



Governor signs MID bill to aid energy costs

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Contact: Mike Jensen

209-354-2856

mjensen@mercedid.org

SACRAMENTO, CA – Legislation aimed at helping Merced Irrigation District minimize electric fee increases was signed by Gov. Jerry Brown today. Senate Bill 591 was passed out of the legislature with significant bipartisan support earlier this summer.

“We would like to thank the Governor for his support on this important legislation,” said MID General Manager John Sweigard.

In 2011, the California Legislature established a law requiring all utilities to have 33 percent renewable energy by the year 2020. The law generally precluded hydroelectric generation as a source of renewable energy. As a result, MID’s New Exchequer Hydroelectric Project is not considered renewable.

SB 591 aims to allow MID to count a portion of its hydroelectric generation toward its renewable-energy purchase requirements.

The legislation marked a bipartisan effort by Merced County’s local legislators: it was authored by Sen. Anthony Cannella, R-Ceres, and co-authored by Assembly Member Adam Gray, D-Merced.

The offset and financial benefit to MID’s ratepayers will depend on the amount of hydroelectricity produced at New Exchequer Hydroelectric Project in a given year. That amount is dependent on the amount of water stored in Lake McClure, based on inflow to the reservoir and outflow requirements by state regulators.

For more than two years MID has been involved in discussions with legislators and top officials at the California Energy Commission regarding the renewable-energy-purchase mandate.

“As has been said before, we are absolutely grateful for the diligent and steadfast work of Senator Cannella, Assemblyman Gray and their staff,” said MID’s Sweigard. “This bill represents a significant step in the District’s ongoing efforts to minimize fees to our ratepayers as we come into compliance with the state’s mandatory green-energy purchase requirements.”

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