

DATE: May 12, 2023

SUBJECT: **Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Report**

PROJECT: Guidelines for Accepting Water into the Friant-Kern Canal

LEAD AGENCY: Friant Water Authority
854 N. Harvard Avenue
Lindsay, CA 93247

Notice is hereby given by the Friant Water Authority (Friant), as the lead agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), that the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed *Guidelines for Accepting Water into the Friant-Kern Canal* (proposed Guidelines) is available for public review and comment. This Notice of Availability (NOA) has been prepared for the Draft EIR, in compliance with Section 15087 of the CEQA Guidelines. The proposed Guidelines will define the water quality thresholds and other requirements for introducing water into the Friant-Kern Canal from a source other than Millerton Lake.

Project Location (Study Area): The study area includes: (1) the 152-mile Friant-Kern Canal; (2) the area within and adjacent to the Friant-Kern Canal right-of-way; and (3) areas within the boundaries of water contractors (Contractors) authorized to take water from or put water into the Friant-Kern Canal. The Friant-Kern Canal extends from Friant Dam near Fresno, California, to the Kern River in Bakersfield, California. It is located in the San Joaquin Valley of central California. The Friant-Kern Canal conveys water to augment irrigation capacity in Fresno, Tulare, and Kern counties, as well as to provide municipal water supplies.

Project Description: The proposed Guidelines will define the water quality thresholds and other requirements for introducing water into the Friant-Kern Canal from a source other than Millerton Lake (Non-Millerton water). Implementation of the proposed Guidelines would not result in Friant making any physical modifications to the Friant-Kern Canal; however, in response to the proposed Guidelines Contractors may need to take certain actions that could include blending of water, changes in timing of the introduction or discharge of Non-Millerton water, use of alternative water supplies, or construction and operation of small water treatment facilities at the source of the pump-in. In addition, Friant or Contractors may need to construct and/or maintain facilities for monitoring and forecasting water quality (e.g., water quality monitoring stations). The proposed Guidelines are available for download at <https://friantwater.org/public-notices>.

Anticipated Significant Environmental Effects: As required by CEQA (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2), the Draft EIR objectively assesses and discloses potential environmental effects of the proposed Guidelines. The Draft EIR identifies potentially significant impacts on biological resources, cultural resources, noise, and tribal cultural resources. Mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid that effect would include site-specific surveys to identify biological, cultural, and tribal cultural resources, and/or implementation of measures during construction to reduce noise impacts. However, the extent to which a Contractor might take an action in response to the proposed Guidelines, and precise locations and detailed

characteristics of future actions are yet to be determined. There could be a range of actions undertaken to meet the requirements of the proposed Guidelines. Therefore, the analysis in the Draft EIR evaluates a range of potential effects in the proposed study area that could result from the construction and operation of these potential actions at a program-level of detail. Once specific actions are proposed by Contractors, their impacts will be more fully evaluated in future project-level CEQA review by the lead agencies for the proposed actions.

Comment Period: The Draft EIR is available to federal, state, and local agencies and interested organizations and individuals who may want to review and comment on the adequacy of the analysis. The Draft EIR is available for review on Friant’s website: <https://friantwater.org/public-notice>, and at the Friant Water Authority office at 854 N. Harvard Avenue, Lindsay, CA 93247. Publication of the Draft EIR marks the beginning of a 45-day public review period. The 45-day public review period for the Draft EIR is Friday May 12, 2023 through 5:00 p.m. on Monday June 26, 2023. Written comments should be mailed or e-mailed to: Friant Water Authority, c/o Ian Buck-Macleod, 854 N. Harvard Avenue, Lindsay, CA 93247, ibuckmacleod@friantwater.org. Please use “Guidelines for Accepting Water into the Friant-Kern Canal EIR Comments” in the subject line. Please also include the name of a contact person if submitting comments on behalf of an agency, tribal group, or organization. All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the official administrative record and may be available to the public.

Scoping Meeting: A virtual public meeting will be held on Tuesday May 30, 2023, 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., via the Zoom web conference application. Information about the Draft EIR, submitting comments and the public meeting can be found on Friant’s website: <https://friantwater.org/public-notice>. A virtual public meeting will be held during the 45-day Draft EIR review period. To join the meeting on your computer or Zoom mobile application, please click the following link or join by phone:

Meeting URL: <https://esassoc.zoom.us/j/6644295192>

Meeting ID: 664 429 5192

Or call in (audio only)

+1 833 548 0276 (United States), Meeting ID: 664 429 5192

To ensure the best experience for this meeting, please join via the Desktop or mobile Zoom application. The dial-in audio conferencing number should only be used if other options do not work or are not available.

The public meeting will include a brief presentation, providing an overview of the proposed Guidelines. After the presentation, comments will be accepted. Individuals wishing to provide comments during the meeting are encouraged to first register by emailing Ian Buck-Macleod at ibuckmacleod@friantwater.org (please include “**Friant Water Authority Guidelines for Accepting Water into the Friant-Kern Canal, Draft EIR Public Meeting Comment Registration**” in the subject line).