

Revised Draft Sacramento/Delta Updates to the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan & Partially Recirculated Draft Staff Report

January 28, 2026



State Water Resources Control Board

Presentation Overview



Hearing purpose and agenda



Brief background on Bay-Delta Plan* and timeline

*Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Watershed



Summary of December 2025 revised draft Bay-Delta Plan and Chapter 13 of draft Staff Report



Next steps and opportunities for public input

Hearing Purpose

- To receive comments on the December 12, 2025:
 - (1) Revised draft of the Bay-Delta Plan with updates focused on the Sacramento River and Delta components
 - (2) New chapter (Chapter 13, *Revised Proposed Plan Amendments*) of the draft Staff Report in support of Sacramento/Delta updates to the Bay-Delta Plan
- See notice for summaries of both documents
 - Attachment A: Summary of revised draft updates to the Bay-Delta Plan
 - Attachment B: Summary of Chapter 13

January 28 Agenda

- Panel 1: Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Representatives
- Lunch break
- Panel 2: Golden State Salmon Association and California Sportfishing Protection Alliance
- Panel 3: Restore the Delta and Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians
- Panel 4: San Francisco Baykeeper and Friends of the River
- Individual comments (anticipated to begin after 2:00 pm)

January 29 Agenda

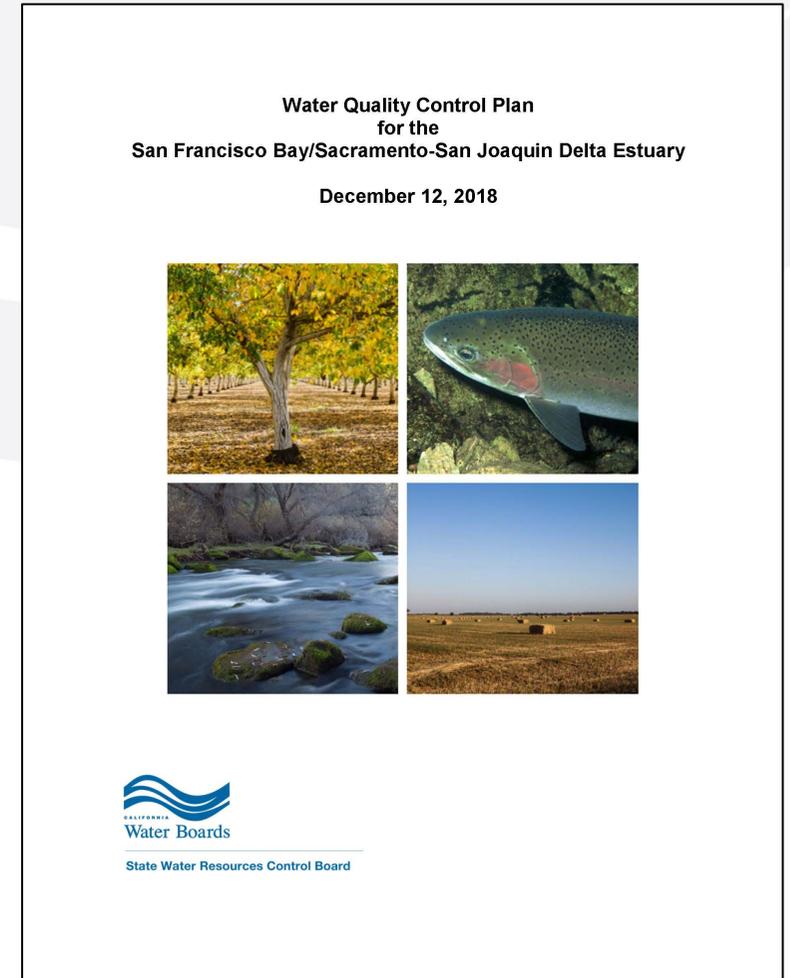
- Panel 1: Fishing Organizations
- Panel 2: Solano County Elected Officials and Board Members
- Individual comments
- Lunch break
- Panel 3: Tribal Representatives
- Panel 4: Central Delta Water Agency
- Individual comments

