

1. INTRODUCTION

On January 20, 1999, the City of Sacramento (City) and County of Sacramento (County) distributed the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for the Water Forum Proposal (WFP) to public agencies and the general public. The WFP was formulated by stakeholder representatives in the Water Forum Working Group, as a proposal for the effective long-term management of the region's water resources. The WFP was formulated based on the two coequal objectives of the Water Forum: 1) provide a reliable and safe water supply for the region's economic health and planned development through the year 2030; and 2) preserve the fishery, wildlife, recreational, and aesthetic values of the Lower American River.

The environmental analysis in the Draft EIR is based on an evaluation of how environmental conditions would be expected to change as a result of implementing the WFP. As a first-tier, Program EIR of the WFP, the impact analysis addresses both the impacts resulting from the WFP and a cumulative evaluation of all the participating purveyor's water resource actions in the region, along with many other water management actions outside the region. The WFP Draft EIR also considers the impacts of various alternatives to the WFP.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines §15205(d) requires a 45-day review period for the Draft EIR. The review period for the WFP Draft EIR was 60 days, from January 20, 1999, to March 22, 1999, and was extended for an additional 14 days until April 5, 1999. Comments on environmental issues evaluated in the Draft EIR were received from the public, and state and local agencies during the review period. In addition, a public hearing was held in the Cooperative Agricultural Extension Office, 4145 Branch Center Road, Sacramento, California, on March 3, 1999, to allow oral comments on the Draft EIR.

As specified in §15088(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines, the focus of the responses to comments is on the disposition of significant environmental issues. Detailed responses are not required on comments regarding the merits of the proposed project. Comments on the merits of the project will be forwarded to agency decision makers for consideration prior to approving or denying the proposed project.

All comments on the Draft EIR, and the responses thereto, are presented in this report. Section 4 of this volume, Comments on the Draft EIR and Responses, contains the written comments (verbatim) and transcripts of oral comments on the Draft EIR, and responses to significant environmental issues raised in the comments, as required by the State CEQA Guidelines §15132. Each comment letter is labeled to correspond with an index list in Section 3. If a comment results in a change to the Draft EIR text, the text is revised and the changes compiled in Section 5, Corrections and Revisions to the Draft EIR. The text deletions are shown in ~~strikeout~~ and additions are shown in underline.

The Final EIR consists of the following documents in their entirety:

■ Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Water Forum
Proposal, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="261 468 1312 508">➤ Appendices A - D<li data-bbox="261 508 1312 548">➤ Appendices E - G and I - K<li data-bbox="261 548 1312 577">➤ Appendix H
Responses to Comments and Additional Information, including:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="261 663 1312 703">➤ Appendix L<li data-bbox="261 703 1312 743">➤ Appendix M<li data-bbox="261 743 1312 772">➤ Appendix N