

THE Current



MID's Monthly Newsletter

OCTOBER 2016



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The first Tuesday of
every month at 10:00am

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State Water Plan harms MID

Local impacts could cost 100s of jobs, millions of dollars



Seen above is Bagby bridge over Lake McClure in 2011 and 2014. The state's Bay Delta Plan would divert water toward the ocean and away from Lake McClure.

In September, the State Water Resources Control Board released the long-anticipated Bay Delta Plan environmental document. This plan calls for significant diversions of Merced River water away from eastern Merced County and sends it north toward the San Francisco Bay Delta for the purported benefit of salmon, water quality and agriculture.

This water would normally be stored in MID's Lake McClure for use in eastern Merced

County. The State's diversion of water will have a devastating impact on local groundwater quality used by cities, rural residents and farmers alike, as well as cause peripheral harm to the local environment. It will cost the local economy more than \$230 million in economic activity and nearly 1,000 jobs. The State's plan attempts to improve salinity and water quality in the Southern Delta in part for agriculture. Yet this approach overlooks the salinity that will result to Merced's water quality, the loss of local agriculture production and environmental

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Celebrating Public Power

MID is celebrating Public Power during the month of October along with more than 2,000 other community-owned, not-for-profit electric utilities that collectively provide electricity to more than 48 million Americans.

Since forming its electric utility 20 years ago, MID has built a system that serves electricity

to more than 8,500 local residents and businesses.

Public power means that there are no profits – it also means local decision making. Unlike investor-owned utilities, there are no investors, no stock shares and no dividends. Power is provided "at the cost of

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impacts. Merced is already considered a "Disadvantaged Community."

The State's Plan notes "Reclamation of farmland in the Delta ... played a significant role in fish and wildlife species plummeting." Yet the plan seeks to address these issues simply by diverting more water long used by Merced's community to benefit Bay Delta farmers and cities. The vast majority of the natural Bay Delta floodplain habitat has long been lost: it's been channelized, and converted to farms and residential communities.

MID has spent decades and millions of dollars on Merced River fishery science and modeling. The District is certain the Bay Delta Plan will fail to meet its stated objective of improving the salmon populations. The District has long advocated a more responsible, comprehensive approach to increase salmon production on the Merced River through vital habitat restoration, predation control and more appropriate flow regimes. In the coming weeks

MID will release the Merced River S.A.F.E. Plan (Salmon, Agriculture, Flows and Environment), a proposed comprehensive approach alternative to the State Bay Delta Plan.

Prior to the release of the Bay Delta Plan, MID had undertaken an economic analysis of the local financial impacts of the state's proposal. The 104-page economic study was completed by Dr. Susan Burke, a Senior Economist with independent consultant Cardno. The study, "Economic Impacts of Reduced Water Availability to Merced Irrigation District" compares existing MID water operations and economic output with economic conditions expected to result from the new Bay Delta plan.

KEY REPORT FINDINGS:

- Nearly \$1 billion in local economic output is associated with the water operations of Merced Irrigation District and Lake McClure.

- Under the State's Bay Delta Plan there could be a loss of up to \$231 million in economic output.
- A reduction of as many as 970 full- and part-time jobs could result.
- In total, the State's Plan could increase the local unemployment rate by an entire percentage point, in Merced's already disadvantaged community.

"This PhD-level, outside review highlights the significant and far-reaching impacts to this community as it relates to local water supply," said MID General Manager John Sweigard. "These are significant negative effects that cannot be minimized or ignored."

The study was completed through reviewing dozens of existing reports and analyses, ranging from state Economic Development Department data to state and local agriculture reports. The collected data was combined with water-use and diversions computer modeling to develop the complete analysis.

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service" with no-markups. The revenue generated by MID is returned to the benefit of all electric customers through investments in the electric system and providing the lowest possible rates.

WHATS IN IT FOR YOU?

Across the country, Public Power Week is officially celebrated from October 2-8. For the entire month of October, MID invites you to visit the lobby of our main office to enjoy complimentary refreshments, free giveaways and the opportunity to win one of our two energy saving baskets. Information on energy savings tips will be available.

MID is located at 744 W. 20th St. in Merced. Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Additionally, information about MID's public power and energy savings can be found at www.MIDLightsTheWay.com

"This is about celebrating the reliable, affordable electricity MID provides to our community," said Deputy General Manager of Energy Resources Don Ouchley. "Public power puts the people of Merced County first, and we are pleased to em-



MID invites you to celebrate the benefits of public power this month.

phasize the advantages of locally owned power that supports strong communities. Our service is reliable and safe: we take pride in serving our families, friends and neighbors."

POWERFUL FACTS:

- MID provides safe, not-for profit electricity at a reasonable price.
- MID provides power to over 8,500 customers.
- Unlike private power companies, public power utilities like MID are public service institutions and do not serve stockholders.
- We measure success by how much money stays within our community.

- Public Power has a strong environmental-protection track record, solid credentials with bond ratings agencies, and a reputation for reliable, customer-focused service.

