

further exacerbate these conflicts. Simply put, the overall system as it is currently designed and operated does not appear to be sustainable from an environmental perspective, and so a proposal to implement a fundamental, systemic change to the current system is necessary. This change is necessary if California is to “[a]chieve the two coequal goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem.” (California Public Resources Code Section 29702, subd. [a]).

This section presents the Lead Agencies’ Project Objectives, which are required by the State CEQA Guidelines, and the Purpose and Need Statement, which is required by the CEQ NEPA Regulations.

1.1.4.1 Project Objectives

CEQA requires that an EIR contain a “statement of the objectives sought by the proposed project.” Under CEQA, “[a] clearly written statement of objectives will help the Lead Agency develop a reasonable range of alternatives to evaluate in the EIR and will aid the decision makers in preparing findings or a statement of overriding considerations. The statement of objectives should include the underlying purpose of the project” (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15124[b]). Here, as the CEQA lead agency, DWR is adopting project objectives separately from the federal agencies’ Purpose Statement as set forth in Section 1.1.4.2, Purpose and Need, as well as the description of Project Need as set forth in Section 1.1.4.2.

DWR’s fundamental purpose in proposing the proposed project is to make physical and operational improvements to the SWP system in the Delta necessary to restore and protect ecosystem health, water supplies of the SWP and CVP south of the Delta, and water quality within a stable regulatory framework, consistent with statutory and contractual obligations.

The fundamental purpose is informed by past efforts taken within the Delta and the watersheds of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, including those undertaken through the CALFED Bay-Delta Program and Delta Risk Management Strategy. The fundamental purpose, in turn, gives rise to the following project objectives.

Address adverse effects to state and federally listed species related to:

The operation of existing SWP Delta facilities and construction and operation of facilities for the movement of water entering the Delta from the Sacramento Valley watershed to the existing SWP and CVP pumping plants located in the southern Delta.

The implementation of actions to improve SWP and/ or CVP conveyance that have the potential to result in take of species that are listed under the ESA and CESA.

Improve the ecosystem of the Delta by reducing the adverse effects to certain listed species of diverting water by siting additional intakes of the SWP and coordinated operations with the CVP.

Restore and protect the ability of the SWP and CVP to deliver up to full contract amounts, when hydrologic conditions result in the availability of sufficient water, consistent with the requirements of state and federal law and the terms and conditions of water delivery contracts and other existing applicable agreements.

In addition to the project objectives enumerated above, the project objectives listed below guide the development of the proposed project and alternatives.

To meet the standards identified in the ESA and the California Fish & Game Code, including the CESA or NCCPA, by, among other things, minimizing and fully mitigating the impacts of take, and, if possible, protecting, restoring, and enhancing aquatic and terrestrial natural communities and