

Topic: **Sites Reservoir Project**

2017 Sept 04

Subject: **Draft EIR/EIS Review Period**

Staff Report and Recommendation

Background: The Board approved publishing a notice of availability for the Site Reservoir Project Environmental Impact Report (CEQA Clearinghouse Number 2001112009) on August 14, 2017. In parallel, the Bureau of Reclamation published a similar notice for the release of the Federal Feasibility Report and associated Environmental Impact Statement. Initial and informal coordination with local land-owners, concerned agencies and other potential commenters has identified that the 90-day review period will not be sufficient to provide comments on the Draft EIR/S and complete the other related activities in support of the California Water Commission's review of the Sites Reservoir Project application for the Water Storage Investment Program.

The Sites Reservoir Project staff has participated in several informal discussions with a few of the regulatory agencies. These agencies have expressed concerns about the volume of information contained in the submitted documents that will be reviewed in parallel with other activities, such as and not limited to the State Water Resources Control Board's update to the Water Quality Control Plan.

Recommendation: Based on the informal discussions with regulatory agencies, the following is the staff's recommendation for the Authority Board's consideration:

- Extend the public and agency review period to a total of 153 days. Written comments on the Draft EIR/EIS should be submitted on or before Monday, January 15, 2018. Through an extension of the review period for an additional 63-days, the regulatory agencies should have the time and resources available to adequately review the submitted project and fully understand the proposed project.
- Direct staff to work with the regulatory agencies and, if applicable, to prepare supplemental information.
- Reschedule the public meetings to occur in early December 2017. These meetings will provide information on the project and an opportunity for the public and agencies to submit comments on the Draft EIR/EIS.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jim Watson, General Manager