



MID files hundreds of pages of comments taking issue with State's Bay Delta Plan SED

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Merced Irrigation District has submitted hundreds of pages of comments on the State's Bay Delta Water Plan SED. That plan, proposed by the State Water Resources Control Board, would take MID water flowing into Lake McClure and send it north to the Bay Delta.

The official deadline to submit comments to the state was March 17, 2017. MID expects the State Water Board will make a final decision on its Bay Delta Plan SED sometime in the coming months.

The Substitute Environmental Document for the Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan (Bay Delta Plan SED) was released late last year. It would impact local drinking water quality and quantity, cost the Merced area nearly 1,000 jobs and decrease local agriculture production, causing hundreds of millions of dollars in local economic loss – among numerous other problems.

On Dec. 19, more than 600 residents, farmers, and local elected officials turned out for a State Water Board hearing at the Merced Theater. At that time, a wide range of concerns was provided to the State Board about the significant impacts that would occur in the community under the Bay Delta Plan SED. Additionally, on Nov. 29, MID managers and several representatives from local businesses, government and the community attended a hearing in Sacramento to express concerns.

Among the numerous issues raised in MID's written comments:

- Multiple concerns related to lost groundwater replenishment.
- The State's plan fails to define any specific "project" that is reviewed or analyzed, particularly in connection with the Merced River Project at Lake McClure.
- The State Water Board lacks authority and jurisdiction to limit, modify and restrict water rights through the Bay Delta Plan SED.
- The plan will impact MID's pre-1914 water rights on the Merced River.
- The plan will impact and conflicts with MID's post-1914 water rights.
- There are potential conflicts between the plan and MID's flood-control obligations on the Merced River.
- Lack of consideration of MID's beneficial uses of water, as well as uses by other diverters downstream of MID on the Merced River.

- Failure to demonstrate that the Bay Delta SED Plan will have a positive impact on fisheries or water quality in the Bay Delta.

The comments in their entirety can be read on the MID website, [MID Comment Letter – 2016 Bay-Delta Plan Amendment and SED](#).

Throughout the process, MID has continued to advocate for a proposed alternative: the [Merced River SAFE Plan](#). This alternative would offer a host of benefits to salmon and the environment that go beyond simply increasing water diversions to the Delta: increasing hatchery production of salmon on the Merced River, addressing bass predation of juvenile salmon and restoring several miles of spawning and salmon-rearing habitat. So far there has been no acceptance of MID's proposal.

The State Water Board is expected to make its final determination about the Bay Delta Plan SED in the coming months.

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