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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Auburn - Directors of the Placer County Water Agency learned Thursday (Mar. 18) that completion of the American River pump station will likely be set back by at least two months from its summer 2005 target date.

In a briefing to the board, PCWA Director of Strategic Affairs Einar Maisch attributed the delay to a change in ownership of the Denver-based engineering firm hired to design the station's intake structure in the American River east of Auburn.

PCWA hired McLaughlin Water Engineers in 2001 to design a specialized in-river water diversion and to plan river restoration work. Maisch said that the firm was bought out and the new owner is reconsidering aspects of the design plans.

He said some of the firm's concerns centered on river flows and whether whitewater rapids in the segment of the river to be restored would be of a Class 3 or 4 category.

Maisch said the federal Bureau of Reclamation, which is the lead agency on the project, and PCWA believe the project should move forward as planned. "We believe that most if not all of the issues raised have been at the forefront of the agency's concerns since the beginning," said Maisch. Representatives of Reclamation and the water agency will meet with the design team in Denver next week (week of Mar. 22) to resolve the situation.

This comes at a time when Reclamation is seeking construction bids for the second phase of the pump project, which includes the riverbed restoration work and intake installation. Construction of the first phase began in October.

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Maisch said project completion will likely be moved back to “a little later in 2005. I’m optimistic that we can get everything resolved and back on track in two months,” he told the board.

In other business, directors:

- adopted an updated set of personnel rules and regulations. This culminates a successful multi-year and multi-stakeholder collaborative process to modernize the agency’s rules that govern employment within the agency, reported Mike Cooper, Director of Administrative Services.

- approved a request from the City of Lincoln to increase its water availability by 978 equivalent dwelling units (EDU), from 10.5 million to 11.7 million gallons per day. PCWA Director of Technical Services Brian Martin said the city plans to add 2100 new homes this year.

- agreed to purchase a new document imaging system hardware and software package from Decision Management Co. for \$144,300.

- approved an agreement for consulting services with Andregg Geomatics of Auburn for the Agency’s Middle Fork American River Pump’s Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Relicense project G.I.S. program including hardware and software package for \$141,500.

- authorized the retention of Gilbert Associates, Inc., CPAs and Advisors, of Sacramento, to serve as the agency’s external auditor. The agency reviewed proposals from four firms in making the selection.

The PCWA Board of Directors will next meet in adjourned session at 3 p.m. on Mar. 31 at the PCWA Business Center, 144 Ferguson Road, in Auburn. The next regular meeting of the board will be held at 3 p.m. on Apr. 1 in the Placer County Board of Supervisors chambers, 175 Fulweiler Avenue, in Auburn. PCWA board meetings are open to the public.