Meeting Announcement

Discussion of Water Use in the Legal Delta Under Drought Conditions

Meeting Convened by the State Water Board, Office of the Delta Watermaster
Thursday, July 14, 2022; 10:00 a.m. to Noon
CalEPA Building, 1001 I Street, Sacramento, Sierra Hearing Room, Second Floor
(Attendees are asked to arrive a few minutes early to clear building security protocols.)
Listen-only Teleconference Number: (888) 273-3658, Participant Code: 300828

Background Materials:
1. Proposed renewal of drought emergency regulations for the Delta watershed [corrected text is available at: Emergency Curtailment Regulation to Protect Water Supplies in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Watershed]
2. Revised version of Appendix D to the Water Unavailability Methodology [available at: Water Unavailability Methodology for the Delta Watershed: Technical Appendix D]
3. Review draft of the summary and resolution of the investigation concerning Friant Water Authority’s complaint alleging unlawful water diversion in the Legal Delta [available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/delta_watermaster/docs/2022/resolution.pdf]

Drought in the Legal Delta:
1. Not a lack of physical water supply as in tributaries and mainstreams
2. Rather, a risk to water quality (salinity intrusion) based on constrained freshwater flow
3. Complexities exacerbated by:
   a. tidal influence
   b. subregional differences within the Legal Delta
   c. coordinated Project operations
   d. reliability of diversion data
   e. confluence of riparian and appropriative water rights (inconsistent ways of allocating shortage)
   f. reconciliation of priority system in upstream and Legal Delta regions

Framework for Discussion:
The parties interested in the Delta water supply* share a common risk: that insufficient freshwater during a prolonged drought threatens saltwater intrusion into the Delta. Without abandoning perceived water rights, blaming rituals, or litigation postures, is there room for a frank and respectful discussion among informed Delta practitioners about potential collaboration to ameliorate that common risk in the short- medium- or long-term? What should the State Water Board do to assist water management during prolonged droughts? Join us to explore these and related question focused on the Legal Delta.

*Among those: Project operators, Ag diverters throughout the Delta watershed, environmental advocates, community and environmental justice advocates, regulators, export contractors, water managers, and others.