



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contacts:

Lisa Lien-Mager, California Natural Resources Agency

(916) 653-9402 Lisa.Lien-Mager@resources.ca.gov

Alex Barnum, California Environmental Protection Agency

(916) 324-9670 Alex.Barnum@calepa.ca.gov

November 21, 2019

State Agencies Lay Out Actions to Protect Endangered Species and Meet State Water Needs

Department of Water Resources issued draft Environmental Impact Report today

Agencies also intend to file litigation against federal government

Newsom administration continues to work toward voluntary agreements in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta rivers

SACRAMENTO — The California Natural Resources Agency and the California Environmental Protection Agency today announced a series of actions to protect imperiled fish while improving real-time management of the State Water Project (SWP). Earlier today, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) took a formal step toward more fish-protective management of the SWP by releasing a [draft environmental impact report](#) under the California Environmental Quality Act. The move reflects the state’s assessment that operating rules recently proposed by federal agencies are not scientifically adequate and fall short of protecting species and the state’s interests.

Additionally, the state intends to file litigation against federal agencies to ensure adequate protection of endangered species, shared responsibility of state and federal water project operations to protect those species and to protect the state’s interests.

“When California has the opportunity to tackle a longstanding challenge with innovative, collaborative solutions, we take it,” said Governor Gavin Newsom. “We are once again marshaling our collective resources — and building on our record of strong, science-based environmental policies — to chart a new path forward for water policy in California. As stewards of this state’s remarkable natural resources, we must do everything in our power to protect them. The next generations of Californians deserve nothing less.”

“We value our partnerships with federal agencies on water management, including our work together to achieve the voluntary agreements,” said California Secretary for Environmental

Protection Jared Blumenfeld. “At the same time, we also need to take legal action to protect the state’s interest and our environment.”

In a separate but related effort, the Newsom administration is collaboratively working with state, local and federal partners to refine a voluntary approach to provide additional water, habitat and science to improve environmental conditions in the Sacramento and San Joaquin River systems and the Delta, and secure water for other beneficial uses. The effort is a potential game changer in that it combines flows with a broader suite of tools including habitat and adaptive management to create more opportunities for species to survive and thrive.

In addition, state agencies are preparing to release a draft water resilience portfolio that provides important tools for local and regional entities to continue building resilience and encourage collaboration within and across regional lines. Governor Newsom called on agencies to develop the portfolio via [executive order](#) earlier this year. The draft, which will be available soon for public comment, recognizes that no quick or singular fix will safeguard our water resources in coming decades. Instead, advance planning, thoughtful investments, integrated management and unprecedented collaboration are needed to prepare for the future.

“We have to find ways to protect our environment and build water security for communities and agriculture,” said California Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot. “We have to become much more creative, collaborative and adaptive, which is why this Administration is working hard to secure voluntary agreements and develop a water resilience portfolio to meet objectives.”

###