January 30 Agenda

- Individual comments
- Panel 1: Save California Salmon (Impacts to Youth)
- Panel 2: Save California Salmon (Tribal Impacts North of Delta)
- Panel 3: Save California Salmon (Tribal Cultural Resources)
- Lunch break
- Individual comments

Bay-Delta Plan

- Identifies beneficial uses, water quality objectives to protect uses, program of implementation, and monitoring provisions
 - Current beneficial uses: municipal & industrial, agricultural, fish & wildlife
 - Water quality objectives: narrative and numeric (primarily flow-dependent)
 - Program of implementation: actions by Board and others to protect beneficial uses and implement objectives, including flow and nonflow actions
 - Monitoring and evaluation to assess compliance and effectiveness of implementation actions
- Requires periodic review/triennial review



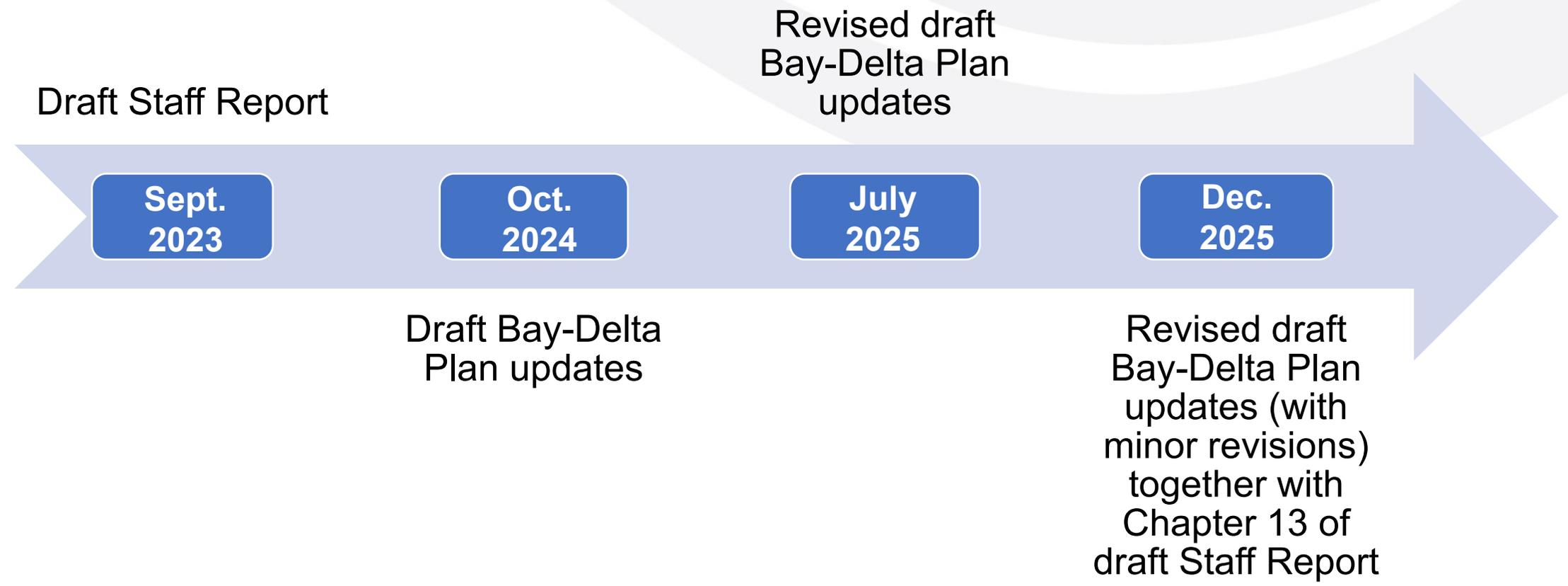
Sacramento/Delta Update to the Bay-Delta Plan

- Board updated the San Joaquin River flow and southern Delta salinity portions of the Plan in 2018
- Sacramento/Delta update will complete comprehensive update to the Plan to address reasonable protection of fish and wildlife throughout the Bay-Delta watershed
 - Significant step to addressing actions by all water right holders and not just Central Valley Project and State Water Project operations
 - Lays the foundation for implementation of the water right priority system in the Bay-Delta watershed
 - Provides for adaptive implementation through specific provisions and regular annual and periodic reviews

