



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

10/23/2009

Ms. Shauna McDonald
U. S. Bureau of Reclamation
South Central California Area Office
1243 N Street, Fresno, CA 93721-1813

Subject: Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Grassland Bypass Project,
2010-2019 (CEQ# 20090341)

Dear Ms. McDonald:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the above-referenced project. Our review and comments are pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and our NEPA review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

EPA reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and provided comments to the US Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) on March 30, 2009. We rated the DEIS as Environmental Concerns – Insufficient Information (EC-2) based on our concerns about the need for a comprehensive monitoring program, the need for a clear commitment to detailed analysis of sediment treatment, management, and disposal options and their effects, and the uncertainty of developing feasible methods of drain water treatment and disposal that would make it possible to meet selenium objectives by 2019 and arrest buildup of selenium in groundwater.

EPA is pleased that several of the issues identified in our review of the DEIS have been addressed in the FEIS. We appreciate Reclamation's and San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority's attention to our previous comments concerning the need for a comprehensive monitoring program, the need for sediment management and sediment quality data, and the commitment to coordinate the Grassland Bypass Project with other regional water quality improvement efforts. While we support your efforts, we would like to reiterate our concerns with the uncertainty of finding a practical technological solution for the treatment of agriculture runoff to meet selenium objectives by 2019 and minimize the increase of selenium in groundwater.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this document. We are available to discuss our comments. When the ROD is signed, please send one copy to the address above (mail code: CED-2). If you have any questions, please contact me at (415) 972-3521 or contact Laura Fujii, the lead reviewer for this project. Laura can be reached at (415) 972-3852 or fujii.laura@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Kathleen M. Goforth, Manager
Environmental Review Office
Communities and Ecosystems Division

cc: Mr. Joseph C. McGahan, San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority
Joy Winckel, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Theresa Presser, US Geological Survey
Kathy Norton, US Army Corps of Engineers
Rudy Schnagl, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
Julie Vance, California Department of Fish and Game, Fresno, CA
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