

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

1416 NINTH STREET, P.O. BOX 942836
SACRAMENTO, CA 94236-0001
(916) 653-5791



October 30, 2015

Re: Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Report / Environmental Impact Statement Regarding the Proposed Delta Research Station – Estuarine Research Station and Fish Technology Center

To Interested Parties:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS), lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), are making available a draft environmental impact report / environmental impact statement (Draft EIR/EIS) for public review. DWR and USFWS have prepared this Draft EIR/EIS to provide the public, responsible agencies, and trustee agencies with information about the potential environmental effects of the proposed Delta Research Station (DRS) (Proposed Project). This Draft EIR/EIS was prepared in compliance with CEQA of 1970 (as amended), the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR] title 14, section (§) 15000 et seq.), and the NEPA (U.S. Code [USC] 432). DWR hereby invites comments on the adequacy and completeness of the environmental analyses in the Draft EIR/EIS.

PROJECT LOCATION: The DRS would be located in a centralized area of the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary (Bay-Delta), California. Two alternative locations are evaluated in the Draft EIR/EIS: (1) the Rio Vista Army Reserve Center (RVARC) site in the City of Rio Vista, and (2) a site located at 845 Ryde Avenue in the City of Stockton (Ryde Avenue site).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: The Proposed Project, as analyzed in this Draft EIR/EIS, consists of evaluation of the proposed construction and operation of two facilities, a proposed Estuarine Research Station (ERS) and Fish Technology Center (FTC). Collectively, these facilities are intended to serve as an aquatic research and monitoring facility that is located in centralized area of the Bay-Delta. The Proposed Project reflects the outcome of a multiyear collaboration between DWR, USFWS, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and other agencies involved in the Interagency Ecological Program (IEP).

The proposed DRS would consolidate ongoing IEP research and monitoring activities throughout the Bay-Delta and provide facilities for study and production of endangered Delta fishes. Currently, the IEP has approximately 145 state and federal employees who conduct research throughout the Bay-Delta. The IEP collaboratively monitors, researches, models and synthesizes critical information for adaptive management water project operations, planning and regulatory purposes relative to the aquatic ecosystem in the Bay-Delta. USFWS and DWR plan to construct the DRS in a centrally located area within the Bay-Delta and the facilities are expected to enhance interagency coordination and collaboration.

The purpose of the DRS is to enhance interagency coordination and collaboration by developing a shared research facility. Currently, federal and state agency staff working on similar Bay-Delta issues are distributed among different locations that are often remote from the Bay-Delta. Construction and operation of the DRS would reduce travel times and costs and improve research and monitoring activity efficiency. The ERS would consolidate existing IEP programs currently located throughout the Delta, and the FTC would house a new program to develop and apply captive fish propagation technologies in support of population restoration.

The Draft EIR/EIS evaluates the potential environmental impacts of three action alternatives as well as the No Project Alternative: the No Project Alternative (DWR and USFWS would not construct the ERS or FTC); Alternative 2 (the ERS and FTC facilities would be consolidated in the predominantly undeveloped portions of the RVARC site); Alternative 3 (the ERS facilities would involve rehabilitation and reuse of existing facilities); and Alternative 4 (the ERS and FTC facilities would be located at 845 Ryde Avenue site in Stockton).

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines §15087, given the size of the Proposed Project area, it is possible that hazardous waste sites or listed toxic sites listed by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (Cal-EPA) may be present in the area. The analysis in the Draft EIR/EIS concluded that the location for the DRS facilities do not overlap with listed sites and did not identify any potentially significant impacts that would require mitigation to reduce effects to a less-than-significant level, or that would be significant and unavoidable.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY: The Draft EIR/EIS and supporting documents are available for download from the following website: www.deltaresearchstation.com. Printed copies of the Draft EIR/EIS and supporting documents are available to review during regular business hours at DWR's office in Sacramento (listed below). Copies are also available to review at the Rio Vista Library and Stockton-San Joaquin County Library (listed below). CDs are available on request by phoning (510) 986-1850 or emailing comments@deltaresearchstation.com. They will also be available at the public meetings in Rio Vista and Stockton. Printed copies are also available at cost plus postage, upon request using the above contact information.

Locations where DEIR copies can be reviewed:

- California Department of Water Resources, 1415 Ninth Street, Room 315-3, Sacramento, CA 95814
- Rio Vista Library, 44 South Second Street, Rio Vista, CA 94571
- Stockton-San Joaquin County Library, 605 N. El Dorado Street, Stockton, CA 95202

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PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: The Draft EIR/EIS is available for a 45-day public review and comment period, which begins on October 30, 2015 and ends at 5 p.m. on December 14, 2015. **Please send comments on the DEIR at the earliest possible date, but postmarked no later than 5 p.m. on December 14, 2015 in order for your comments to be considered.**

Comments may be mailed to the following address:

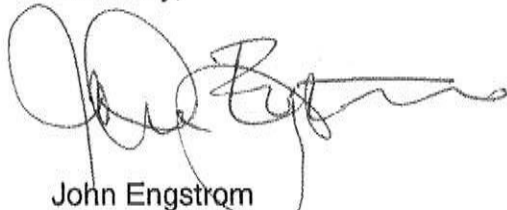
California Department of Water Resources
ATTN: John Engstrom, DRS Draft EIR/EIS Comments
1416 Ninth Street, Room 315-3
Sacramento, CA 95814

Comments may also be submitted by email to: comments@deltaresearchstation.com. Emailed comments are preferred, and should include your name, address, and daytime telephone number so a representative of DWR can contact you if clarifications regarding your comments are required. All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the official public record. A Final Environmental Impact Report / Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared which will include responses to comments received during the public review period.

PUBLIC MEETINGS: All interested persons are encouraged to attend the public meetings to present written and/or verbal comments on the Draft EIR/EIS. Two public meetings will be held at the following locations and times:

- D.H. White Elementary School, 500 Elm Way, Rio Vista, CA 94571 on December 1, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.
- Arnold Rue Community Center, 5758 Lorraine Avenue, Stockton, CA 95210 on December 3, 2015 at 5:30 p.m.

Sincerely,



John Engstrom
Supervising Architect