

OR119 CMUA



CALIFORNIA MUNICIPAL UTILITIES ASSOCIATION

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Delta Stewardship Council
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RE: Delta Plan -- Draft Environmental Impact Report

The California Municipal Utilities Association (CMUA) is pleased to submit comments on the draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Delta Plan. CMUA represents most of the publically owned electric utilities in the state and many of the largest water agencies. CMUA members are responsible for approximately 25% of the electricity delivered in California.

Our comments on the draft EIR concern the section of the report entitled "Policies and Recommendation – Creating a More Natural Hydrograph." This section recommends:

- By June 2, 2014, adopt and implement updated flow objectives for the Delta that are necessary to achieve the coequal goals.
- By June 2, 2018, develop flow criteria for high-priority tributaries in the Delta watershed that are necessary to achieve the coequal goals.

As you may know, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) has just issued a Notice of Preparation to begin a review of the water quality objective of the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Bay Delta Plan).

We are deeply concerned that the draft EIR fails to analyze the impacts of the primary ecosystem tool on which the Council relies – implementation of a "more natural flow regime". The draft EIR states repeatedly that implementing a "more natural flow regime" – which we do not believe is defined in any meaningful way – will help improve the Delta ecosystem. Given the draft EIR's lack of clarity on this issue, we can only assume that implementation would result in less water being stored in reservoirs that California communities rely on. The draining of these reservoirs, particularly in the Spring, would have significant adverse impacts on California's water supplies and clean, renewable hydropower resources that helps sustains the state's energy grid.

An organization for the protection of municipally owned utilities.
CMUA members provide utility service to more than 70% of the people of California.

Response to comment OR119-1

Comment noted.

Response to comment OR119-2

Please refer to Master Response 5.

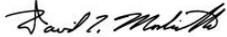
The draft EIR, however, fails to analyze these impacts that will result from redirecting water supplies to the Delta. It dismisses water-supply impacts by assuming communities will simply develop other water supplies. As you know, this is often not economically possible, or the development of the alternative water supplies comes with additional adverse environmental impacts.

Similarly, there is a lack of thorough analysis of the potential reduction in the capacity to produce hydropower. This clean, renewable electric power is critical to California and the Western U.S. The need to secure alternative power sources would be costly, both economically and environmentally.

To begin assessing these possible impacts, some CMUA members contributed to a study examining some of the impacts of implementing the 2010 Delta Flow Criteria, as proposed by the SWRCB. The study used the State Water Project/Central Valley Project systems as surrogates for the types of impacts that would be seen by Sacramento Valley users. The study revealed devastating impacts to clean hydropower generation, water supply and the environment. We realize additional studies are needed. We urge the Delta Stewardship Council to begin examining all possible impacts associated with implementing a "more natural hydrograph."

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft EIR. We look forward to working with the Delta Stewardship Council and interests throughout the California to develop an effective and equitable solution to the water supply, and environmental challenges that face the Delta.

Sincerely,



David L. Modisette
Executive Director

Response to comment OR119-3

Comment noted.

OR119-2

OR119-3