



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Mid-Pacific Region
Bay-Delta Office
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Sacramento, CA 95814-2536

IN REPLY REFER TO:

BDO-400
ENV-7.00

JUN 3 5 2017

Mr. Barry Thom
Regional Administrator, West Coast-Region
National Marine Fisheries Service
7600 Sand Point Way Northeast
Seattle, WA 98155

Subject: Request for National Marine Fisheries Service Participation as a Cooperating Agency in Preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Reinitiation of Consultation on the Coordinated Long-term Operation of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project

Dear Mr. Thom:

The Bureau of Reclamation is initiating preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the reinitiation of Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on the Coordinated Long-term Operation (LTO) of the Central Valley Project (CVP) and State Water Project (SWP).

On August 2, 2016, Reclamation requested reinitiation of consultation (ROC) with the Service and NMFS under Section 7 of the ESA on the Coordinated LTO of the CVP and SWP. This request is based upon new available science, multiple years of drought, and the continued decline in the status of listed species.

Reclamation requests that NMFS be a “cooperating agency” in the ROC on LTO EIS project as defined by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provision of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) at 40 CFR Section 1508.5. The responsibilities of a cooperating agency are described at 40 CFR Section 1501.6. Reclamation expects cooperating agencies to participate in the NEPA process at the earliest possible time, participate in the process leading to identification of significant issues, help fashion alternatives to the proposed action for the EIS, and make available staff support to enhance our interdisciplinary capability. Cooperating agencies focus their efforts on topics for which they have special expertise, appropriate data, or information. As a cooperating agency pursuant to NEPA for the ROC on LTO EIS, the following activities are currently anticipated:

- Attendance at EIS coordination meetings.
- Collaboration on development of a coordination plan, which may include a schedule.

- The opportunity to comment on the purpose and need statement and the range of alternatives as early practicable.
- Identification, as early as practicable, of any issues regarding the project's environmental and socioeconomic impacts that could substantially delay or prevent the granting of a permit or other approval.
- Consultation on any relevant technical studies that will be required for the project.
- Identification of data and analysis in the EIS that your agency needs to discharge their NEPA responsibilities and any other requirements regarding jurisdictional permits and/or other approvals required for implementation of the project.
- Review of technical analyses of key subject areas prior to public review of the EIS.

If you decide to act as a cooperating agency in the NEPA process for this project, we hope you will commit personnel adequate to assume responsibility for developing information and preparing environmental analyses, including portions of the EIS for which NMFS has special expertise and area of jurisdiction, with direction from the Federal lead agency. Reclamation shall use the environmental analyses and proposals from NMFS to the maximum extent possible, consistent with our responsibility as the Federal lead agency.

You have the right to expect that the ROC on LTO EIS will enable you to discharge your jurisdictional responsibilities. Likewise, you have the obligation to tell us if, at any point in the process, your needs are not being met. We expect that at the end of the process the EIS will satisfy your NEPA requirements including those related to project alternatives, environmental consequences, and mitigation. Further, we intend to utilize the EIS and our subsequent record of decision as our decision-making documents and as the basis for subsequent permit applications or other approvals. We expect the permit application and/or ESA consultation process to proceed concurrently with the EIS approval process.

We look forward to your response to our request for your agency to be a cooperating agency and to working with you on this project. Please be advised that a response to this request to be a cooperating agency is required under CEQ regulation 40 CFR 1501.6(c). Should you decide not to accept, you must respond in writing and submit a copy of your reply to the CEQ. Please feel free to direct questions regarding the ROC on LTO EIS process or questions regarding cooperating agencies and NEPA to Ms. Katrina Harrison at kharrison@usbr.gov or 916-414-2425.

Sincerely,



David M. Mooney
Acting Area Manager

Similar letter sent to persons on next page.

Similar Letter Sent To:

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