

OAKDALE IRRIGATION DISTRICT
SEPTEMBER 2020
GENERAL MANAGER'S NEWSLETTER

On July 28th, Governor Gavin Newsom released a final version of the [Water Resilience Portfolio](#). This is the Administration's blueprint for equipping California to cope with more extreme droughts and floods, rising temperatures, declining fish populations, over-reliance on groundwater and other challenges. Further down in the Press Release it provides the 10 highest priority goals of the Resiliency Plan, those being;

1. Implementing the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Act of 2019.
2. Supporting local communities to successfully implement the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014.
3. Achieving voluntary agreements (VA's) to increase flows and improve conditions for native fish in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and its watersheds.
4. Modernizing the Delta water conveyance system to protect long-term functionality of the State Water Project.
5. Updating regulations to expand water recycling.
6. Accelerating permitting of new smart water storage.
7. Expanding seasonal floodplains for fish and flood benefits.
8. Improving conditions at Salton Sea.
9. Removing dams from Klamath River.
10. Better leveraging of information and data to improve water management.

There are many positive things the Governor is saying that need to be explored in the coming decades if our State is going to meet the water challenges brought on by climatic changes. As someone who has had a 40 year career in the water business, many of the Governor's words have meaning that the casual reader without a water background may not understand. I thought I would add my thoughts on what I see in the words the Governor is saying and putting forth;

1. Who can argue with providing safe and affordable drinking water? However, the word "affordable" means communities that can't afford the treatment or acquisition cost of safe water means that others

(taxpayers) will fund those programs. While these costs are unknown and will likely be significant, it's a cost worth the human benefit to these disadvantaged communities in our State. I give it a thumbs up.

2. Supporting successful implementation of SGMA. Groundwater in our State needs protection. This will hurt agriculture and the communities in the Central Valley who rely upon that agricultural production for their livelihoods. Likely one of the biggest pain pills in the coming years that will need to be swallowed, but it has to happen. I give it a thumbs up.

3. Achieving VA's. The State's single focused WQCP objective to just send water down the river and hope all will be fine is misplaced, unrealistic and unworkable. Their plan shows an improvement of just under 1,103 more salmon coming upstream on the San Joaquin River, really? VA's can work but the State needs to rethink its position. OID and SSJID put a VA on the table providing 30-35% unimpaired flow (UIF) and money for habitat. It was summarily dismissed as not substantive enough. Other rivers put forward proposals of 18-22% UIF and money and were accepted. Fairness and equity have been grossly absent from the process. Thumbs down for now.

4. Modernizing Delta Water Conveyance to protect functionality of the State Water Project. Okay, let's go from 2-tunnels to 1-tunnel and send less water south and make the southern State pay for all these improvements only to get less water. I don't see the Project Contractors jumping on what's currently on the table. For now, this isn't going anywhere. I don't mean to be disrespectful to those in our State north of the Tehachapi's but the economic engine of our State is south of there, not north. There needs to be another attempt at another plan. Thumbs down on the current effort.

5. Updated regulations on recycling. I'll pass on this.

6. Accelerating permitting of new smart water storage. Hard to imagine the State can accelerate the current permitting process. However, if they can cut down the time from permitting a dam in this State

from 2 lifetimes down to 1 lifetime, I guess that's progress. Thumbs up.

7. Expanding seasonal floodplains for fish and flood benefits. Good idea. My problem with this though, due to global warming, fish will be transitioning in our streams and rivers, going from cold water fisheries to warm water fisheries. The National Marine Fisheries Service says in their Anadromous Fish Recovery Plan (AFRP) that salmon will be expatriated from the San Joaquin River by 2050 due to global warming. Why in the world would we invest in flood plain habitat for fish that won't be here in 30 years? Thumbs up though if we invest in habitat north of Sacramento so we taxpayers can get a ROI on that investment.

8. Improving conditions at the Salton Sea. Oddly enough I managed the Salton Sea for the Imperial Irrigation District (IID) for over 12 years. I sat as IID's Technical Representative on the Salton Sea Task Force. If there was a place that needed some State investment in money and resources to protect a key component of the Pacific Flyway, it's there at the Salton Sea. Thumbs up.

9. Removing dams from the Klamath River. Maybe this should say, removing non-functioning end-of-purpose dams paid for by taxpayers. Removing a functioning dam that still serves a purpose just seems odd to an engineer. Flow negotiations and endless litigation seems as lost in the Klamath Basin as it is with VA's in the Delta. I'll pass on this.

10. Better leveraging of information and data to improve water management. Our State is using "combat science" to proffer THEIR vision of resource management for all of us. It's wrong. OID/SSJID has spent roughly \$12 million over the last 20 years on fishery studies on the Stanislaus River. We sent the State Water Board all of that science to assist them in their development of their WQCP. In the final document, there was not one sentence used from the science we provided. Do you think they had their minds already made up?? I give a thumbs up to better data sharing, but I give two thumbs down on what currently exists in Sacramento.

Thank you for allowing me to share my insight on issues of importance that will affect our State and our future.



Oakdale Irrigation District
1205 East F Street
Oakdale, CA 95361
(209) 847-0341
www.oakdaleirrigation.com