



DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
Division of Operations and Maintenance
3310 El Camino Avenue, Suite 300
Sacramento, California 95821



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Central Valley Operations Office
3310 El Camino Avenue, Suite 300
Sacramento, California 95821

May 21, 2026

Eric Oppenheimer
Executive Director
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 2000
Sacramento, California 95814
Eric.Oppenheimer@waterboards.ca.gov

Re: Monitoring Special Study Final Report Pursuant to the 2018 Bay-Delta Plan Amendments

Dear Mr. Oppenheimer:

Consistent with Section B(1)(iv) of the 2018 Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary (Bay-Delta Plan), the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and United States Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) are pleased to submit the final report for the Monitoring Special Study (MSS). The MSS is designed to accomplish the following goals, as listed in the 2018 Bay-Delta Plan:

1. Characterize the spatial and temporal distribution and associated dynamics of water level, flow, and salinity conditions in the southern Delta waterways.
2. Identify the extent of low-or null-flow conditions and any associated concentration of local salt discharges.
3. Inform the development of a Long-Term Monitoring and Reporting Plan.

Between 2021 and 2025, DWR and Reclamation convened twenty-one public coordination and Technical Workgroup (TWG) meetings with participating agencies (see Table 1 for dates and topics discussed). The MSS reflects a comprehensive integration of participant

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perspectives gathered through this collaborative process. Public coordination meetings were open to the general public and attended by more than twenty different interested parties. The TWG is comprised of South Delta Water Agency, Contra Costa Water District, Office of the Delta Watermaster, State Water Resources Control Board (Board), DWR, and Reclamation. These meetings facilitated transparent collaboration and technical coordination to design, adapt, and conduct the MSS technical studies. This process included large data collection and model refinement efforts as well as methodology workshops, to achieve the defined goals of the MSS. Technical studies, available data, supporting documents, and detailed meeting notes used in developing the MSS are posted on the following website: water.ca.gov/Programs/State-Water-Project/Operations-and-Maintenance/Monitoring-Special-Study.

Table 1. List of Public Coordination and TWG Meetings Held for the MSS

Date	Topic
May 6, 2021	Public Coordination Meeting #1
June 14, 2021	Paradise Cut (TWG Meeting)
July 17, 2021	Water Quality Data Integration / Data Assimilation (TWG Meeting)
July 19, 2021	Salinity Point Source Sampling (TWG Meeting)
October 12, 2021	Public Coordination Meeting #2
January 13, 2022	SCHISM & Related Modeling (TWG Meeting)
January 26, 2022 February 2, 2022 February 9, 2022	Bathymetry of the South Delta (TWG Meetings)
March 17, 2022	The 1980 Report Relative to Scope and Objectives of the MSS (TWG Meeting)
May 17, 2022	Public Coordination Meeting #3
September 15, 2022	High-Speed Salinity Transect Mapping (TWG Meeting)
December 9, 2022	SCHISM and Data Assimilation (TWG Meeting)
March 20, 2023	Public Coordination Meeting #4
June 30, 2023	MSS Modeling Assumptions Document Responses to Comments (TWG Meeting)
October 3, 2023	Public Coordination Meeting #5
December 12, 2023	MSS Data Assimilation: An Introduction (TWG Meeting)
February 23, 2024 March 6, 2024 March 7, 2024 March 8, 2024	Informal Ad Hoc Meetings to Discuss Specific Topics of Interest as Data Analysis Began

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March 15, 2024	Public Coordination Meeting #6
June 20, 2024	Public Coordination Meeting #7
April 18, 2025	Draft MSS Report Review Check-in (TWG Meeting)
May 20, 2025 July 24, 2025	Draft MSS Report Review Follow-up (TWG Meetings)
March 12, 2026	Overview of comments received and processed (TWG Meeting)

On September 19, 2022, DWR and Reclamation submitted the MSS work plan (MSS Plan) to the Board after receiving ongoing feedback from all participating agencies, including Board staff. On May 5, 2023, the Board approved the MSS Plan, providing five conditions for the MSS to satisfy, as listed and discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 of the enclosed MSS report. Appendix A of the MSS summarizes the outreach DWR and Reclamation have engaged in since the submission and approval of the MSS Plan in more detail.

On March 19, 2025, DWR and Reclamation shared the draft MSS with the TWG for their review. Comments were received from all parties by September 23, 2025. DWR and Reclamation have revised the MSS to address the comments received.

The final MSS synthesizes a large, multiyear effort of data collection and studies, analyses of historical observations, and robust modeling experiments to understand the sensitivities of water levels, flow, and salinity to different influencing factors under variable conditions in the channels of the southern Delta.

This submission does not constitute an admission, nor waiver of any rights, objections, claims or remedies available to DWR or Reclamation in any past, current or future judicial (Federal or State) or administrative proceedings related to the Bay-Delta Plan, including but not limited to any water rights proceedings to implement the Bay-Delta Plan and/or amend D-1641, and DWR and Reclamation hereby expressly reserve all such rights, objections, claims or remedies.

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For additional information or questions, please contact Bill McLaughlin of DWR (916-873-5748 or William.McLaughlin@water.ca.gov) or Grace Windler of Reclamation (916-978-5089 or gwindler@usbr.gov).

Sincerely,

Molly White

5/21/2026

Molly White
Assistant Division Manager
Water Management
Division of Operations and Maintenance
Department of Water Resources

Levi Johnson

5/21/2026

Levi Johnson
Operations Manager
Central Valley Office
California-Great Basin Region
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Attachments:

Monitoring Special Study Final Report
Appendix A - Outreach to Participating Organizations Since Publishing the MSS Plan
Appendix B - Supplemental Stable Water Isotope Analysis
Appendix C - Low Water Metrics
Attachment 1 - High-Speed Salinity Transect Mapping
Attachment 2 - Salinity Point Source and Ion Sampling
Attachment 3 - Circulation, Channel Depletion, and Barrier Assumptions for Modeling the South Delta, 2024 Revision
Attachment 4 - Data Integration and Source Inference for Modeling
Attachment 5 - Clifton Court Forebay Gate Characterization, Scheduling Study, and Facilities Comparison
Attachment 6 - MSS Operational Effects and Sensitivities Historical Data Analysis and Modeling Study
Attachment 7 - 2021 Old River Tracy Barrier Flow Study
Attachment 8 - 2022 Old River Null Zone Study

cc: (See next page)

cc: Erik Ekdahl
Chief Deputy Director
State Water Resources Control Board

Diane Riddle
Assistant Deputy Director
State Water Resources Control Board

Erin Foresman
Environmental Program Manager
State Water Resources Control Board

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Stephen Louie
Senior Environmental Scientist
State Water Resources Control Board

Jelena Hartman
Senior Environmental Scientist
State Water Resources Control Board

Jay Ziegler
Delta Watermaster
State Water Resources Control Board