



State Water Project Briefings: Maintaining Operational Flexibility

Introduction

The first State Water Project (SWP) briefing of 2023 will examine how the Department of Water Resources (DWR) is working to maintain the operational flexibility of the SWP, including dealing with drought and flood at the same time, the limiting factors to system flexibility, and the challenges faced by operators that reduce its flexibility.

Background

The California State Water Project, consisting of 36 water storage facilities and 700 miles of rivers, pipelines, and canals, supplies water to 27 million people and irrigates 750,000 acres of farmland. The system includes 21 pumping plants, powered by a system of power-generation and power-recovery plants. DWR also operates the world's tallest water lift – the Edmonston Pumping Plant – which pumps water more than 1,900 feet up and over the Tehachapi Mountains into Southern California.

Goal Two of the Commission's Strategic Plan directs the Commission to remain apprised of the operations and construction activities of the SWP, focusing on how it adapts and responds to hydrological extremes expected with climate change, restores critical ecosystems, and addresses aging infrastructure. As required by Water Code section 165, the Commission conducts an annual review on the progress of the construction and operation of the SWP and reports its findings and recommendations to DWR and the Legislature. This briefing will inform the Commission of SWP activities in preparation for the Commission's 2023 annual review.

Meeting Overview

At the February meeting, SWP Deputy Director Ted Craddock will offer opening remarks, followed by SWP Assistant Deputy Director John Yarbrough, who will define how DWR understands the concept of operational flexibility of the SWP, and provide a qualitative overview where flexibility exists in the system. Mr. Yarbrough will brief the Commission on the obstacles hindering operational flexibility, including subsidence, aging infrastructure, rules governing Delta exports, and changing environmental conditions, and conclude with the steps that DWR is taking to expand the SWP's operational flexibility for the future. In addition, Los Angeles County Works Deputy Director Keith Lilley will explain how his department harvested and stored excess water during the January storms.

This is an informational item.

Agenda Item: 9

Meeting Date: February 15, 2023

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