

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

**DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

## **Firebaugh Canal Water District 5-Year Transfer Program**

**FONSI-18-025**



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
South-Central California Area Office

**November 2018**

## **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-18-025**

**Firebaugh Canal Water District 5-Year  
Transfer Program**

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# Introduction

In accordance with section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has released for public review this draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) which is supported by Reclamation's Environmental Assessment (EA)-18-025, *Firebaugh Canal Water District 5-Year Transfer Program*, hereby incorporated by reference. No final decision shall be made on the FONSI until public review has been completed and comments, if any, considered.

## Background

Firebaugh Canal Water District (Firebaugh), a member of the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors (Exchange Contractors), has requested approval from Reclamation for a series of annual transfers between 2019 and 2023 of up to 7,500 acre-feet per year (AFY) of its Central Valley Project (CVP) water supply to Pacheco Water District (Pacheco), San Luis Water District (San Luis), and Westlands Water District (Westlands) hereafter referred to as the Transfer Recipient Districts. In 2014, Reclamation analyzed the same series of annual transfers in EA-14-001 (Reclamation 2014). Based on specific environmental commitments, Reclamation determined that the proposed Agreements would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and a FONSI was issued in April 2014. Both the EA and FONSI are hereby incorporated by reference.

## Alternatives Considered

### No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, Reclamation would not approve a series of annual transfers over a five-year period (2019 through 2023) of up to 7,500 AFY of Firebaugh's CVP Contract supplies to the Transfer Recipient Districts. Reclamation would continue to deliver CVP water to Firebaugh and the Transfer Recipient Districts pursuant to their CVP contracts.

### Proposed Action

Reclamation proposes to approve a series of annual transfers over a five-year period (calendar year 2019 through 2023) of up to 7,500 AFY of Firebaugh's CVP contract (Exchange Contract) supplies to the Transfer Recipient Districts. The proposed transfers would occur from April through December of each year that water is transferred and would not exceed the maximum of 37,500 AF over the five-year period.

### Environmental Commitments

Firebaugh and the Recipient Districts shall implement the environmental protection measures listed in Table 1 of EA-18-025 to reduce environmental consequences associated with the Proposed Action. Environmental consequences for resource areas assume the measures specified would be fully implemented.

## Findings

In accordance with NEPA, Reclamation has determined that the approval of the Proposed Action is not a major federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment; consequently, an environmental impact statement is not required.

The following reasons are why the impacts from the proposed action are not significant:

- The proposed action will not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(2)).
- The proposed action will not significantly affect natural resources and unique geographical characteristics such as proximity to historic or cultural resources; parks, recreation, and refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or 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)).
- There is no potential for the effects to be considered highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)).
- 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)).
- The proposed action will not have cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)).
- The proposed action will not significantly affect historic properties (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)).
- The proposed action will not significantly affect listed or proposed threatened or endangered species, or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)).
- The proposed action will not threaten a violation of 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 adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007 and 512 DM 3).