Public Processes to Date

- Numerous public workshops, hearings, meetings, written public comment processes
- Initial planning actions
 - 2 Notices of Preparation
 - Multiple public meetings/written comments on science, modeling, other, including 2017 science report
- Recent actions post 2020-2023 drought
 - Board Informational Item on Tribal Beneficial Uses (6/7/23)
 - Workshop and written comments on Draft Scientific Basis Report Supplement (1/19/23)
 - Workshop and written comments on Draft Staff Report (10/19/23)
 - Workshop on modeling for Draft Staff Report (11/2/23)
 - Tribal Workshop on Draft Staff Report (11/9/23)
 - Board Workshop on Voluntary Agreements (4/24/24 - 4/26/24)
 - Board Workshop on Draft Updates to the Plan (11/20/24, 11/22/24, 12/3/24, 12/12/24 & 1/23/25)
- Listening Sessions
 - Tribal Listening Sessions on Draft Staff Report (3/15/23 & 5/4/23)
 - EJ Listening Sessions on Draft Staff Report (3/27/23 & 6/7/23)
- Working Meetings
 - 11 Meetings on Draft Staff Report (1/28/25 - 3/4/25)
- Board Hearings
 - Draft Staff Report (11/17/23, 12/1/23 & 12/11/23)

Timeline of Draft Bay-Delta Plan and Draft Staff Report



Current Comment Process

- In July 2025 Board released a revised draft Plan
 - Comment period was modified to make minor revisions to the draft Plan reflected in December 2025 draft and to coordinate public comment process on draft Plan with release of Chapter 13, allowing more time for review
- Board released Chapter 13 for comment, but is not accepting further comments on the remainder of the draft Staff Report that was released in 2023 for public comment
- Responses to comments on 2023 draft and Chapter 13 will be provided together with final Staff Report to ensure responses are comprehensive

December Revised Draft Bay-Delta Plan

- Similar to July 2025 draft
- Two implementation pathways that would both have regulatory effect upon Plan adoption
 - Voluntary Agreement (VA) pathway incorporates Healthy Rivers and Landscapes (HRL) flow and habitat commitments and would apply to HRL water rights in Appendix B.1
 - Regulatory pathway would apply to other water rights, as well as HRL water rights if VA pathway is discontinued
- Incorporation and designation of tribal beneficial uses
- Edits to water quality objectives and program of implementation
- Updated flow and habitat accounting for the VA pathway

Overview of Chapter 13

- Updated project description – identifies the specific provisions, consistent with the revised draft Bay-Delta Plan, that are proposed to move forward
 - Combination of actions from alternatives evaluated in draft Staff Report chapters released in 2023
- Synthesizes analyses from other parts of draft Staff Report to provide updated environmental and economic analyses that support revised proposed updates to the Plan
- Previous comments were considered in development of Chapter 13

Revised Draft Bay-Delta Plan



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Tribal Beneficial Uses (TBUs) and Other Tribal Provisions



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Incorporation and Designation of TBUs

- Revised draft Plan designates Tribal Tradition and Culture (CUL) in the Bay-Delta watershed
- CUL designation is based on substantial evidence provided to the Board through tribal outreach and engagement efforts that the watershed supports the use
- CUL designation recognizes the centrality vital fish populations, particularly salmon, and aquatic life have for cultural, spiritual, ceremonial, and traditional rights and lifeways
- Incorporates tribal and subsistence fishing beneficial uses (T-SUB and SUB) but designation would occur through future specific processes due to the need for more specific evaluation

Additional Tribal Provisions

- Board to develop tribal engagement plan to inform consultation, outreach, and engagement for Bay-Delta Plan processes
- Board to work with California Native American Tribes (Tribes) to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) into Monitoring and Evaluation Program
- Board to form with Tribes Bay-Delta Tribal Advisory Group to provide input to Board on Bay-Delta Plan processes
- HRL parties to consider input from Tribes in decision making and HRL Science Committee
- HRL habitat restoration projects to include provisions for incorporating input from Tribes and others during development, implementation, and assessment of habitat restoration, including consideration of TEK

