



Meeting: **Reservoir Committee & Authority Board**
Agenda Item 2.1

March 20, 2026

Subject: **Reclamation Refuge Water Acceptance Agreement**

Requested Action:

Reservoir Committee and Authority Board consider authorizing the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with Reclamation related to accepting and conveying Incremental Level 4 refuge water as part of the Sites Project's Proposition 1 ecosystem benefits, conditioned upon no substantial changes from the terms described in this staff report.

Detailed Description/Background:

Staff have been working with the Bureau of Reclamation to develop a "Refuge Water Acceptance Agreement". The Acceptance Agreement establishes the framework under which the Authority will make Prop 1 Sites Water available to Reclamation, and for Reclamation to accept that water as supplemental Incremental Level 4 water supply for delivery to federal and state wildlife refuges pursuant to the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA). The Acceptance Agreement is intended to implement components of the Authority's commitments under Proposition 1 and facilitate delivery of Prop 1 Sites Water to CVPIA refuges for net ecosystem benefits.

Under the Acceptance Agreement, the Authority would make Prop 1 Sites Water available to Reclamation at designated Points of Acceptance. Reclamation would accept this water at these Points of Acceptance and convey the water to refuge delivery locations north and south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Points of Acceptance have been identified for both north and south of Delta refuges. The Authority is responsible for the costs and losses necessary to deliver water to the designated Points of Acceptance. The losses have been attributed to and accounted for in the Prop 1 Sites water deliveries. The costs are part of the O&M associated with Prop 1 Sites Water deliveries. Reclamation is responsible for the costs to convey the Sites Water from the Points of Acceptance to the CVPIA refuges. Each party pays these costs directly and no funds are exchanged between Reclamation and the Authority in the Acceptance Agreement.

The Acceptance Agreement remains in effect for as long as the Authority provides Sites Water for CVPIA refuge water needs and may be terminated prior to that time by mutual consent.

The Acceptance Agreement establishes a formal pathway for Sites Water to support CVPIA wildlife refuges and is a condition precedent to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife entering into the Project's Ecosystem Public Benefits Agreement.

Staff have been working with Reclamation staff on the Acceptance Agreement and feel that the Agreement is nearly finished. Staff recommends that the Reservoir Committee and Authority Board approve the Executive Director to sign the Acceptance Agreement once finalized, conditioned upon no substantial changes in the final Agreement from the terms described in this staff report. If substantial changes are made, defined as changes that could result in additional costs categories for the Authority or substantially increase the risk to the Authority, staff will return to the Reservoir Committee and Authority Board.

Fiscal Impact/Funding Source:

The Acceptance Agreement does not create new capital obligations.

The Authority will be responsible for the cost to convey and deliver Prop 1 Sites Water to the Points of Acceptance identified in the Agreement. These costs are to be considered in the staff's continued development of the Public Benefits Agreements and associated CalSim modeling (water losses, especially carriage water costs through the Delta).

Importantly, the Agreement does not require the delivery of Prop 1 Sites Water to these Points of Acceptance – rather, the Agreement merely provides the mechanism for the Authority to provide supplemental Incremental Level 4 CVPIA refuge water and for Reclamation to accept that water at certain points, along with the roles and responsibilities for conveyance of water to and from the Points of Acceptance. The Ecosystem Public Benefits Agreement (in development) is anticipated to also include the delivery of Prop 1 Sites Water to other wetland habitat areas outside of the CVPIA refuges.

Prior Actions:

None

Staff Contact:

Ali Forsythe

Attachments:

Attachment A – Points of Acceptance

POINTS OF ACCEPTANCE

North of Delta	
Sutter National Wildlife Refuge	Butte Slough Pumping Plant Sunset Pumps
Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge	Hamilton City Pumping Plant
Delevan National Wildlife Refuge	Williams Outlet
Colusa National Wildlife Refuge	Wasteway Cross Channel
Grey Lodge Wildlife Area	Sutter Butte Canal at Intake
South of Delta	
All South of Delta Refuges	Delta-Mendota Canal at Milepost 7.2 O'Neill Forebay