

Department of Water Resources

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**Bureau of Reclamation**

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October 13, 2005

Ms. Celeste Cantu
 Executive Director
 State Water Resources Control Board
 Post Office Box 100
 Sacramento, California 95812-0100

Decision 1641 Report of Exceedence of Southern Delta Standard

Dear Ms Cantu:

Pursuant to State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Decision 1641 (D-1641), the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation submit this report describing increased salinity that occurred at two compliance stations in the southern Delta.¹ From January 22, 2003, to April 22, 2003, the 30-day average electro-conductivity at the San Joaquin River at Brandt Bridge station (C-6) and the Old River at Tracy Road Bridge station (P-12) fluctuated between about 1.05 and 1.1 mmhos/cm (EC), which is slightly above the required standard of 1.0 mmhos/cm (EC), as shown in the attached graph "Water Year 2003 – Water Quality in Southern Delta."

DWR would have reported these increased salinities in 2003, however, we only became aware of the values when reviewing data in preparation of a SWRCB hearing regarding the southern Delta objectives. At the time of the exceedence, only two of the four southern Delta stations—San Joaquin River at Airport Way Bridge, Vernalis (C-10), and Old River near Middle River (aka Union Island) (C-8)—had real-time gages and were telemetered. The data at these two stations indicated that salinity in the southern Delta was within the required standard of 1.0 EC. Electrical conductivity data for the other two stations was continuously recorded, but only downloaded from the field approximately monthly, after which this data was entered into a monitoring data base maintained by DWR's Central District. Consequently, the compliance monitoring staff at DWR and Reclamations' Project Operations Office were not aware of this exceedence until recently.

¹ DWR and Reclamation submit this report pursuant to D-1641 condition 1, page 159 (DWR permits), and conditions 1, pages 159, 160 and 162 (USBR permits) (D-1641 Revised March 15, 2000 (Order WR 2000-02)). The two compliance stations became requirements of DWR and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's water right permits in December 1999 with adoption of D-1641.

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DWR regrets the delay in notifying you of the exceedance at these two stations. This delay in notification will not occur in the future, however, because in April 2005, DWR installed telemetry capability at these two southern Delta stations. Currently, data from all four gages are transmitted on a real-time basis and posted on the California Data Exchange Center (CDEC) website (<http://cdec.water.ca.gov/>). The compliance monitoring staff at DWR and Reclamation's Project Operations now monitor and track water quality at all four of the southern Delta compliance stations in near real-time. In addition, DWR now reports the daily and 30-day average EC values for all four south Delta stations on our daily water quality report, which is posted on the internet at <http://www.woco/cmplmon/reports/wgreport.html>.

The attached graph shows the water quality compliance dynamics that were occurring in the western and southern Delta during Water Year 2003. From the plot of 30-day EC, it is noted that the two non-telemetered stations at Brandt Bridge and Old River at Tracy Road Bridge had about a three-month period where salinity fluctuated between 1.05 EC and 1.1 EC, which is slightly above the compliance objective of 1.0 EC. However, as mentioned above, the 30-day EC values for Vernalis and Old River near Middle River during this time were below 1.0 EC, illustrating that Reclamation was actively managing the salinity level below 1.0 EC at Vernalis during this period.

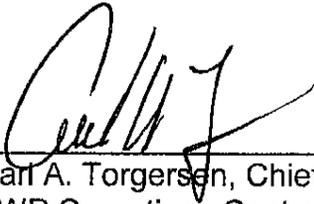
Salinity levels at Reclamation's Tracy Pumping Plant were fairly stable during this period and were much lower than the salinity levels at the southern Delta compliance locations or channels. The difference in water quality near Tracy Pumping Plant from the water quality in the channels near Tracy Road Bridge and near Brandt Bridge reflects differences in the mixes of source water. Tracy Pumping Plant water quality is reflective of a source mix of interior Delta and south Delta water quality, while the compliance stations water quality is reflective of a dominant source mix from the San Joaquin River at Vernalis. The graph also shows that, during this three-month period, Clifton Court salinity levels were low, and more reflective of salinity conditions in the western and interior Delta.

DWR and Reclamation believe that the graphs of salinity in the different Delta locations reflect that the increase in salinity near Brandt Bridge and near Tracy Road Bridge is significantly influenced by local salt contributions discharged into the San Joaquin River between Vernalis and Brandt Bridge and into the local southern Delta channels near Tracy Road Bridge. These local discharges are caused by actions beyond the control of DWR or Reclamation, and they begin to degrade water quality immediately downstream of Vernalis as shown in the graph of 30-day EC on the San Joaquin River at Mossdale.

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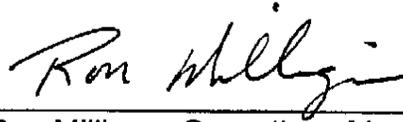
If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Tracy Hinojosa at (916) 574-2655 or Paul Fujitani at (916) 979-2197.

Sincerely,



Carl A. Torgersen, Chief
SWP Operations Control Office
Department of Water Resources
3310 El Camino Avenue, Suite 300
Sacramento, California 95821

Date: 10/13/05



Ron Milligan, Operations Manager
Central Valley Operations Office
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
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Date: 13 OCT 05

Attachments

cc: Ms. Victoria Whitney
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Ms. Gita Kapahi
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