

1. INTRODUCTION

This document is the **Draft Environmental Impact Report** (Draft EIR) on the Water Forum Proposal (WFP). Development of the WFP has been a long-term process involving substantial scientific review and input, environmental analysis, and consensus-building since 1993. The WFP was formulated by stakeholder representatives in the Water Forum Working Group, and was first published for review in Draft form in January 1997. Subsequently, the Water Forum Working Group has refined aspects of its recommendations and formulated the WFP.

This Draft EIR is being circulated to the public and affected agencies for review and comment. Based on comments and final negotiations, a Final EIR will be prepared and stakeholder representatives will revise the WFP into recommendations for a Water Forum Agreement (Agreement). The culmination of these efforts is planned to result in consideration and certification of the EIR by the lead agencies, followed by adoption of the Water Forum Agreement by the stakeholders of the Water Forum. This program EIR has been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code §21000, *et seq.*, and State CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations §15000, *et seq.*

1.1 MISSION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE WATER FORUM

The Sacramento Area Water Forum (**Water Forum**), a diverse group of water managers, business and agricultural leaders, environmentalists, citizen groups, and local governments, was formed in September 1993 to evaluate water resources and future water supply needs of the Sacramento metropolitan region. During its early activities, the Water Forum defined its goals and mission, which are embodied in the **coequal objectives**.

Provide a reliable and safe water supply for the region's economic health and planned development through the year 2030

Preserve the fishery, wildlife, recreational, and aesthetic values of the Lower American River

1.2 COMPOSITION OF THE WATER FORUM

The Water Forum consists of a coalition of **stakeholders** who have been discussing and debating water management issues in the Sacramento area and adjacent foothill region. The group represents the business, agricultural, environmental, citizen, water management, and local government interests in Sacramento County, and water interests in South Placer County and western El Dorado County. All stakeholders have been participating in the formulation of the WFP and will be responsible for its ultimate approval. The Water Forum stakeholder organizations are listed in Table 1-1.

**Table 1-1
WATER FORUM STAKEHOLDERS**

Stakeholders - Business	Stakeholders - Sacramento Water Interests
Associated General Contractors	Arcade Water District *
Building Industry Association of Superior California	Carmichael Water District
Sacramento Association of Realtors	Citizens Utilities
Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce	Citrus Heights Water District
Sacramento-Sierra Building & Construction Trades Council	City of Folsom
Stakeholders - Environmental	City of Galt
Environmental Council of Sacramento	Clay Water District
Friends of the River	Del Paso Manor County Water District
Save the American River Association, Inc.	Fair Oaks Water District
Sierra Club - Mother Lode Chapter - Sacramento Group	Florin County Water District
Stakeholders - Public	Galt Irrigation District
City of Sacramento (Co-Lead Agency)	Natomas Central Mutual Water Company
County of Sacramento (Co-Lead Agency)	Northridge Water District
League of Women Voters of Sacramento	Omochumne-Hartnell Water District
Sacramento County Alliance of Neighborhoods	Orange Vale Water Company
Sacramento County Taxpayers League	Rancho Murieta Community Services District*
Sacramento Municipal Utility District	Rio Linda Elverta Community Water District *
Stakeholders - Foothill Water Interests	Sacramento County Farm Bureau
City of Roseville	Sacramento Metropolitan Water Authority
El Dorado County Water Agency	San Juan Water District
El Dorado Irrigation District *	
Georgetown Divide Public Utility District *	
Placer County Water Agency	
<p>* Parties to Procedural Agreements— these stakeholder organizations have remaining issues that have not been resolved at this time, and are expected to enter into Procedural Agreements instead of becoming parties to the Water Forum Agreement (see Section 3.2.4, Parties to the Water Forum Agreement and Status of Negotiations).</p>	

In addition to Water Forum stakeholders, a number of other public agencies or entities have an interest in the WFP, or may have some jurisdiction in its implementation. State Trustee Agencies and other affected State agencies include: California Department of Water Resources (DWR), State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), State Lands Commission (SLC), and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR), and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Federal agencies which may have separate, subsequent actions related to the plan's implementation include the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

1.3 LEAD AGENCIES AND RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES

As defined in State CEQA Guidelines §15367, the **Lead Agency** is the public agency that has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project. Although all stakeholder organizations are expected to adopt and implement the WFP, the City of Sacramento and the County of Sacramento are the designated CEQA Co-Lead Agencies.

Other public agency stakeholders that use this EIR to support adoption of the Agreement are **Responsible Agencies** as defined by CEQA §21069 and State CEQA Guidelines §15381. The **City-County Office of Metropolitan Water Planning** (CCOMWP), a joint effort of the City of Sacramento and the County of Sacramento, is providing staffing and coordination for the Water Forum effort, including CEQA compliance.