New Water Quality Objectives



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Proposed New Fish and Wildlife Objectives

- Revised draft Plan incorporates the following objectives:
 - Narrative Sacramento and Delta tributary inflow (numeric portions from 2024 draft moved to the program of implementation)
 - Narrative cold water habitat
 - Narrative Delta outflow
 - Inflow-based Delta outflow
 - Narrative interior Delta flows
 - Narrative fish viability
- Under VA pathway, objectives would be implemented by HRL flow, habitat, and other required commitments
- Under regulatory pathway, objectives would be implemented by a percent of unimpaired inflow and associated Delta outflow, cold water habitat management, and other requirements
- Both pathways would be implemented concurrently and would provide for more flow above current conditions

Regulatory Pathway Requirements

Applicable to Water Rights Not
Covered by VA Pathway



Implementation of Tributary Inflows

- Continuation of previously proposed inflow requirement of 55% of unimpaired flow (UIF), with exceptions
 - Adaptive implementation: ability to shape flows and propose flows within adaptive range of 45-65% UIF, including through local cooperative solutions
- Due to water supply/cold water management concerns, new water supply adjustments (WSAs) were incorporated
 - During wettest 1/3 of conditions requirement is 55% UIF
 - During middle 1/3 of conditions requirement is 45% UIF
 - During driest 1/3 of conditions requirement is 35% UIF
 - Tributary specific WSAs for rainfall/municipal dominated tributaries (Mokelumne and Calaveras Rivers, and Putah Creek) would allow greater reductions down to 35% UIF and off-ramps (no flow requirement) in the driest conditions

Implementation of Cold Water Habitat

- Reservoir owners/operators would be required to develop long-term cold water management strategies identifying actions to provide temperature management
- Strategies required to include proposed end of water year reservoir storage levels within ranges identified in Plan for temperature management, as well as other actions
- If operators do not propose carryover levels, Board would conduct public process to determine carryover
- Annually, operators would be required to develop temperature management plans identifying specific operations each year in conformance with approved temperature management strategies

Implementation of Inflow-Based Delta Outflow

- Required Delta outflow is to be calculated by adding up the applicable required inflows from the Sacramento/Delta tributaries, including an equivalent amount of Sacramento valley floor and Delta accretions, and required lower San Joaquin River flows, making appropriate adjustments for natural losses

VA Pathway

Applicable to HRL Water Rights



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VA Pathway for HRL Commitments

- VA pathway approach – HRL participants propose combining flow and habitat can yield ecosystem benefits with lower impacts to water supplies
- Includes flow, non-flow habitat restoration, science and governance provisions
- HRL flow commitments vary by tributary, month, and water year type
- Initial 8-year term, following which VA pathway could be extended, modified, or terminated after evaluation of ecosystem benefits
 - Start date for implementation would be no later than January 1, 2027
 - Revised draft Plan also includes ability to make course corrections under certain circumstances (e.g., if HRL commitments are not being met)
 - If terminated, Board would release an addendum to the Scientific Basis Report and either amend the Bay-Delta Plan to update the regulatory pathway or provide a new determination that regulatory pathway is appropriate under provisions of Water Code section 13241

VA Pathway for HRL Commitments, cont.

- List of HRL water rights included in Appendix B.1
 - A water right less than 100 acre-feet (AF) may be added to HRL water rights with Executive Director approval after a 45-day public comment
 - If a water right is larger than 100 AF it would need to be considered for approval by the Board as part of the annual or periodic review process with additional scientific and environmental documentation
- In processing new water right applications or change petitions involving expanded use of water, Board would consider needed measures to protect base flows and additive flows provided pursuant to VA pathway and regulatory pathway

New HRL Commitments

- Nevada Irrigation District HRL proposal for the Bear River, Yuba River, and Auburn Ravine
- South Sutter Water District HRL proposal for Bear River
- Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District HRL proposal for Cache Creek and Putah Creek

HRL Flow and Non-Flow Commitments (Table 9)

