



# Media Release

## State Water Board Approves Water Rights Changes to Implement San Joaquin River Restoration

**For immediate release**

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The State Water Resources Control Board Division of Water Rights today approved long-term changes to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's water rights on the San Joaquin River, the latest step in the effort to restore river flows and salmon runs on the San Joaquin between Friant Dam and the confluence with the Merced River.

A 60-mile segment of the river has been dry since the building of Friant Dam in 1942. An 18-year legal battle over restoring the river flows culminated in 2006 with the San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Act.

The two goals of the federal River Restoration Act are to restore and maintain fish populations, including Spring-run Chinook Salmon, in the river below Friant Dam; and to reduce or avoid adverse water supply impacts to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamations water contractors that may result from the restoration project.

Parties to the agreement are a coalition led by the Natural Resources Defense Council; the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation; and the Friant Water Users Authority. The cost of the project is estimated at between \$350 million and \$570 million. Funding is expected from federal appropriations, state bond initiatives and current environmental contributions from farmers and cities served by Friant Dam.

The water rights changes approved today allow water to be released from Friant Dam to the river channel to support fish and wildlife and then be picked up for other uses farther downstream.

Interim water releases from Friant Dam began in 2009, experimental reintroduction of fall run salmon took place in 2012, and full restoration flows are expected to begin next year.

For more information on the San Joaquin River Restoration Program, visit:  
<http://restoresjr.net/index.html>

For more information on the State Water Resources Control Board Division of Water Rights, visit:  
<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/waterrights/>

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