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Contacts: Keith Coolidge (916) 445-0092 or (916) 275-6098, cell
Jim Milbury, NOAA Fisheries, (562) 980-4006

Review Panel Releases Report About Science Used to Support Water Project Environmental Documentation

WHAT: The California Bay-Delta Authority has released an independent review of the scientific information used by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) to assess the impacts of proposed changes in federal and state water project operations .

WHEN: Report is available now on the CALFED website at www.calwater.ca.gov

A public meeting to review the findings of the panel is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 30

WHERE: John E. Moss Federal Building, Stanford Room
650 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA

WHY: The review was undertaken at the request of NOAA Fisheries and examined the scientific data and approach used by NOAA Fisheries to prepare a Biological Opinion (BO) that addressed a proposal by the US Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the state Department of Water Resources (DWR). That proposal, known as the Operations Criteria and Plan (OCAP) covered future operations and closer coordination of the federal Central Valley Project and the State Water Project, both of which impound and store water in the Central Valley and pump water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

California Bay-Delta Authority staff recruited the panel and facilitated the review, but did not participate in developing or critiquing the panel's conclusions.

The BO was issued on October 22, 2004. The BO assessed the impacts of changes in operations of the CVP and SWP on listed Chinook salmon and steelhead in the Sacramento River, and coho salmon in the Trinity River system.

A subsequent audit by the U.S. Department of Commerce Office of the Inspector General recommended that NOAA Fisheries undertake an objective evaluation of the scientific integrity of the BO, which led NOAA Fisheries to ask the California Bay-Delta Authority (CBDA) last July to conduct the review.

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