



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

CONTACT: Steve Goldstein

(O) 202-343-6416

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(H) 202-887-5248

INTERIOR SECRETARY LUJAN ANNOUNCES ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT TO BE PREPARED FOR CALIFORNIA'S SAN JOAQUIN RIVER BASIN

Secretary of the Interior, Manuel Lujan, today announced an initiative, including the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for the San Joaquin River Basin in California. The San Joaquin River Basin Resource Management Initiative, which includes the Friant unit of the Central Valley Project, will seek to improve the water-related environment of the Basin.

In addition, the Secretary has directed that the Fish and Wildlife Service be consulted under the Endangered Species Act to determine the impact that any proposed actions resulting from the Initiative might have on endangered or threatened species.

"This initiative plan presents an excellent vehicle for finding ways to improve the water-related environment of the San Joaquin River Basin," said Lujan. "By proceeding with an EIS, we will involve the public to assure that environmental concerns will be addressed."

The Bureau of Reclamation will be asking the State of California, as well as other organizations, to cooperate in preparation of the EIS. "California's participation will be vital because of state primacy in water use and allocation decisions. Water resource groups can add valuable insight on possible approaches to conservation. Other federal agencies with facilities in the Basin can also play a major role," said Lujan.

In announcing the Initiative, Secretary Lujan reinforced his commitment to meeting existing legal obligations to water users in the River Basin and elsewhere in the Central Valley Project, as defined by federal law. This includes the long-term renewal in early 1990 of Friant Unit water service contracts expiring at that time, with the same quantities of water as have been used beneficially in the original contracts.

Under the renewed contracts, the price of delivered water will increase by more than 300 percent and will be adjusted annually. These contracts and project operations will provide for further adjustments that might be required based on the results of the EIS prepared under the Initiative, including, but not limited to, price, conservation, time, manner and efficiency of delivery.