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NEW ANALYSIS REVEALS MASSIVE WATER SUPPLY RESTRICTIONS IN ATTEMPT TO PROTECT FISH

Cutbacks Have Caused the Loss of Enough Water to Fill One of State's Key Storage Facilities

Sacramento, CA – The State Water Contractors, a statewide organization representing 27 public water agencies in California, released a new analysis today quantifying how regulatory restrictions, theoretically designed to protect endangered fish species, have severely impacted our state's water supply. Clearly demonstrating the mounting water crisis and profound problems within our existing water delivery infrastructure, the regulatory restrictions imposed on California's two major water projects – the State Water Project and the Central Valley Project – have cut a whopping 478,894 acre-feet of water since January.

To put that in perspective, that amount of water would serve more than 3.8 million people for one year. Looking at it another way, it was enough to refill San Luis Reservoir, one of the state's primary water storage facilities that has been drawn down to record levels due to the three-year drought and the fish restrictions. Total capacity for San Luis Reservoir is 2,027,835 acre-feet and, as of Friday, March 12, the reservoir contained only 1,585,326 acre-feet. Lake Oroville, the State Water Project's main storage facility, is at below normal levels due to less than average runoff.

The state's water projects have been controlled by regulatory restrictions (biological opinions for Delta smelt and salmon) for more than two years now, severely limiting the amount of water that state and federal agencies deliver, even in wet years.

"The amount of water that we've lost during the past two and a half months alone would have filled San Luis Reservoir. The ongoing restrictions are preventing us from recovering from the past three years of drought," said Laura King Moon, assistant general manager of the State Water Contractors. "Between regulatory cutbacks and low runoff from the Sierras, we are looking at another bad year for water supplies."

Meanwhile, the cutbacks have failed to boost fish populations. The State Water Contractors have called on the courts as well as state and federal agencies to consider the [many other factors that have impacted fish populations in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta \(Delta\)](#). However, court action is not expected until the window to capture additional water supplies this year has come and gone.

"If we don't address the other stressors that are hurting fish populations, we'll never see their numbers rebound. The need to look at this comprehensively has never been greater," added King Moon.

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State and federal agencies have been working in conjunction with environmental organizations and water agencies to develop the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, a comprehensive plan that will restore the ecosystem and reliable water supplies for the 25 million people, businesses and farms that rely on the Delta. For more information, please visit www.baydeltaconservationplan.org.

Attached is recent Delta water operations information.

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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.