



PRESS RELEASE
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Federal Agencies Directed to Develop CVP Action Plan

Citing the deteriorating condition of federal water infrastructure and degrading operations, as well as the need for an action plan to improve them, Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the Department of Interior ordered federal agencies under his jurisdiction to develop an action plan in the next two weeks for improvements to California's water infrastructure.

"Leadership in California and at the Department of Interior (Department) has spent decades evaluating the need to improve the water infrastructure and water delivery situation in California's Central Valley Project," said Zinke. "While the Federal and State Governments have engaged in negotiations, our infrastructure has degraded, he said.

"Water supply reliability and regional flexibility are vitally important to the Central Valley," said Steve Chedester, Executive Director of the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority. "Our hope is that the action plan will help restore the CVP's ability to deliver water to our farms and communities. That's important to farmers and to those who depend on California agriculture for their jobs," he said.

A memo issued Friday to the Assistant Secretary – Fish and Wildlife, Assistant Secretary – Water and Science, the Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Solicitor, directed the agencies to develop and submit an action plan to Interior's Office of the Deputy Secretary within 15 days.

Specifics in the memo included a call to maximize water deliveries, incorporating better science into real and long-term decision making, moving on construction of new water storage, resolving issues with coordinated operations on both the Central Valley Project and (California) State Water Project, and more.

“This is an opportunity to not only improve water deliveries to farms and rural communities, said Chris White, general manager of the Central California Irrigation District in Los Banos, “It means that Reclamation will be more able to fulfill its water supply obligations to federal wildlife refuges in the area that are a critical stopover on the Pacific Flyway.”

Zinke also called attention to California’s “additional unacceptable restrictions that further reduce the Department’s ability to deliver water to Federal contractors,” a reference to the State Water Resources Control Board’s Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan. The Plan, if implemented, is expected to drastically reduce the federal government’s ability to operate water projects, such as New Melones Reservoir for the benefit of farms and other water users in the San Joaquin Valley.

The Office of the (Interior) Deputy Secretary was given 10 days following the submission of the report to develop final recommendations for action, including specific objectives, implementation timelines, a list of accountable individuals, and to meet legal procedural requirements.

The federal Central Valley Project serves public water agencies throughout California’s Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys, irrigating millions of acres of farmland and delivering water to rural communities as well as the high-tech industry in the Santa Clara Valley.

[Link to Interior Secretary Calls for Central Valley Project Action Plan](#)