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**GRIM WATER SUPPLY FORECAST FOR 2009 REINFORCES NEED  
FOR NEW WATER DELIVERY SYSTEM**

*Early Estimates Indicate Agencies May Get Only 15% of Water Contracted*

**Sacramento, CA** – The bleak water supply forecast for 2009 reinforces the pressing need to build a new water delivery system that will protect the environment and provide a reliable water supply for Californians. Water agencies receiving water from the State Water Project (SWP), one of the state’s primary water delivery systems, may only get 15 percent of their contract water supplies in 2009, according to early forecasts released today by the California Department of Water Resources.

In light of the low predictions, the State Water Contractors also warned today that residents, businesses and farms throughout the state will see significant new restrictions on water use in 2009.

“Even if we have a wet fall and winter, the water won’t necessarily be available to us because deliveries are also being cut to protect fish in the Delta. We are anticipating drastically reduced water supplies, regardless of weather conditions,” said Laura King Moon, assistant general manager of the State Water Contractors. “The fragility of the Delta ecosystem, combined with the drought we are currently experiencing, makes it imperative for California to agree on a comprehensive, long-term Delta fix. We can’t make it rain, but we can make the system work better to ensure a reliable water supply for Californians and protect the environment.” added Moon.

This exceptionally low forecast is due to restrictions placed on water deliveries from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta (Delta) to protect endangered fish species, and severely dry conditions in California throughout 2008 that are expected to continue into 2009. A ten percent projected statewide allocation for the SWP is the lowest in California history.

This comes at a time when California is already reeling from ongoing hits to the state’s water supply and delivery system. Having been allocated only 35 percent of their contracted water supplies in 2008, state water managers have been facing significantly reduced water deliveries for nearly a year.

Dry conditions have been so bad that Governor Schwarzenegger has formally declared California to be in a state of drought and collectively, reservoirs throughout the state are at the lowest levels in 14 years. San Luis Reservoir, one of the state’s largest reservoirs, is able to hold 2,039,000 acre-feet of water but today only holds a little more than 230,000 acre-feet -- a

dismal 11 percent of capacity. In addition to drought, instability within the Delta has significantly impacted the reliability of our water supply. Water exports were slashed in 2008 to protect fish species and by mid-2008, 660,000 acre-feet of water had been cut – enough to serve 5.3 million Californians for one year.

“This extremely low forecast for 2009 means that Californians will be using less water and paying more,” said Moon. SWC member agencies have been urging and in many cases, requiring, their customers to cut back on water use. Public water agencies have put in place rate increases, mandatory restrictions, public education programs and enforcement programs to ensure that we are efficiently using the water that’s available.

The problems we face today go beyond weather conditions and regulatory issues. Twenty-five million Californians and more than 3 million acres of agricultural land currently get their water supplies moved through the Delta. However, the water delivered through the Delta is at risk because of the estuary’s failing condition, antiquated levees and the threat of natural disaster.

Public water agencies, environmental organizations, and state and federal agencies are working together now to develop a long-term solution. The Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP), a comprehensive conservation plan for the Delta, is researching new ways to protect the struggling ecosystem by physically separating its natural tidal movements from the conveyance of water supplies, a strategy that has been identified as the best way to restore and protect the Delta ecosystem and ensure a reliable water supply for California. For more information on the BDCP, please visit <http://www.resources.ca.gov/bdcp/>.

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*The State Water Contractors is a statewide, non-profit association of 27 public agencies from Northern, Central and Southern California that purchase water under contract from the California State Water Project. Collectively the State Water Contractors deliver water to more than 25 million residents throughout the state and more than 750,000 acres of agricultural lands. For more information on the State Water Contractors, please visit [www.swc.org](http://www.swc.org).*