



MID workshop will discuss updates of long-range plans and federal relicensing

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Several important issues related to MID's future operations and finances will be presented at a public workshop planned for this Thursday at the Merced Fairgrounds.

The Merced Irrigation District Board of Directors will receive an update on the recently released Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the New Exchequer Hydroelectric Project, a requirement for federal relicensing. Additionally, MID will discuss issues related to the District's long-term Water Resources Management Plan.

The workshop will begin at 9 a.m. on Thursday, Jan. 28, at the Tioga Hall of the Merced Fairgrounds.

FEDERAL RELICENSING

The final EIS for the hydroelectric project was released late last year. Spanning 840 pages, it prescribes how much future water must be diverted downstream to the Bay Delta for the environment. The increased diversions will have a direct effect on MID's ability to store water in Lake McClure for irrigation and other beneficial uses in eastern Merced County.

MID has been working toward the federal relicensing of New Exchequer Dam for several years. The lengthy process includes numerous required studies, as well as significant public input. The final license will prescribe operational flow requirements on the Merced River for 50 years.

In April of 2015, approximately 250 farmers, local residents, business leaders and elected officials descended on a meeting with federal regulators to share their objections and concerns about the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for relicensing of New Exchequer Dam. In addition to citing concerns about water storage impacts on Lake McClure, many raised

concerns about the impacts to local groundwater recharge that would result from diverting more water downstream and away from eastern Merced County.

At the Thursday meeting, the MID Board will receive an update on the final Environmental Impact Statement, including federal responses to comments received from the community.

WATER RESOURCES PLAN

As part of the Water Resources Management Plan update, discussions will focus on the issues involving lands which are within the District, paying standby fees, but strictly using groundwater. Additionally, discussions will address Class I and Class II water-user annexation, including potential water supply and financial considerations.

The Water Resources Plan has been in the works for more than a year and will help guide future decisions about the District's operations. MID has conducted numerous meetings to receive input from the public throughout its development. Input has also been received from local growers, business interests, local elected officials, the Merced Irrigation District Advisory Committee, and many other community leaders. Numerous water industry leaders and experts across the state have also been consulted.

For more information about the FERC relicensing process click, please [here](#). For more information about the Water Resources Plan, please click [here](#).

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