



State Water Resources Control Board



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JUL 3 1 2007

To: Enclosed Cachuma Hearing Service List and General Mailing List

RELEASE OF REVISED DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT PREPARED IN CONNECTION WITH CONSIDERATION OF MODIFICATIONS TO THE U.S. BUREAU OF RECLAMATION'S WATER RIGHT PERMITS 11308 AND 11310 (APPLICATIONS 11331 AND 11332) TO PROTECT PUBLIC TRUST VALUES AND DOWNSTREAM WATER RIGHTS ON THE SANTA YNEZ RIVER BELOW BRADBURY DAM (CACHUMA RESERVOIR) (SCH#1999051051)

The above revised draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) is available for public review. The proposed project analyzed in the revised DEIR consists of potential modifications to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) water right permits for the Cachuma Project in order to provide appropriate protection of downstream water rights and public trust resources on the Santa Ynez River. The Cachuma Project includes Bradbury Dam, which impounds water on the Santa Ynez River in northern Santa Barbara County, forming Cachuma Lake. The Cachuma Project provides water to the Cachuma Project Member Units (Member Units) for irrigation, domestic, municipal, and industrial uses. The Member Units consist of the City of Santa Barbara, Goleta Water District, Montecito Water District, Carpinteria Valley Water District, and the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District – Improvement District #1.

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) prepared a DEIR for this project and circulated it for public comment in August 2003. In comments on the 2003 DEIR, California Trout (CalTrout) argued that the DEIR should be revised to include consideration of a different project alternative designed to protect fishery resources in the Santa Ynez River. The new alternative was described as Alternative 3A2 in a 1995 Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Impact Statement prepared by Reclamation and Cachuma Project water supply contractors in connection with the renewal of the water supply contract for the Cachuma Project. In response to CalTrout's comments, the State Water Board has developed two new alternatives, Alternatives 5B and 5C that are modified versions of Alternative 3A2. The State Water Board has supplemented and revised the DEIR to analyze those alternatives. As such, the 2003 DEIR together with the subject 2007 revised DEIR constitute the final DEIR for this project.

The revised DEIR includes sections on background information and alternatives analyzed in the 2003 DEIR to establish a context for the analysis of Alternatives 5B and 5C, but focuses on the analysis of the new alternatives. In addition, the revised DEIR has been updated to reflect a number of changes that have occurred since the 2003 DEIR was prepared, the most significant being the surcharging of Lake Cachuma to 2.47 feet. Finally, the revised DEIR makes some changes and corrections in response to comments on the 2003 DEIR. The revised DEIR does not contain, however, a complete response to comments.

When revising a DEIR, the lead agency may recirculate only those portions of the document that have been revised, and request that reviewers limit their comments to the revised chapters or portions of the document. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15088.5, subd. (f)(2).) The Table of Contents of the revised DEIR identifies by italicizing those portions of the August 2003 DEIR

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that have been revised. The State Water Board requests that reviewers of the revised DEIR limit their comments to those revised portions. The State Water Board will combine comments made on the August 2003 DEIR and comments made on the revised DEIR, and include a complete response to all comments in the Final EIR that the State Water Board will prepare after circulating this document.

For the sake of consistency, the revised DEIR maintains the same outline and numbering as the original August 2003 DEIR. However, consistent with section 15088.5 of the CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et seq.), certain portions of the August 2003 DEIR that have not been revised are not included in this revised DEIR. Accordingly, the numbering of sections, tables, and figures in the revised DEIR is not always sequential. Appendices A and B of the revised DEIR are revised versions of Appendices A and B to the 2003 DEIR. Appendices C, D, and E to the 2003 DEIR have not been changed, and therefore they have not been reproduced and recirculated with the revised DEIR. The revised DEIR also includes a new Appendix F. The portions of the 2003 DEIR, including appendices that have not been reproduced in the revised DEIR are incorporated by reference. To the extent that the 2003 DEIR and the revised DEIR conflict, the revised DEIR supersedes the 2003 DEIR.

Regarding environmental impacts, the revised DEIR finds that one of the alternatives analyzed (Alternative 5B) could result in shortages to Member Units' water supply in critical drought years. This could have significant, unmitigable indirect environmental impacts if the Member Units make up for the shortages by increasing groundwater pumping, implementing a temporary water transfer, or desalinating seawater. Consistent with the 2003 DEIR, the revised DEIR also finds that the remaining alternatives (Alternatives 3B, 3C, 4B, 5B, and 5C), which entail raising Bradbury Dam to create additional storage capacity, could have significant environmental impacts to oak trees at Lake Cachuma. In addition, the revised DEIR finds that the following significant but mitigable impacts may result: impacts to sensitive aquatic and terrestrial wildlife from Alternative 4B; impacts to recreation from Alternatives 3C, 4B, and 5C; and impacts to cultural resources from Alternatives 3B, 3C, 4B, 5B, and 5C. The revised DEIR also finds that the following adverse but not significant impacts could occur: impacts to surface water hydrology and surface water quality under Alternatives 3B, 3C, 4B, 5B, and 5C; and impacts to water supply conditions under Alternatives 3B and 5C.

A copy of the revised DEIR is being provided on compact disk to the parties to the State Water Board hearing under cover of this letter. Copies are also available upon request and may be obtained by calling Diane Riddle at (916) 341-5297. Copies on compact disk are available free of charge. Hard copies are available for the cost of reproduction. Copies of the revised DEIR and documents referenced in the revised DEIR (including the 2003 DEIR) are available for public review from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday in the Records Unit of the State Water Board, Division of Water Rights (Division), which is located on the Second Floor of the Joe Serna Jr./CalEPA Headquarters Building, 1001 I Street, Sacramento, California. A copy of the revised DEIR (along with the 2003 DEIR) also has been posted on the Division's website at: <http://www.waterrights.ca.gov/hearings/cachumahearing.htm>.

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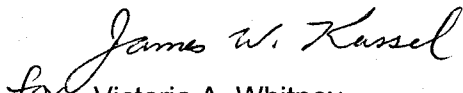
Comments on the revised DEIR must be received by close of business within 60 days from the date of this letter. **Again, comments should be confined to information that is new or has been changed from the 2003 DEIR to the 2007 revised DEIR.** Comments should be addressed to:

Ms. Diane Riddle
Division of Water Rights
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 2000
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Comments may be hand delivered to the same addressee at 1001 I Street, Second Floor, Division of Water Rights – Records Unit during the office hours referenced above. In addition, comments may be, and are encouraged to be, submitted via electronic mail to driddle@waterboards.ca.gov or via fax to (916) 341-5400, but must be followed by an original hard copy.

If you have any questions regarding the revised DEIR, please contact Diane Riddle at driddle@waterboards.ca.gov or (916) 341-5297.

Sincerely,


for Victoria A. Whitney
Division Chief

Enclosures

cc: Mr. Josh Fernandez (w/enclosures)
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Cachuma Project Hearing
Phase-2 Hearing
Final Service List

Updated 05/10/2007

(Note: The parties whose E-mail addresses are listed below agreed to accept electronic service, pursuant to the rules specified in the hearing notice.)

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