

January 12, 2006 Update

1) Don't Let the State and Water Agencies Destroy the Delta!

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) is planning to increase pumping of fresh water from the Bay-Delta Estuary by as much as 27%. Even though scientific studies show that the Delta ecosystem is collapsing, the state plans to pump millions of gallons of additional water from the Delta every year as part of the so-called South Delta Improvement Program (SDIP).

Friends of the River is opposing this plan because:

SDIP will increase pumping of fresh water from the Delta, even though Delta fish species are crashing and water diversions are considered to be prime factor in fish decline.

SDIP does not actually "improve" the Delta ecosystem or water quality. It simply directs more fresh water to state, federal, and regional pumps to allow for more Delta diversions.

California does not need to increase Delta diversions to meet its current and future water needs. Increased investments in urban and agricultural water use efficiency and reclamation can meet our needs well into the future.

The Delta pumping plan must be stopped. The SDIP should be withdrawn until the cause of the Delta fish decline is identified and resolved. A revised plan should significantly reduce Delta pumping to restore the Delta ecosystem, improve water quality, and protect Delta fish species.

What you can do - Write a letter and attend a hearing to help stop DWR's disastrous pumping plan!

To send a letter to the Department of Water Resources urging them to halt this disastrous plan, go to <http://capwiz.com/friendsoftheriver/issues/alert/?alertid=8349336&type=CU> **THIS LETTER MUST BE SENT BY FEBRUARY 7TH!!!**

To learn about hearings you can attend in January to oppose the pumping plan, go to www.friendsoftheriver.org/ActionAlerts/2006_PumpingThreatensBayDelta.html#Hearings

For more background on the Bay-Delta estuary pumping plan, go to www.friendsoftheriver.org/ActionAlerts/2006_PumpingThreatensBayDelta.html

2) New Hydropower Rule Threatens River Protection

The U.S. Departments of the Interior, Commerce, and Agriculture have issued new rules that will give electric utilities the opportunity to evade their responsibility to protect rivers that are affected by hydropower dams. If these rules remain in place, dam owners would be able to weaken or override federal requirements that keep rivers from running dry and protect fish and wildlife from harm.

Many hydropower dams have operated for decades under federal licenses that do not reflect today's environmental standards. The re-licensing process allows state and federal agencies to bring these dam operators' licenses up to modern standards for protecting river health and public uses. These new licenses dictate the health of the river for the next 30 to 50 years, so it is vital that they be as protective as possible.

Under these new rules, dam owners will be able to contest environmental, cultural, and recreational protections such as:

fish ladders that allow fish to reach habitat above and below dams;

requirements that utilities keep enough water in riverbeds to protect and enhance habitat, recreation, and water quality;

public access to campgrounds, boat ramps and swimming areas;

protection of cultural resources and tribal treaty rights.

The agencies could have written rules that maximized public involvement, established a high bar for industry challenges of environmental protection measures, and banned reopening of protection measures that have already been finalized. Instead, they wrote rules that favor dam owners over healthy rivers. This rule is bad public policy and bad for America's rivers. The Interior, Commerce, and Agriculture Departments need to hear your opposition!

What you can do: Send a letter to these federal agencies know that their job is to protect our rivers, not energy companies. Public comment deadline is January 17, 2006.

To send a letter, go to

www.americanrivers.org/site/PageServer?pagename=DOI_COMMERCE_AGRICULTURE_RULEMAKING_ALERT&JServSessionIdr006=rb435g7f01.app8b

3) Alameda County Watershed Forum Meeting February 7

The next meeting of the Alameda County Watershed Forum will be on Tuesday, February 7th from 7 to 9 pm (6:30 pm for socializing and refreshments) at Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley's office at 20993 Redwood Court in Castro Valley, which is approximately one block from the Castro Valley BART Station.

The tentative agenda includes presentations by one or more local creek groups, a report back from the subcommittee on ideas for garnering support and interest in the forum by local agencies and officials, and information about creek ordinances and policies in Alameda County. Directions and a more detailed agenda will be sent out about a week before the meeting. For more information contact Dale Hopkins of the Alameda WS Forum Planning Committee (510) 622-2362, DHopkins@waterboards.ca.gov

4) DWR and DFG Directors to Host Fish Passage Document Signing

On Friday, January 13, 2006, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) will host signing of the inaugural publication of Bulletin 250, Fish Passage Improvement 2005.

The report provides an inventory of barriers to salmon and steelhead migration, calls for additional work to prioritize solutions, and is an important new tool to help improve and enhance fish passage in Central Valley rivers and streams.

The signing ceremony will take place at 10:30 a.m. in the Resources Building, Room 1131, 1416 9th Street, Sacramento.

DWR Director Lester Snow, DFG Director Ryan Broddrick, Acting CALFED Director Joseph Grindstaff, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service California/Nevada Operations Manager Steve

Thompson, and National Marine Fisheries Service Regional Administrator Rodney McInnis are all B-250 signatories.

Assemblymember Lois Wolk and State Senator Sheila Kuehl, or their representatives, are expected to attend the ceremony. Representatives from several environmental organizations have also been invited.

Bulletin 250 is a joint interagency document through CALFED's Ecosystem Restoration Program. It resulted from concern about fewer salmon and steelhead in the Central Valley due, in part, to dams and other migratory obstructions.

The Fish Passage Improvement Program (FPIP) coordinates activities with other local, state and federal agencies to identify and remove barriers that impede migration and spawning of anadromous fish. DWR scientists review and plan program objectives with the CALFED ERP implementing agencies: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service; and the Department of Fish and Game.