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National Research Council Launches New Study of Sustainable Water and Environmental Management in the California Bay-Delta

At the request of Congress and the Departments of the Interior and Commerce, the National Research Council (NRC) has begun a review of the scientific basis of actions that have been and could be taken to achieve both an environmentally sustainable Bay-Delta and a reliable water supply. In order to balance the need to inform near-term decisions with the need for an integrated view of water and environmental management challenges over the longer-term, the NRC will issue two reports over its term of two years. The roster of the provisional committee appointed to conduct the study is listed below.

In its first report, the committee will focus on scientific questions, assumptions, and conclusions underlying water-management alternatives in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) Biological Opinion on Coordinated Operations of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project (Dec. 15, 2008) and the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Biological Opinion on the Long-Term Central Valley Project and State Water Project Operations Criteria and Plan (June 4, 2009). The committee will consider whether there are any "reasonable and prudent alternatives" (RPAs) that, based on the best available scientific data and analysis, would have lesser impacts to other water uses as compared to those adopted in the biological opinions, and would provide equal or greater protection for the relevant fish species and their designated critical habitat given the uncertainties involved. It also will consider whether there are provisions in the FWS and NMFS biological opinions to resolve potential incompatibilities between the opinions with regard to actions that would benefit one listed species while causing negative impacts on another. To the extent that time permits, the committee would consider the effects of other stressors on federally listed and other at-risk species in the Bay-Delta.

In its second report, to be issued in the fall of 2011, the committee will focus on how to most effectively incorporate science and adaptive management concepts into holistic programs for management and restoration of the Bay-Delta. This advice, to the extent possible, will be coordinated in a way that best informs the Bay Delta Conservation Plan development process. The committee will meet several times during its 24-month tenure, with its first meeting scheduled for January 24-28 at the ARC Ballroom, University of California, Davis.

The provisional committee roster follows.

Robert J. Huggett, Professor Emeritus, College of William and Mary, Seaford, VA, Chair.
James J. Anderson, University of Washington, Seattle, WA
Michael E. Campana, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR
Thomas Dunne, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA
Albert E. Giorgi, BioAnalysts, Inc., Redmond, WA
Patricia M. Glibert, Horn Point Laboratory, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Cambridge, MD
Christine A. Klein, University of Florida College of Law, Gainesville, FL
Samuel N. Luoma, U.S. Geological Survey, Menlo Park, CA
Michael J. McGuire, Michael J. McGuire, Inc., Los Angeles, CA
Thomas Miller, Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Solomons, MD
Jayantha Obeysekera, South Florida Water Management District, West Palm Beach, FL
Max J. Pfeffer, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
Denise Reed, University of New Orleans, LA
Kenneth A. Rose, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA
Desiree D. Tullos, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR

David Policansky, NRC Study Director

Committee biographical information and additional details about the study are available at <http://www8.nationalacademies.org/cp/projectview.aspx?key=49175>.

The National Research Council (NRC) is the operating arm of the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering (NAE), and the Institute of Medicine (IOM).