

California Department of Water Resources
Testimony in Support of Yuba County Water Agency's Yuba River Accord and
Long-Term Water Purchase Agreement¹

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) supports the Yuba County Water Agency (YCWA) petitions to amend the terms of YCWA's water-right permits for purposes of implementing the Yuba River Accord. In particular, DWR supports the change in YCWA's water rights to change the point of diversion and place of use to enable the transfer of water to the State Water Project (SWP) and Central Valley Project (CVP) service areas. With this change, DWR will be able to transfer water to these areas for the benefit of municipal, agricultural, and environmental uses.

DWR operates the SWP which stores and diverts water from the Feather River and Sacramento River watershed to provide water for municipal, agricultural, and environmental purposes throughout California. DWR supports the YCWA petitions because it will implement the Lower Yuba River Accord as described in the Final Environmental Impact Report prepared by YCWA, a proposal that will provide benefits to the environment, water supply, and flood control.

In 2006 and 2007, to help evaluate the implementation of the proposed Yuba River Accord, DWR and YCWA implemented pilot programs. In 2006, DWR and YCWA signed the 2006 Water Purchase Agreement for a Yuba River Accord Pilot Program. However, due to the Delta being "out-of-balance" for most of 2006, no YCWA water was transferred. In 2007, another Pilot Program was implemented that resulted in transfer of water and that provided information to the agencies regarding the process. DWR and YCWA used this information to prepare final terms and conditions for the Water Purchase Agreement that implements the transfers for the Lower Yuba River Accord.

Under the Water Purchase Agreement for the Yuba Accord, DWR will purchase water from YCWA for Environmental Water Account purposes and for SWP and CVP contractors when project allocations are low. As with past water transfers between DWR and YCWA, DWR and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation are obligated under their water rights and Decision 1641 to maintain water quality conditions in the Delta to protect beneficial uses of water. Transfer of the YCWA water under the Water Purchase Agreement is subject to compliance with regulatory requirements, such as D-1641 and biological opinions for endangered species. Therefore, no harm would occur to other legal users of water as a result of transferring the water through the Delta under the Yuba Accord and the Water Purchase Agreement.

¹ Presented December 5, 2007, by Teresa Geimer, DWR Engineer.