



January 11, 2018

VIA E-MAIL ([EIR-EIS-Comments@SitesProject.org](mailto:EIR-EIS-Comments@SitesProject.org)) AND U. S. MAIL

Sites Project Office  
Attention: Rob Thomson  
Draft EIR/EIS Comments  
P. O. Box 517  
Maxwell, California 95955

Bureau of Reclamation  
Attention: Michael Dietl  
Draft EIR/EIS Comments  
2800 Cottage Way, W-2830  
Sacramento, California 94825

Re: Sites Reservoir Project Draft EIR/EIS: Comments of Woodland-Davis  
Clean Water Agency

Dear Mr. Thomson and Mr. Dietl:

The Woodland-Davis Clean Water Agency (“WDCWA”) is submitting these comments on the Sites Reservoir Project Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (“DEIR/EIS”) that has been posted on the website of the Sites Project Authority (the “Authority”).

WDCWA is a joint powers authority created by a joint powers agreement between the Cities of Woodland and Davis. WDCWA operates the Davis-Woodland Water Supply Project (“DWWSP”), which diverts water through a screened intake facility on the Sacramento River east of Woodland and just north of the Interstate 5 bridge. WDCWA treats this water at its Regional Water Treatment Facility and then conveys the treated water to the Cities of Davis and Woodland for municipal uses. WDCWA also supplies treated water to the University of California, Davis, for uses on its main campus. WDCWA diverts water from the Sacramento River for these beneficial uses under water-right Permit 20281 (Application 30358) and water-right Licenses 904A and 5487A (Applications 1199A and 12073A), which were issued by the State Water Resources Control Board (the “State Water Board”). WDCWA has a Sacramento River water-rights settlement contract with the Bureau of Reclamation (Contract No. 14-06-200-7422X-R-1) for WDCWA’s diversions under Licenses 904A and 5487A.

WDCWA generally supports the development of additional water storage capacity in the Sacramento Valley. WDCWA supports the development of the Sites Reservoir Project (the “Project”), so long as Project operations will not adversely affect the water supplies of entities like WDCWA that divert water from the Sacramento River for beneficial uses.

WDCWA has the following specific comments on the DEIR/EIS:

-On pages ES-7 and 1-12, the DEIR/EIS states that the Project would divert and store Sacramento River water “when available and not meeting required environmental and water supply needs.” We appreciate the Authority’s recognition of the need for this proposed limitation on Project diversions to avoid impacts on the water supplies of entities like WDCWA.

-On page 3-102, the DEIR/EIS states that a final operations plan for the Project “will be refined based on the findings of the California Water Commission regarding the Sites Project WSIP application, and the defined related benefits and obligations.” WDCWA requests that you provide copies of this final operations plan to WDCWA and other interested parties for their review and comments when this plan is completed.

-Table 3-24 on page 3-103 of the DEIR/EIS states that Project diversions would be allowed when various regulatory requirements were met, SWP Article 21 demands were satisfied, and other Delta diversions were satisfied. WDCWA requests that this text (and the corresponding text in Table 6A-3 on page 6A-19) be edited in the Final EIR/EIS so that this text also states that Project diversions will occur only when all of the demands of other diverters of Sacramento River water for beneficial uses are being met. Such edits are necessary to make this entry in this table consistent with the text on DEIR/EIS page 3-105, which states that flows available for Project diversions are river flows in addition to those required to meet “[s]enior downstream rights.” Under the watershed protection statute (discussed below), all of WDCWA’s water rights will be senior in priority to the Project’s water rights, and thus “senior downstream rights.”

-Subsection 3.3.12 on DEIR/EIS pages 3-105 to 3-106 lists various proposed bypass flow criteria for Project operations, including various proposed minimum flows in the Sacramento River at Freeport. WDCWA requests that text be added to the Final EIR/EIS to confirm that the Authority will ask the State Water Board to include these bypass flow criteria (which also are described as modeling assumptions on DEIR/EIS page 6A-22) as minimum flow requirements in the Authority’s water-right permit for the Project.

-On page 4-15, the DEIR/EIS states that the Authority intends to apply “for water rights consistent with” water-right Application 25517, which was filed in 1977. We assume that this means that the Authority will file a petition with the State Water Board for assignment of this State filing. Under the Watershed Protection Act discussed on DEIR/EIS page 4-17, the water-right permit issued to the Authority for the Project should be junior in priority to water-right permits for diversions from the Sacramento River for beneficial uses in the Sacramento Valley. WDCWA requests that text be added to the Final EIR/EIS stating that the



Authority will ask the State Water Board to include a term in the Authority's water-right permit for the Project that will confirm this junior priority.

-Table 6A-5 on DEIR/EIS page 6A-33 contains an entry for "Non-project" demands and water rights, which states that the CALSIM II assumptions for these demands are "[l]and use based, limited by water rights and SWRCB Decisions for Existing Facilities." WDCWA requests that the Final EIR/EIS confirm that these model assumptions include all authorized diversions under WDCWA's water rights. This appears to be the case, because the DWWSP is listed in Table B-33 on DEIR/EIS page 5A-B164 (in Attachment 6A-1), but we request confirmation of this fact.

-Text on DEIR/EIS page 6B-11 states that the results in Appendix 6B include the modeled parameters listed in Table 6B-2. Items 18, 19 and 20 in this table are for Sacramento River flows at Wilken (sic) Slough, Verona and Freeport. However, the model output tables in Appendix 6B do not include any of these modeled parameters. WDCWA requests that tables of these modeled parameters be included in the Final EIR/EIS.

-Since the mid-1960s, the State Water Board has included its Standard Permit Term 91 in all water-right permits for diversions from the Sacramento River. WDCWA's water-right Permit 20281 contains this term (term 20 in that permit). This term prohibits diversions under water-right permits with this term whenever the satisfaction of in-basin entitlements requires the release of supplemental project water by the Central Valley Project or the State Water Project. DEIR/EIS Chapter 6 does not contain any discussion of whether Project operations would cause the diversion prohibition in Term 91 to go into effect more often, and DEIR/EIS Appendix 6 does not contain any modeling results regarding this issue. Because more-frequent Term 91 diversion prohibitions could have water-supply and associated environmental impacts, WDCWA requests that the Final EIR/EIS contain an analysis, with appropriate modeling results, of the Project's effects on the frequency of Term 91 diversion prohibitions.

WDCWA thanks the Authority for this opportunity to provide these comments on the DEIR/EIS. As discussed in this letter, WDCWA supports the Sites Reservoir Project, so long as there are appropriate assurances that Project operations will not adversely affect the water supplies of any Sacramento River water user, including WDCWA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tim Busch", is written over a light blue wavy graphic element.

Tim Busch  
General Manager

