

Joint Reservoir Committee and Authority Board Meeting

Agenda Item 3.1: Final EIR/EIS Status Briefing

May 19, 2023



Final EIR/EIS Briefings in Preparation for Approval of Project

- February 2023, Part 1
 - Review Final EIR/EIS requirements and format
 - Provide overview of changes to the project based on design refinements and operations
 - Discuss revisions to modeling
- March 2023, Part 2
 - Overview of key comments and master responses; ongoing public and local community, tribal and NGO outreach
- April 2023, Part 3
 - Overview of refinements to impacts and mitigation measures; Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
- May and June 2023, Part 3, continued
 - Overview of Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations
- July 2023
 - Any last items
- August 2023, Board Hearing
 - Next steps post EIR
 - EIR Certification
 - Decision to Approve Project

CEQA Requirements for a Statement of Overriding Considerations

- In approving a project that results in significant and unavoidable impacts, the agency must state in writing the specific reasons to support its action based on the Final EIR and/or other information in the record
- Statement of Overriding Considerations should:
 - Balance, as applicable, the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including region-wide or statewide environmental benefits, of a proposed project against its unavoidable environmental risks
 - Be supported by substantial evidence in the record
- If the specific benefits outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse environmental effects may be considered "acceptable"

Anticipated Project Impacts that Remain Significant and Unavoidable

- Surface Water Quality
 - Veg and Wetlands
 - Wildlife
 - Agriculture
 - Air Quality
 - Cultural Resources
 - Tribal Cultural Resources
 - Visual Resources
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- Land Use (Alternative 2 Only)
 - Navigation, Transportation and Traffic (Alternative 2 Only)
 - Geology and Soils (TRR East Only)

Key Project Benefits for the Overriding Consideration

- Water supply reliability and drought resilience
- Ecosystem benefits
- Anadromous fish benefits
- Benefits to the local and regional community

Water Supply Reliability and Drought Resiliency Benefits

- Sites Reservoir would be an offstream reservoir and would be used to capture water from major storms and store the water until it is most needed during dry periods providing:
 - State-wide water supply reliability
 - State-wide drought resilience
 - Operational flexibility for the CVP and SWP
 - Consistency with the Governor’s Executive Order N-10-19, which identified the state’s current water challenges
 - Consistency with the 2020 Water Resilience Portfolio which identifies the need to expand smart surface water storage where it can benefit water supply and the environment
 - Consistency with CALFED which sought to balance environmental and water supply challenges in our state

Ecosystem Benefits

- Incremental Level 4 Refuge water supply benefits as identified under the Water Storage Investment Program
- Additional flow into the Yolo Bypass to benefit delta smelt, deliveries would increase desirable food sources in the late summer and early fall
- Flexible water asset dedicated to the environment – testing revolutionary ideas on how to better manage water for the environment in our State
- Involvement on technical and advisory teams (e.g., Sacramento River Temperature Task Group) that would provide opportunities to work collaboratively to achieve species benefits in the Sacramento Valley and the Delta
- Exchanges and investment by Reclamation has the potential to assist the CVP and SWP in meeting their regulatory obligations, authorized purpose, and improving conditions to protect, restore and enhance fish, wildlife, and associated habitats
- Increased freshwater habitat for species such as bald eagle, dabbling ducks, water birds, gull and pelican species
- Water source for terrestrial species such as elk, deer, and badger

Anadromous Fish Benefits

- The Project would provide benefits to anadromous fish through:
 - Enhanced opportunity for cold water pool management in Shasta Lake
 - Enhanced frequency and amount of spring pulse flows in the upper Sacramento River
 - Better ability to maintain stable river flows in the upper Sacramento River in the fall
- Exchanges with Shasta Lake would be formulated to target cold-water pool preservation and anadromous fish benefits
- Project results in an overall increase in the population of endangered winter-run Chinook salmon

Benefits to the Local and Regional Community

- Flood control benefits to:
 - Communities of Maxwell and Colusa, local agricultural lands, rural residences by impounding Funks and Stone Corral creeks
 - Regional commerce and emergency services by reducing the frequency and depth of water flooding on Interstate 5 by impounding Funks and Stone Corral creeks
 - Regional communities by reducing flows in the Sacramento River during high flow events
- Recreational benefits including multiple recreational amenities, including campsites, boat access, horse trails, hiking trails, and vista points
- Economic benefits:
 - Increase in construction income and jobs is expected to be larger than the decrease in agricultural jobs and income, resulting in an overall beneficial effect on regional economics
 - A beneficial effect to local economics would result from the increase in recreational visitors and associated spending
- Local employment benefits by providing medium-term construction jobs and long-term operations jobs
- Improved safety and quality of roadways after construction is complete

Next Steps in Briefing Process

- June 2023, Additional Briefing in Preparation for Approval of Project
 - Findings
 - Water Quality and Tribal Cultural Resources
- July 2023, Update on Final EIR/EIS
 - Last items prior to approval in August

Final EIR Certification Targeted for August 2023

- August 2023, Board Hearing
 - Any last items
 - EIR Certification
 - Adoption of Findings, Statement of Overriding Considerations and Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program
 - Decision to Approve Project
 - Next Steps
 - Local considerations with MOUs and Local Community Working Group
 - Tribal considerations with MOA and Tribal Working Group

Questions?

