



NEWS RELEASE

Association of California Water Agencies

910 K Street, Suite 100 · Sacramento, California 95814-3512
916/441-4545 · FAX 916/441-7893 · <http://www.acwa.com>

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Contact: Jennifer Persike, ACWA Director of Strategic Coordination and Public Affairs,
916/441-4545, or 916/296-3981 (cell)

ACWA Issues Statement on Salmon Biological Opinion

New Restrictions Underscore Water Infrastructure Problems, Need for Solutions

Sacramento – Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) Executive Director Timothy Quinn issued the following statement today on a new biological opinion for salmon issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service. The opinion outlines changes the agency will require to the operation of the State Water Project and the federal Central Valley Project to protect salmon and other species under the Endangered Species Act.

“This opinion adds another layer to a complicated landscape for California’s water managers. These new requirements underscore the difficulty of making our half-century old water delivery infrastructure work for both the environment and the economy.

“NOAA Fisheries has suggested that the water supply impact of this action is relatively small. But the fact is this decision eliminates about \$100 million worth of previously available supplies that, if not replaced, will result in further job losses and financial strain for local water agencies and our beleaguered economy.

“Over the past two decades, we have now lost about 3 million acre-feet of previously available supplies to environmental regulation at a cost of roughly \$1 billion annually with little evidence these sacrifices are improving the environment.

“We are at a point when we can no longer guarantee the reliability of our water supplies in any given year. The water management tools we’ve invested in over the past decade -- groundwater storage, off-stream storage, voluntary water transfers, conservation, and even water recycling -- cannot work if water cannot be captured and moved reliably.

“People don’t win and the environment doesn’t win in this scenario. We need new approaches to ESA implementation that reduce these unacceptable economic impacts, and we need them now. California must move ahead immediately with a comprehensive long-term solution that includes conveyance improvements in the Delta, additional surface and groundwater storage and local resource development. We must also support the Bay Delta Conservation Planning process.”

ACWA is a statewide association of public agencies whose 450 members are responsible for about 90% of the water delivered in California. For more information, visit www.acwa.com