

Proposed Negative Declaration

Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District-Kern County Water Agency Water Transfer Program

Project Description

The Project is a long-term water transfer program between Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District (TLBWSD) and Kern County Water Agency (KCWA) to allow for annual transfers of up to 67,000 acre-feet per year (AF/y) of State Water Project (SWP) water from common landowners (JG Boswell up to 66,000 AF/y and Westlake Farms up to 1,000 AF/y) with landholdings in each of the listed member units. The purpose of the Project is to improve water management opportunities within TLBWSD and KCWA by creating a program that would accelerate the California Department of Water Resources approval process for the kinds of surface water transfers that have successfully occurred in the past between TLBWSD and KCWA. The Project would allow for timely SWP water transfers that would utilize the water supplies and existing facilities in a more beneficial manner for the growers, thereby improving water management practices within the agencies. Although water transfers could occur both from TLBWSD to KCWA and from KCWA to TLBWSD, it is anticipated that most of the SWP water transfers would be from landowners in TLBWSD to districts in KCWA where the same landowners also own and manage agricultural operations. Transfers from districts in KCWA to TLBWSD would only occur if both the specific district in KCWA and KCWA approve the specific transfer when and if it is requested by the landowner.

For common landowner transfers, the following districts that are KCWA Member Units could be involved:

- Belridge Water Storage District
- Berrenda Mesa Water District
- Buena Vista Water Storage District
- Henry Miller Water District
- Kern Delta Water District
- Lost Hills Water District
- Rosedale-Rio Bravo Water Storage District
- Semitropic Water Storage District
- Wheeler Ridge-Maricopa Water Storage District

No construction, nor any operational or maintenance changes will occur as a result of this project.

Project Location

The Project is located within the service areas of KCWA within Kern County and TLBWSD in Kings and Tulare Counties. The points of delivery would be in Reaches 8 through 16 of the California Aqueduct and Reach 31A of the Coastal Branch of the California Aqueduct. The KCWA member units expected to be involved in the water transfers from TLBWSD are located in the San Joaquin Valley floor portion of Kern County. The land uses in TLBWSD and KCWA are primarily agricultural.

Determination/Proposed Finding

After making an assessment of the possible impacts of the proposed Project and reviewing an Initial Study dated January 2020, the Board of Directors of the Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District has determined that the proposed Project as presented will not have any significant effect on the environment, either directly or indirectly.

The reasons for this determination are as follows:

The Project would not involve construction, would not result in any significant changes in land use, would involve mostly non-permanent transfers of water, and would not develop or require any new water resources but use existing resources. The Project would therefore not significantly impact or affect aesthetics, agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology/soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology/water quality, land use/ planning, mineral resources, noise, population/housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or utilities/service systems. A proposed Negative Declaration has been prepared.

Initial Study

A copy of the Initial Study and Environmental Checklist prepared by Agency Staff and dated January 2020 is attached.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are needed.