

2/26/2015

Comment Letter: Salton Sea

State Water Resources Board

Borrowing Owl Brief

By John Dantice email: jdantice@gmail.com



Funding long term restoration of the Salton Sea.

How to finance the restoration of the Salton Sea written by an angry tax payer.

First, why am I angry?

When reading summaries about the importance of the Salton Sea, it is usually stated that the sea is an important fishery and bird habitat. The summaries rarely if ever state that the primary function and primary importance of the sea is that it provides a repository for salt. If the farmers did not have the Salton Sea to dump the salt that is continuously leached from the soil, there would be no farming in the Imperial Irrigation District. In short, no salt storage means no farming.

I am angry because those who benefit from polluting the Salton Sea with salt (land owners) are paying nothing for its restoration. And those polluting the Salton Sea with salt (farmers) are paying nothing towards the sea's restoration.

The Quantitative Settlement Agreement or QSA of 2005 was used to include wording that stipulated that the State of California would be responsible for financing and restoring the Salton Sea. By leveraging the passing of the QSA, those responsible and those who benefit from polluting the Salton Sea passed the responsibility for funding and restoring Salton Sea to the tax payers of California.

*As a tax payer, it angers me that tax payers of our country have paid and continue to pay for the building and maintaining of the dams and rivers that supply the water to agriculture. Farmers are charged \$20@aft by the IID for this heavily subsidized resource.*

It angers me that farmers put forth an image of responsible stewards of the land; yet, take steps to avoid responsibility to restore the sea. The Salton Sea is as important to farming as the All American Canal. The All American Canal brings the river water to the farmers and the Salton Sea provides a dumping ground for the salty water drained from the fields. Without a place to dump the salt leached from the fields, farming would come to a screeching halt. One million acre feet of fresh water or one-third of the water used in the IID is used to leach salt out of the soil and transport it to the Salton Sea.

Since the wording in the QSA does not stipulate how the state is supposed to procure the funds for the restoration of the Salton Sea, I propose the following.

Using Eminent Domain, the State purchases 25,000 acres of farm ground within the Imperial Irrigation District to permanently fallow for \$12,000@ acre. This accomplishes three things. First it reduces the size needed for sea restoration. Second, it provides 137,500 aft (5.5 aft x 25,000) of water that can be contracted to Metropolitan Water District.

137,500 aft x \$1000 @aft equals \$137,500,000 per year to fund the restoration of the Salton Sea. Cost of the water to MWD would increase each year so that the estimated \$9 billion for restoration could be paid back in 50 years. And third, it provides funds for long term mitigation, maintenance and conservation of habitat not only on the sea but also along the Colorado River.

The farm ground to be purchased and permanently fallowed would be located on the west side of the IID. The ground on the west side tends to be marginal farm ground. It would be bordered on the South by Worthington Rd. and bordered on the East by Forrester Rd. Since 25,000 acres equals about 39 square miles, the farm ground purchased would require about 15 miles of ground north of Worthington Rd.

While maintaining water rights to the permanently fallowed property during the intervening years, the State could lease ground for solar development. It would need to be stipulated that leasing ground for solar development does not affect the 5.5 acre feet of water per acre generated from permanently fallowing for transfer obligations.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Dantice". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "D".

John Dantice PO BOX 1033, El Centro, Ca 92244 hm. 760353 1827 email: jdantice@gmail.com