The CCOMWP was created by the City and the County in October of 1991. For the 20 years prior to the establishment of the CCOMWP, the City of Sacramento, County of Sacramento, Sacramento County Water Agency, and water districts within the county engaged in discussions concerning the use of surface water and groundwater for municipal, industrial and agricultural purposes. Although extensive studies had been conducted by the water agencies concerning water resource management in Sacramento County, little progress had been made toward implementation of a plan due to technological and political complexities. Therefore, the County Board of Supervisors and City Council determined that a more formalized planning process should be instituted. Because the task of developing and implementing a regional water plan is complex and involves a large number of individuals and agencies, the Council and Board felt that the City's and County's efforts to develop a consensus about a regional water plan should be combined in a single planning entity. Therefore, the Board and Council created the CCOMWP and forged a partnership to take the lead in developing a comprehensive regional water management plan.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THIS PROGRAM EIR

The Water Forum stakeholders will be asked ultimately to approve and adopt the Water Forum Agreement (based on refinements to the WFP); therefore, the public agencies among the stakeholders must comply with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. CEQA requires that all state and local government agencies consider the environmental consequences of projects over

which they have discretionary approval authority. An **environmental impact report** (EIR) is an informational document used in the decision-making process. It is not the purpose of an EIR to recommend either approval or denial of a project. CEQA requires decision-makers to balance the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of a proposed project against its significant environmental effects.

This environmental document is a **Program EIR** that is intended to provide the Co-Lead Agencies and Responsible Agencies with the environmental information necessary to make an informed decision when they decide whether to approve and adopt the WFP. The purpose of a Program EIR is to identify and assess the environmental impacts of a series of actions that comprise an overall program, such as the WFP. As described in the State CEQA Guidelines §15168, a Program EIR "may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either: 1) geographically; 2) as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions; 3) in connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program; or 4) as individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways."

It is anticipated that subsequent actions by individual stakeholders to implement the Water Forum Agreement will be reviewed in light of the Program EIR to determine what additional environmental documentation must be prepared. If the agency undertaking an action pursuant to the WFP finds that no new effects that were not examined in this Program EIR could occur or no new mitigation measures would be required for that action, it can approve the activity as being within the scope of the Program EIR, and no new environmental analysis would be required. If the activity would involve new impacts or mitigation measures, subsequent documentation (in the form of an EIR or Negative Declaration) would focus on those new impacts, thereby streamlining the environmental process for subsequent, implementing actions under the WFP.

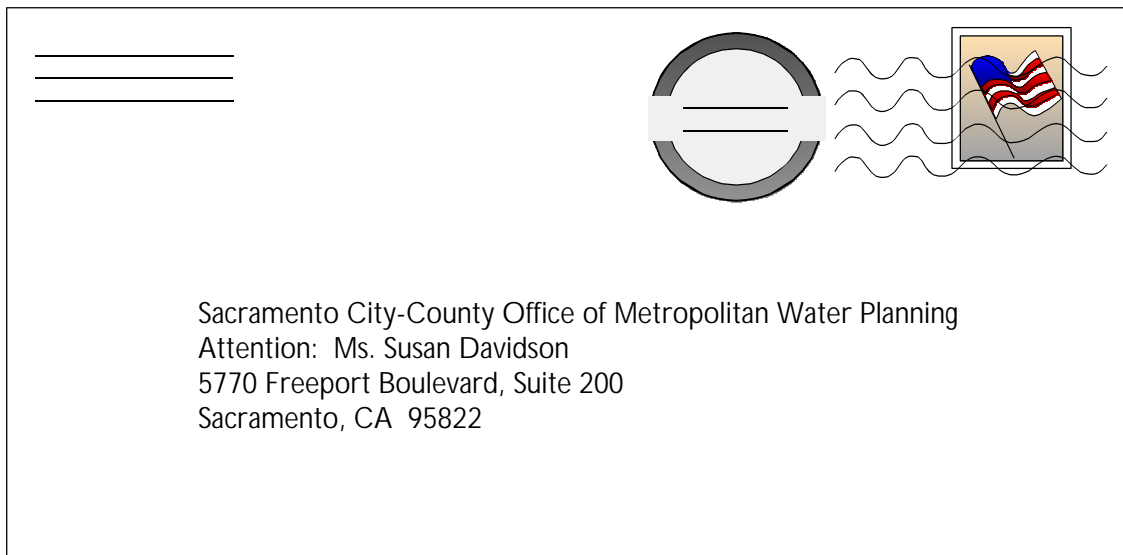
1.5 EIR PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

The public review process required by CEQA begins with a **Notice of Preparation** (NOP) of the EIR. The NOP requests comments from affected agencies and the public regarding the scope and content of the EIR. The NOP for this Draft EIR was released by the CCOMWP on August 8, 1995. The NOP and comments received during the public circulation period are included in Appendix A.

The purpose of public review of the Draft EIR is to receive comments from interested parties on its completeness and adequacy in disclosing the environmental effects of the WFP. Following the close of the Draft EIR public review period, a second document containing comments received on the Draft EIR, and responses to significant environmental points raised in those comments, will be prepared and published. Together, the Draft EIR and the responses to comments will constitute the Final EIR. The Sacramento City Council and Sacramento County Board of Supervisors are each responsible for certifying that the EIR has been adequately

prepared in compliance with CEQA. After certification, Responsible Agencies may use the EIR in making their determination whether to approve the Water Forum Agreement.

- If you wish to submit comments on the Draft EIR, please send them by the close of the public review period to:



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