LOCATION	ADDITIVE DELTA INFLOWS AND OUTFLOWS (TAF) ABOVE BASE CONDITIONS BY WATER YEAR TYPE					RESTORATION (ACRES)		
	C	D	BN	AN	W	SPAWNING	INSTREAM REARING	FLOODPLAIN
Sacramento		100	100	100		113.5	137.5	40,000
American*	30	40	10	10		25	75	
Yuba*		50	50	50			50	100
Feather		60	60	60		15	5.25	1,655
Auburn Ravine (NID) C1*		0-3.6	0-3.6	0-3.6				
Bear (NID) C2		5.6	5.6	5.6				
Yuba (NID) C3		5.6	5.6	5.6				
Bear (SSWD) C1		0-4.4	0-4.4	0-4.4				
Bear (SSWD) C2		0-4.4	0-4.4	0-4.4				
Putah*	7	6	6	6		1.4		
Putah (YCFCWCD)*		5	5	5				
Mokelumne*		5	5	7			1	25
Delta forgone exports		125	125	175				5,227.5
Friant (by San Joaquin River Restoration Program Water Year Type)*		50	50	50				
PWA Fixed Price Purchases	3	63.5	84.5	99.5	27			
PWA Market Price Purchases		50	61	85				
Permanent State Water Purchases	65	108	9	52	123			

*Some of these flows may not be fully additive to Delta outflows during the January through June time period.

HRL Flow and Habitat Accounting (Appendix B)

- Flow accounting provided for each HRL tributary, water purchases, export reductions, and Delta outflow
- Habitat accounting provided for tributary spawning, tributary instream rearing, tributary floodplain rearing, bypass floodplain, and tidal wetland habitat
 - Criteria include: depth, velocity, substrate, cover, and floodplain inundation, except for bypasses and tidal wetlands that will have project specific criteria

Bay-Delta Plan Implementation, Review, and Monitoring



Implementation Methodology

- Bay-Delta Plan to be implemented through curtailment methodology developed through public process and associated regulation
 - Similar to methodology used in the last drought to ensure that flows provided to meet the Bay-Delta Plan are protected from diversion, consistent with water right priorities
 - Applies to both VA and regulatory pathway in different ways
- Board may consider implementation procedures other than, or in addition to, curtailment regulations that are defined to achieve comparable protections

Annual and Periodic Reviews

- Public meetings would be held annually to discuss progress on implementation of the Bay-Delta Plan and adaptive management
- Periodic reviews would be held every three years to discuss possible needed changes to the Bay-Delta Plan or its implementation to protect beneficial uses

Bay Delta Monitoring and Evaluation Program (BDMEP)

- BDMEP encompasses all Bay-Delta Plan related monitoring including:
 - Monitoring required in prior versions of Plan, including 2018 update, currently required monitoring from Water Right decisions implementing the Plan, HRL monitoring, and any future needed monitoring
 - New harmful algal bloom (HABs) monitoring requirements
- Board to work with Delta Stewardship Council to evaluate needed monitoring and related activities
- Additional provisions add specificity to monitoring, review, data quality, and reporting requirements

HRL Supplemental Science and Monitoring and Governance

- Would require HRL participants to develop hypotheses, metrics, targets, and monitoring to assess HRL commitments subject to Board approval
- Would require HRL participants to solicit input from Tribes, NGOs and other interested parties in development of targets
- Would be required to address specific topics, including HABs, salmonids, sturgeon, habitat conditions and utilization, food webs, pesticides, and methylmercury
- Results and outcomes would be reported annually and triennially

Limited Recirculation of Draft Staff Report (Chapter 13)



Approach to Chapter 13

- Updated project description – identifies specific provisions, consistent with the revised draft Bay-Delta Plan, that are proposed to move forward
 - Combination of actions from alternatives evaluated in draft Staff Report chapters released in 2023
- Analyses of revised proposed Plan amendments compared to baseline
- Relies on analyses from other Staff Report chapters released in 2023
- Evaluations include:
 - Changes in hydrology and water supply;
 - Beneficial environmental effects;
 - Environmental and economic effects; and
 - Public trust and analyses required by Water Code Section 13241

