



Media Release

State Water Board Orders More Information from Diverters Claiming Senior Delta Water Rights

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Persons claiming senior water rights in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta watershed will be required to provide the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) detailed information on the water rights they claim and diversions associated with those rights under a new order issued by the State Water Board.

The order comes after the State Water Board received information that some riparian and pre-1914 water right holders may be illegally diverting stored water in the Sacramento and San Joaquin watersheds and the Delta.

To determine whether unauthorized diversions have occurred, the State Water Board needs supporting documentation for the claimed water right including the property patent date and the date of initial appropriation, as well as information on diversions made during 2014 and projected 2015 diversions.

The order applies to 1,061 water rights claims held by about 450 individuals in the Delta and the Sacramento and San Joaquin watersheds.

Failure to comply and provide the information in a timely manner may lead to enforcement action, including a Cease and Desist Order. To read the order, visit:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/drought/docs/2015sacsjinforder.pdf

More than 8,500 post-1914 water rights holders (junior water rights holders) in the Sacramento and San Joaquin watersheds were issued curtailment notices last May as a result of the continuing drought. They were required to stop diverting water to protect the rights of pre-1914 and riparian water rights holders. The junior water rights holders were entitled to continue using water that had been previously stored in reservoirs on their behalf.





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In July the California Department of Water Resources and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, both holding junior water rights, alleged that senior water right holders in the south and central Delta were illegally diverting water stored and released by the State Water Project and the Central Valley Project. The two agencies asked the State Water Board under its statutory authority to require Delta water users to provide proof of their water rights claims, or to curtail unauthorized diversions.

The new informational order is in response to those allegations and another complaint that has been received by the State Water Board.

To view the letters from the Department of Water Resources and the Bureau of Reclamation and other related documents, visit:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/bay_delta/complaints/index.shtml

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