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Environmental Review Launched for Delta Conservation Plan *Plan Addresses Water Supply Reliability, Environmental Sustainability*

A comprehensive conservation plan for the environmentally troubled Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is underway in efforts to both recover endangered fish species and address critical water-supply reliability for the state, including more than 2.3 million residents in the Livermore-Amador Valley, the Fremont area and Santa Clara County.

On Monday, the California Department of Water Resources and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation kicked off the environmental review process for the Bay Delta Conservation Plan with a series of statewide public scoping meetings.

The Bay Area meeting will be held at 6 p.m. on May 6 at the Santa Clara Valley Water District offices, 5700 Almaden Expressway, San Jose. Another meeting in a series of 10 across the state will be held at 6 p.m. on May 5 at the San Joaquin Farm Bureau office, 3290 N. Ad Art Road, Stockton.

Zone 7 Water Agency, the water wholesaler for Livermore, Pleasanton, Dublin and Dougherty Valley, relies on the ecologically fragile Delta to convey about 80 percent of its water supply. It is among East and South Bay water agencies serving 2.3 million people receiving State Water Project water through the same Delta pumps that serve Southern California and farms in the Central Valley. A federal judge reduced pumping

for 2008 while state and federal agencies work on a plan to protect endangered Delta smelt, and protections could be extended to other species that live or migrate through the Delta.

The BDCP is a collaborative effort between water agencies, environmental organizations and state and federal wildlife agencies to develop a more proactive, comprehensive approach to Delta sustainability. A joint Environmental Impact Report/Statement (EIR/EIS) is being prepared by the state Department of Water Resources, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Among other things, the EIR/EIS will address water conveyance options, habitat restoration and management, and other ecological problems including invasive species and toxic pollutants.

“We are highly supportive of, and participants in, the Bay Delta Conservation Plan because we believe it is the best opportunity to establish a plan that can stabilize both water supplies and fish species in the Delta -- the co-equal objectives of the process,” said Zone 7 General Manager Jill Duerig. “Neither can afford to wait.”

Duerig added that recent water supply cuts ordered by or under consideration by the courts impact Zone 7’s ability to provide adequate long-term drought protection for its customers.

“Water conservation alone, even with measures Zone 7 is pursuing locally to enhance water supply, distribution and storage, will not provide long-term reliability if court-ordered reductions in supply become permanent,” she said.

Members of the public unable to attend one of the hearings can submit comments about the scope of the plan’s EIR/EIS by May 30 to Delores Brown, Chief, Office of Environmental Compliance, Department of Water Resources, PO Box 942836, Sacramento, CA, 94236 or by email to BDCPcomments@water.ca.gov.

For more information on the BDCP, visit www.resources.ca.gov/bdcp/.

Zone 7 Water Agency is one of the 10 active zones of the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. The District was established by the State Legislature in October 1949 to solve problems of flooding, drainage, channel erosion and water supply and conservation in Alameda County. In 1957, by popular vote, Zone 7 became a special district governed by a seven-member board of directors. Along with flood protection, Zone 7 supplies water to all of eastern Alameda County and a population of more than 190,000. Treated water is sold wholesale to local retailers, including the cities of Livermore and Pleasanton, the Dublin San Ramon Services District, and the California Water Service Company. Zone 7 also distributes untreated water to local agriculture operations and golf courses.