

Update on Presidential Memorandum on Promoting the Reliable Supply and Delivery of Water in the West

DATE: Monday, November 19, 2018
TIME: 3:00-4:00 PM EST
LOCATION: HCHB 51030

PURPOSE

The purpose of this meeting is to provide you an update on the status of the Presidential Memorandum (PM) on *Promoting the Reliable Supply and Delivery of Water in the West* that was released on October 19th. This memo highlights the NOAA efforts taking place as a result of this order and our progress in meeting the various deadlines were laid out within the PM.

Below are the seven sections identified within the PM and any updates/progress that has taken place to date.

PM Updates By Section

Section 1. Policy. To meet these challenges, the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce should, to the extent permitted by law, work together to minimize unnecessary regulatory burdens and foster more efficient decision-making so that water projects are better able to meet the demands of their authorized purposes.

Sec. 2. Streamlining Western Water Infrastructure Regulatory Processes and Removing Unnecessary Burdens. To address water infrastructure challenges in the western United States, the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce shall undertake the following actions: (Lead: NOAA Fisheries)

Focus will be on these 4 specific priority 1 projects per 11/16/18 DOI/DOC memo:

- 1. Central Valley Project (MOU signed on 11/7 by DOI & DOC)**
- 2. Klamath (MOU signed on 11/7 by DOI & DOC)**
- 3. Shasta Dam Raise (NEPA dates and project completion dates in development. ESA nexus for FWS, not NMFS)**
- 4. B.F. Sisk Safety of Dams Raise (NEPA, ESA and project construction/completion dates in development).**

For the Central Valley Project: A tiger team has been assembled to review the proposed action and Biological Assessment from the Bureau of Reclamation. We recently received the Environmental baseline section of the BA and are reviewing. All issues for elevation will go through Paul Souza, the lead contact on the project. Coordination calls occur weekly across the Regional Federal agencies and at the DOC/DOI level.

Klamath Project: The project team meets several times per week and a proposed action and draft Biological Assessment have been developed. The project team was recently directed to shorten the timeline by an additional 20 days for a final Biological Opinion by March 30, 2019.

Sec. 3. Improve Forecasts of Water Availability. To facilitate greater use of forecast-based management and use of authorities and capabilities provided by the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-25) and other applicable laws, the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce shall convene water experts and resource managers to develop an action plan to improve the information and modeling capabilities related to water availability and water infrastructure projects. The action plan shall be completed by January 2019 and submitted to the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality. (Lead: NOAA HQ)

Update: NOAA (NMFS and NWS) convened regional interagency experts in La Jolla, CA the week of November 7, 2018 to discuss water quality and quantity requirements and technological capabilities. The following week on November 14-15, experts across NOAA and other agencies convened at the National Water Center in Tuscaloosa to discuss such issues at a national level.

Sec. 4. Improving Use of Technology to Increase Water Reliability. To the maximum extent practicable, and pursuant to the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act (Public Law 102-575, title XVI), the Water Desalination Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-298), and other applicable laws, the Secretary of the Interior shall direct appropriate bureaus to promote the expanded use of technology for improving the accuracy and reliability of water and power deliveries. This promotion of expanded use should include:

Sec. 5. Consideration of Locally Developed Plans in Hydroelectric Projects Licensing. To the extent the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce participate in Federal Energy Regulatory Commission licensing activities for hydroelectric projects, and to the extent permitted by law, the Secretaries shall give appropriate consideration to any relevant information available to them in locally developed plans, where consistent with the best available information.

Sec. 6. Streamlining Regulatory Processes and Removing Unnecessary Burdens on the Columbia River Basin Water Infrastructure. In order to address water and hydropower operations challenges in the Columbia River Basin, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Energy, and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works under the direction of the Secretary of the Army, shall develop a schedule to complete the Columbia River System Operations Environmental Impact Statement and the associated Biological Opinion due by 2020. The schedule shall be submitted to the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality within 60 days of the date of this memorandum.

Update: Interior hosted a meeting among the agency's Regional and DC level leadership, CEQ and DOJ at the main Interior building on Nov. 30th. There was consensus from the group to complete the Draft EIS by end of February 2020 and a decision from CEQ is outstanding on whether to target a September or December 2020 Record of Decision. The Endangered Species Act consultation timeline will start with the completion of the DEIS. The Corps of Engineers has been recommended to be the single action agency point of contact for the project.

Sec. 7. General Provisions.