



# california water impact network

## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

**Press Contacts:** Carolee Krieger, President, California Water Impact Network: (805) 969-0824

Lloyd Carter, Director, California Water Impact Network: (559) 304-5412

Carolee K. Krieger  
*president*

Dorothy Green  
*secretary*

Joan Hartmann  
*treasurer*

Lloyd G. Carter  
*director*

Malinda Chouinard  
*director*

Yvon Chouinard  
*director*

Jim Edmondson  
*director*

Michael Jackson  
*director*

Huey Johnson  
*director*

Linda Mitrovich  
*director*

Tom Stokely  
*director*

## **C-WIN Demands Reduced Delta Pumping as answer to Delta Eco-Crash**

California's Department of Water Resources (DWR) is mismanaging our precious Bay Delta and misrepresenting the amount of water that can be safely sucked from the Delta for delivery to farmers and developers. The California Water Impact Network (C-WIN), an organization dedicated to promoting sensible and sustainable water use throughout California, has asked DWR to dramatically and **permanently lower the total amount of water it pledges to deliver under the State Water Project (SWP) delivery contracts from the current level of 4.1 million acre feet per year to a level that ensures average deliveries will not exceed 1.2 million acre feet per year.** This reduction will help save the Delta and will give farmers and urban planners across the State a realistic picture of how much water will be available for use.

Currently, the SWP contracts pledge to deliver 4.1 million acre feet per year to water users south of the Delta, the same volume of water promised when the SWP was first approved in 1960. But, a lot has changed since 1960. "We now have a better appreciation of the importance of the health of the Delta and other aquatic ecosystems, an appreciation that is reflected in both state and federal environmental laws," says C-WIN's president, Carolee Krieger. As a result, Krieger notes, **"between 1990 and 2004, the SWP was, on average, able to deliver only 2.0 million acre feet of water per year, slightly less than half the promised allocation."**

To deliver water to central and southern California, DWR must pump it out of the Delta into storage and transport facilities. But, pumping kills fish and disturbs Delta ecosystems. Even though deliveries have been far lower than the proposed 4.1 million acre feet for many years, the Delta is still dying. Recent fish surveys have revealed that the Delta smelt, considered an indicator of the health of the Delta, has plummeted to record low numbers and is on the verge of extinction.

Many SWP Water Contractors are selling their water rights to urban areas in Southern California. What usually changes hands in such transfers is the full amount of water promised to the seller. But, because DWR has historically been unable to deliver a substantial portion of the promised amount, this leaves the purchaser, often a municipal water district, holding a large amount of what is known as "paper water." Paper water only exists on paper -- in the contracts -- and cannot be delivered. "The really dangerous thing about paper water is that it is being used to justify new construction throughout Southern California, even though it may never materialize," says C-WIN's Secretary, Dorothy Green, a well-known Southern California Water Activist.

According to language in each SWP Water Contract, DWR is required to reduce the amount of water it promises to deliver to reflect what it actually can deliver on a long-range basis. Doing so would get rid of the paper water. But, DWR has failed to obey the requirements of its own contracts.

C-WIN is asking DWR to permanently reduce the amount it promises in its contracts to reflect the real, biologically safe, capacity of the SWP to deliver the water. "If it fails to do so, new homeowners in Southern California may have nothing more than paper and hot air flowing from their taps," according to Carolee Krieger. "It is absolutely critical for the people of California to understand what is happening with paper water," says Dorothy Green. "Water policy in California is so complicated that the public is often left out of the decision making process," Green says, "but the use of paper water to fuel development in Southern California threatens to further erode our quality of life. It must be stopped."