Hydrology and Water Supply

- Draft Staff Report chapters released in 2023 presented modeled (SacWAM) changes in hydrology and water supply for UIFs from 35 to 75 (referred to as flow scenarios in Chapter 6) and VAs (referred to as proposed VAs in Chapter 9)
- Chapter 13 presents updated results compared to baseline for:
 - Regulatory pathway: 55% UIF with water supply adjustments (55 w/WSAs)
 - VA pathway: very similar to proposed VAs evaluated in Chapter 9
 - Updated results for UIF scenarios without WSAs are also presented in appendices
- Minor refinements to SacWAM modeling incorporate input from stakeholders and other refinements, including extending the period of simulation through 2021
- Changes under 55 w/WSAs are similar to the Low Flow Alternative (35-45% UIF) evaluated in chapters of draft Staff Report released in 2023 and less than 55% UIF due to the addition of water supply adjustments
- Changes under the VA pathway similar to evaluations included in Chapter 9

Beneficial Environmental Effects

- Scientific basis reports and Chapters 3 and 9 of draft Staff Report provided benefits analysis for 35 to 75% UIF and HRL commitments
- Chapter 13 includes updated benefit analyses for 55% UIF w/WSAs and the VA pathway compared to baseline, including:
 - Frequency of achieving ecological flow thresholds
 - Potential increases in estuarine species abundance indices
 - Area of tributary spawning and rearing habitat and estuarine habitat
 - Frequency of meaningful floodplain events
- Benefits of 55% UIF w/WSAs expected to be less than 55% UIF and closer to Low Flow Alternative (35 to 45% UIF) due to WSAs
- VA pathway benefits are very similar to those shown in Chapter 9

Environmental Analysis

- Relies on environmental analyses of 2023 proposed Plan amendments and other UIF alternatives from Chapter 7 and the proposed VAs from Chapter 9
- Effects of 55% UIF w/WSAs are similar to the Low Flow Alternative evaluated in Chapter 7
- However, because water supply adjustments could be modified, and flows could be higher in the range of unimpaired flow in the future, impacts could be as high as those evaluated in Chapter 7 for the previous proposed Plan amendments (45-65% UIF)
- Impacts under the VA pathway are very similar to those identified in Chapter 9

Analysis of CUL Designation

- Chapter 13 includes environmental analysis supporting CUL designation
- Describes activities associated with TBUs, water quality objectives and implementation measures to protect uses, reasonably foreseeable non-flow compliance measures and response actions
- Reasonable protection of CUL as it relates to tribes' cultural and spiritual connection to salmon overlaps with reasonable protection of aquatic life beneficial uses forming basis for implementation actions
- Objectives needed to protect fish & wildlife and CUL overlap and are addressed by objectives and program of implementation in Plan
- CUL uses may be protected by measures needed to protect REC-1 and COMM; however, additional requirements may result from CUL designation

Next Steps



State Water Resources Control Board

Public Comment

- Hearing continues tomorrow, Jan. 29, and concludes Jan. 30
- Written comments due Feb. 2, 2026
- Reminders (see notice)
 - Board is not accepting further comments on the remainder of the draft Staff Report that was previously released for public comment
 - Commenters are encouraged to organize letters using clear headings to distinguish between comments on the revised draft Plan and Chapter 13
 - Request that commenters identify and distinguish specific CEQA-related comments from other comments
- Email comments and questions to:
SacDeltaComments@waterboards.ca.gov

Major Next Steps



Review public comments received orally at hearing and in writing



Based on public comments, develop final draft Bay-Delta Plan and final Staff Report (including responses to comments on 2023 draft Staff Report and Chapter 13)



Release final draft Bay-Delta Plan and final Staff Report (including responses to comments)



Board meeting to consider adoption of Sacramento/Delta updates to Bay-Delta Plan and final Staff Report

Resources and Contact Information

- Sacramento/Delta Update to Bay-Delta Plan: waterboards.ca.gov/bay_delta/comp_review.html
- Proposed VAs: waterboards.ca.gov/bay_delta/proposed_voluntary_agreements.html
- Bay-Delta Watershed: waterboards.ca.gov/bay_delta/
- Email: SacDeltaComments@waterboards.ca.gov



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