Action (Project) is to issue WACs to up to 11 CVP water service contractors served by the SCU over a five-year period, beginning with water contract year 2018. The WACs will allow the contractors to introduce and convey groundwater in the Tehama Colusa Canal (Canal) to support downstream permanent crops in times of low CVP (surface) water availability, during the period of March 1, 2018 through February 28, 2023.

Combined, the quantity of groundwater that could be pumped into and conveyed in the Canal in any one year could be up to 86,200 acre-feet (AF), as demonstrated in Table 2 of EA NCAO-18-01. Water considered for transport in Federal facilities would be limited to groundwater pumped from existing wells and discharged to, and removed from, the Canal through existing facilities or through facilities reviewed and permitted on an individual basis. In addition, conveyance of groundwater in CVP facilities would be subject to available facilities capacity and suitable water quality as well as the environmental commitments identified in Section 2.2.1 of EA-NCAO-18-01. These environmental commitments include the continuation of a water quality monitoring program which will use acceptance criteria developed during California's recent "Drought State of Emergency".

# Findings

The EA was prepared in accordance with the NEPA Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Department of the Interior Regulations (43 CFR Part 46). The EA found that any potential environmental impacts from the Proposed Action would be reduced or eliminated by the environmental commitments that will be implemented in conjunction with the action. As a result, Reclamation has determined that implementing the Proposed Action is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment and, therefore, does not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact

Statement. Reclamation's determination is supported by the EA which describes the existing environmental resources in the Project area and evaluates the effects of the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative on those resources. The analysis provided in the EA is incorporated by reference and Reclamation's determination that the Proposed Action will not result in significant impacts is summarized in the following. References to sections of regulations, Executive Orders and agency policies defining "significant" are provided in parentheses, where applicable:

- The Proposed Action will not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3))
- The Proposed Action will not significantly impact natural resources and unique geographical characteristics such as historic or cultural resources; parks, recreation, and refuge lands; wilderness areas; Wild and Scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order (EO) 11990); flood plains (EO 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3) and 43 CFR 46.215(b)).
- The Proposed Action will not have possible effects on the human environment that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(5)).
- The Proposed Action will neither establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects nor represent a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)).
- There is no potential for the effects to be considered highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)).
- The Proposed Action will not have significant cumulative impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)).
- The Proposed Action has no potential to affect historic properties (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)).
- The Proposed Action will have no effect on proposed or listed threatened or endangered species (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)).
- The Proposed Action will not violate Federal, state, tribal or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)).
- The Proposed Action will not affect any Indian Trust Assets (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum dated December 15, 1993).
- Implementing the Proposed Action will not disproportionately affect minorities or low-income populations and communities (EO 12898).
- The Proposed Action will not limit access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007 and 512 DM 3).