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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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PCWA: Delta Plan Threatens Local Water Supplies

AUBURN - Officials at the Placer County Water Agency remain very concerned that local water supplies could be highly jeopardized by plans to solve downstream issues involving the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

Following discussions Thursday (Jan. 19), including a presentation by a former top state water official, Jerry Johns, the PCWA Board of Directors authorized staff to submit comments on a draft environmental impact report (EIR) for the proposed Delta Plan.

Water agency leaders are most concerned that the proposed plan, now in its fifth revision, calls for “a more natural flow regime” in the Delta, which could significantly impact areas upstream of the Delta. “If more Placer County water is needed to flush the Delta, it could invalidate the Middle Fork Project relicensing agreement recently reached with a broad stakeholder group and seriously affect how local water supplies are stored, used and released,” said the Agency’s Director of Strategic Affairs, Einar Maisch.

“The draft Delta Plan has serious and very negative impacts upon water supplies available to Placer County from both the Yuba and Bear River system, as well as the American River system,” said General Manager David Breninger. “It will have serious cost implications as well.”

The board’s unanimous vote followed a presentation by Mr. Johns, former deputy director of the California Department of Water Resources, who is studying Delta issues as a consultant to the State and Federal Contractors Water Agency.

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Johns said there is wide concern over a finding by the State Water Resources Control Board that 75 percent of unimpaired inflow to the Delta is necessary to restore the Delta ecosystem. He said implementation of this standard would cause widespread environmental and economic impacts, particularly to areas upstream of the Delta, including Placer County.

He said impacts of proposed solutions to the Delta's problems would go far beyond what has been studied, and would include surface and groundwater supplies that now serve agriculture, power generation, recreation, and urban users.

"Everything is connected," he said. "There would be lots of unintended consequences if the delta inflow plan were to be implemented as currently recommended."

PCWA has been active on several fronts in bringing attention to the local impacts of Delta planning. The agency is working within the water industry and has joined a North State Water Alliance, a growing group of water purveyors, cities, counties and others with concerns about upstream impacts of Delta planning.

In other business, PCWA directors:

- approved a two percent cost of living adjustment for employees, effective Jan. 1, 2012 and extended the current terms and conditions with three bargaining units through 2013. On behalf of the agency's work force, General Manager David Breninger thanked the board for the adjustment, which is the first since January 2009. Breninger declined the adjustment for his own position; his salary remains unchanged.

- heard a water supply update related to this year's unusually dry winter. Director of Field Services Mike Nichol said that fortunately mountain reservoirs are holding more water than average for this time of year, which is a cushion against continued dry conditions. Senior Engineer Tony Firenzi reported on contingency planning if the year remains unusually dry. "Our early assessments show that if we receive close to normal precipitation for the rest of the season we anticipate that we may be able to make normal deliveries this year," he said.

The next regular meeting of the PCWA Board of Directors will be held at 2 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 2, at the PCWA Business Center, 144 Ferguson Road, in Auburn.

Information on PCWA board meetings may be obtained through the Clerk to the Board at (530) 823-4850 or (800) 464-0030. PCWA information is also posted at www.pcwa.net.