

Department of Fish and Game
Current Issues
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Quantification Settlement Agreement

The Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) for the Colorado River was completed in October 2003. This historic agreement provides California the means to implement water transfers programs that will allow California to live within the state's 4.4 million acre-foot basic annual apportionment of Colorado River water. The QSA also commits the state to a restoration path for the environmentally sensitive Salton Sea, and provides full mitigation for impacts to biological resources for these water supply programs. The QSA assures California up to 75 years of stability in its Colorado River water supplies.

The completion of the QSA required the commitment and combined efforts of the San Diego County Water Authority, Coachella Valley Water District, Imperial Irrigation District, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, State of California and U.S. Department of the Interior.

The QSA enables California to reduce its historic overdependence on the Colorado River to its 4.4 million acre-foot basic annual apportionment through voluntary agriculture-to-urban water transfers and other water supply programs. As part of the QSA legislation enacted in October 2003, the state will complete a programmatic environmental impact report to identify a preferred alternative and funding plan for restoring the Salton Sea.

A number of lawsuits against the QSA have been filed which threaten continuation of the water transfers. A federal suit in the U.S. District Court filed by the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District and Imperial County, and a consolidated state lawsuit filed by a number of parties resulted in the Superior Court decision on Feb. 11, 2010 invalidating the QSA. The latter suit threatened to cut off San Diego's supply of water coming from Imperial Valley, but a stay was granted pending the outcome of an appeal.

DFG supports the QSA and will continue to serve as the lead implementing the Salton Sea restoration plan. Currently DFG is collaborating with the Department of Water Resources and the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service on a joint environmental document, which is scheduled for draft release under the National Environmental Protection Act and California Environmental Quality Act in spring 2011. Staff continues to participate on numerous technical teams to evaluate the potential impacts, design considerations and plans for projects, and Joint Powers Agreement.